

Sustainable Tourism:

The Tour Operators' Contribution



TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



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Contributors

Accor – Patricia Cortijo & Sarah Tesei
Atlas Voyages – Cherif Alami Othman
Aurinkomatkat – Tom Selänniemi
British Airways Holidays – Jan Jackson
Discovery Initiative – Julian Matthews
Dynamic Tours – Isabelle Hustache Bennani
Exodus – Stephen Natrass & David Gillespie
First Choice Holidays – UK & Ireland Division – Jane Ashton
Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten – Barbel Kramer
Hotelplan – Kaspar Hess & Christian Brogli

LTU Touristik – Andreas Müseler
MyTravel Northern Europe – Pia Willars & Paul Matell
Orizzonti – Liliana Baldi Manfredi
Premier Tours – Julian Harrison
Studiosus – Klaus A. Dietsch
Travel Walji's – Shirin Walji
TUI AG – Michael Iwand
TUI Nederland – Nico Visser & Elise Allart
TUI Nordic/Fritidsresor Group – Lotta Sand
VASCO Travel – Yusuf Ornek
Viaggi del Ventaglio – Ellen Bermann

Project Co-ordinator

Giulia Carbone (United Nations Environment Programme)

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TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE

FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Tourism:

The Tour Operators' Contribution

Tour Operators' Initiative Members

Accor (France)	www.accor.com
Atlas Voyages (Morocco)	www.atlasvoyages.co.ma
Aurinkomatkat-Suntours (Finland)	www.aurinkomatkat.fi
British Airways Holidays (UK)	www.baholidays.com
Discovery Initiatives (UK)	www.discoveryinitiatives.com
Dynamic Tours (Morocco)	www.dynamictour.com
Exodus (UK)	www.exodus.co.uk
First Choice (UK and Ireland)	www.firstchoice.co.uk
FreeWay Adventures (Brazil)	www.freeway.tur.br
G.A.P. Adventures (Canada)	www.gapadventures.com
Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten (Germany)	www.hapagloyd.de
Hotelplan (Switzerland)	www.hotelplan.ch
KEL 12 (Italy)	www.kel12.com
LTU-Touristik GmbH (Germany)	www.rewe.de
MyTravel Northern Europe (Sweden)	www.mytravel.se
NSTravel (The Netherlands)	www.nstravel.nl
Orizzonti (Italy)	www.orizzonti.it
Premier Tours (USA)	www.premiertours.com
Settemari (Italy)	www.settemari.it
Studiosus (Germany)	www.studiosus.de
Travel Walji's PVT (Pakistan)	www.waljis.com
TUI AG (Germany)	www.tui-environment.com
TUI Northern Europe (UK & Nordic Countries)	www.tui-environment.com
VASCO Travel (Turkey)	www.vasco.com.tr
Viaggi del Ventaglio (Italy)	www.ventaglio.com

Note: Parentheses indicate headquarters location

Table of Contents

Foreword	5
Tour Operators and Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities	6
A Common Response: The Tour Operators' Initiative	8
The Tour Operators' Contribution (full list of cases)	11
1. Integrating Sustainability into Business	13
2. Supply Chain Management	23
3. Internal Management	39
4. Product Management and Development	51
5. Customer Relations	65
6. Cooperation with Destinations	81
Comments from External Reviewers	92



TOUR OPERATORS' INITIATIVE
TOUR OPERATORS' INITIATIVE

I am often asked, 'What is the Tour Operators' Initiative?' or 'Why are you a member of the Tour Operators' Initiative?' What raises some eyebrows is that, in the Tour Operators' Initiative (TOI), businesses in the same sector collaborate by sharing ideas and practices, despite the increasingly competitive nature of the tourism industry. Yet, it makes sense, not only

from the sustainability perspective but also business-wise. In the end, the answer is rather simple: sustainability is the only option for the tourism industry.

The Tour Operators' Initiative is a group of committed tour operators that have understood that collaboration is the key element for the successful implementation of their individual strategies and actions for sustainability. It provides a neutral platform for sharing and refining ideas on strategies and actions, as well as a mechanism for acting together. Thus, the TOI does not replace the commitment and actions of the individual companies, but aims at catalysing the results.

One of the first activities carried out by the TOI Secretariat after the launch of the Initiative in 2000 was to collect from the individual members 'good' examples of how a tour operator can effectively integrate the principles of sustainability into its various areas of operations. This effort was a success, not only because it demonstrated that the members of the TOI actually take action, but, most importantly, because it helped spread awareness that tour operators can actually do something about sustainability.

This new collection of case studies, which brings together revised versions of the first series of examples with many other new ones, offers a broad sample of the different actions that tour operators can take to address sustainability in different contexts. We – the members of the TOI – found this exercise very useful and enriching, and we hope that not only other tour operators, but also other tourism actors, will find these examples inspiring.

We recognise that none of these practices alone is sufficient to effectively address the challenges of sustainability. We also recognise that all are 'works in progress' and that we need to constantly revise our activities to take into account new issues and challenges. We are thus open to feedback from all our readers on ways to improve our performance and our results.

Tom Selänniemi
Manager for Sustainable Tourism Aurinkomatkat
Chairman of the Tour Operators' Initiative

Tour Operators and Sustainable Development

Challenges and Opportunities

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global industries, creating significant employment and economic development, particularly in many developing countries. Tour operators are an important part of this growth. According to the International Federation of Tour Operators, outbound tour operators represent 12 percent of international arrivals, while in Europe they represent 35 percent of leisure air holidays. This figure does not take into account packages sold by inbound tour operators, or incoming agents, directly to tourists in destinations.

This growth has led to an increase in the negative environmental and social impacts of tourism, from resource consumption, pollution and the generation of wastes. Tourism activities can also disrupt or destroy local cultures and introduce unwanted activities such as drugs and prostitution. Because of their significant market share, tour operators are in part responsible for these negative impacts of tourism, as they determine where many tourists go and which facilities they use. They also act in some ways as a catalyst bringing other tourism sectors together.

Tour operators play a central role in the tourism industry. As intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers, tour operators can influence the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations. This unique role means that tour operators can make an important contribution to furthering the goals of sustainable tourism development and protecting the environmental and cultural resources on which the tourism industry depends for its survival and growth.

A clean and pristine environment, with authentic local

culture and friendly people, are the reasons why people travel. It is thus in the tour operators' interest to preserve the environment in their destinations and to establish good relationships with local communities, to improve the quality of their tourism products and increase customer satisfaction. More and more surveys show that customers respond positively to actions taken by tour operators to improve the sustainability of their businesses.

Besides strengthening their brand values and reputations with consumers, integrating sustainable principles into tour operators' business practices can also create better relationships with suppliers, staff and local communities, increasing their respect as a partner in destinations and limiting the risk of problems or conflicts. A strong positive reputation and a low risk of conflict can lead to increased access to key resources such as capital, the ability to develop products in an increasingly competitive market, and motivated and loyal staff. From a financial standpoint, sustainable practices can also increase revenue and shareholder value, particularly through the generation of more repeat business, acquisition of new clients, cost savings and increased operational efficiency.

To address the negative impacts of tourism, the industry needs new tools and methods that can prevent environmental and social harm while developing and managing tourism activities in ways that contribute to sustainable development and protect tourism resources. Effectively integrating sustainability into the tour operators' business will mean considering environmental, social and economic aspects throughout the process of developing a holiday package. The key operating

areas where companies can integrate sustainability practices are:

- Internal management, by taking into account sustainability principles in the management of human resources, office supplies and production of printed materials;
- Product development and management, by planning tours and selecting holiday package components that minimise environmental, economic and social impacts;
- Contracting with suppliers, by integrating sustainability principles into the selection criteria and service agreements of suppliers;
- Customer relations, by guaranteeing privacy, health and safety standards, and providing customers with information on responsible behaviour and sustainability issues at their destinations; and
- Relations with destinations, by supporting destination stakeholders' efforts to address sustainability issues and financially contributing to conservation and development projects.

Responses by individual tour operators in each of these areas vary considerably, influenced by their size, type of holiday packages offered (and hence type of customers) and destinations served. For any company, though, to ensure that activities targeted toward sustainability are comprehensive, credible and lead to long-term positive changes, it is important to integrate sustainability principles into corporate policy and management systems, and to monitor and report on performance. And, while each company has a responsibility to individually address the challenges of sustainability, sectoral approaches and tools can effectively complement individual companies' efforts

and create synergies throughout the industry.

This document offers a survey of different programmes, policies and actions that tour operators are implementing around the world to promote the goals of sustainable tourism and protect the environmental and cultural resources upon which their business depends. Many of these examples are works in progress and are continuously being revised by the tour operators. Furthermore, none of the actions presented here represents the one and only solution to preventing and mitigating impacts from tour operators' activities, as effective response requires addressing all areas of responsibility and identified impacts. However, they do provide an opportunity to understand the range of different options that tour operators can choose from.

The case studies in this document are organised in six sections:

- **Integrating Sustainability into Business,**
- **Supply Chain Management,**
- **Internal Management,**
- **Product Management and Development,**
- **Customer Relations, and**
- **Co-operation with Destinations.**

For each case study, we offer a brief description of the good practice, a history of its development and implementation, and a description of the benefits of such practices, both for the tour operators and for other stakeholders in the tourism industry, including communities, customers, destinations, staff and suppliers.

A Common Response

The Tour Operators' Initiative

The Tour Operators' Initiative (TOI) is a network that brings together tour operators who have recognised the urgency of incorporating sustainable development principles into their operations. Members include inbound and outbound operators of all specialties and from all regions of the world.

The TOI was founded in 2000 by tour operators in response to a growing awareness that their long-term success depends on sustainable tourism, and that joint and more widespread action is needed to successfully tackle the challenges of sustainable tourism development.

The TOI's mission is to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry, and to encourage tour operators to make a voluntary yet firm corporate commitment to sustainable development. Its members have committed to integrating environmental, social and economic principles into their business operations, and to join forces in areas that would benefit from the input of all members and can be best addressed with a common voice.

Through the Initiative, tour operators are involved in a wide range of activities to explore approaches and tools

Good Practice in the Accommodations Sector

Jointly with Conservation International, the TOI developed A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodations Sector. The guide provides accommodation suppliers with information on energy management, water use management, wastewater management, 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 also provides a list of sources of further information on these topics. More than 30,000 copies of the guide have been disseminated by the members of the TOI to their contracted hotels worldwide. The guide has been translated into French, Spanish, Turkish and Portuguese. For an electronic version of the guide, see www.toinitiative.org or www.celb.org.

for improving the sector's environmental, economic and social performance. Together, the members of the TOI are taking actions in three key areas:

1. Supply chain management, to develop a common framework for the integration of sustainability criteria into the selection and contracting of service suppliers. Common tools such as a guide for good practice in the hotel sector (see Box) and sustainability purchasing guidelines are also developed and used by all members.
2. Co-operation with destinations, to exert a positive influence and work with a collective voice to influence the actions of all partners in destinations. As a basis for establishing credible and transparent co-operation at the destination level, TOI members work with a cross-section of stakeholders encompassing the diversity of views and interests present in the destination, including the local authorities, the private sector, civil society and NGOs. To exercise this common voice, TOI members agreed to organise multi-stakeholder dialogues in key destinations, aiming at:
 - identifying a shared way forward for promoting sustainable tourism, keeping the destination perspective as the priority, and maintaining economic and business viability for all stakeholders; and
 - developing an agreed action plan to build on synergies between the tour operators and the various destination stakeholders.
3. Sustainability reporting, to develop and test reporting guidelines and performance indicators on sustainable development. One of the major achievements of the TOI is the development of the tour operators' performance indicators, which supplement the 2002 GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. The tour operators' supplement is the result of a nine-month process that included numerous meetings and on-line exchanges with UNEP and the Global Reporting Initiative acting as facilitators, and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Statement of Commitment

We are Tour Operators concerned about the impact of our tours and activities.

We recognise our responsibility to develop and operate in a manner that makes a positive contribution to the natural, social and cultural environment. We also recognise and accept our responsibility to operate in ways that reduce environmental impacts, benefit host communities, safeguard the future livelihood of local people, and ensure the protection of destinations for future generations.

To fulfill this responsibility, we have joined together to work in close partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO/OMT).

In doing so, we commit in this Initiative to:

- protect the natural environment and cultural heritage;
- co-operate with local communities and people, ensure they benefit from the visits of our customers and encourage our customers to respect the local way of life;
- conserve plants and animals, protected areas and landscapes;
- respect the integrity of local cultures and their social institutions;
- comply with local, national and international laws and regulations;
- oppose and actively discourage illegal, abusive or exploitative forms of tourism;
- work closely with business partners, local authorities, regional and national governments and other organisations to achieve sustainable development of tourism;
- provide information on our activities to develop and encourage the sustainable development and management of tourism;
- communicate our progress in implementing this commitment.

We also acknowledge that we cannot achieve our goal of sustainable tourism development without the help of all stakeholders, including our

The Tour Operators' Contribution

1. Integrating Sustainability into the Business	13
1.1 Exodus: Development of a Responsible Tourism Policy	14
1.2 First Choice Holidays – UK & Ireland Division: Development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy	17
1.3 Hotelplan: Environmental Reporting	19
1.4 Studiosus: Development of an Environmental Management System	21
2. Supply Chain Management	23
2.1 Atlas Voyages: Suppliers' Hygiene Control Campaign	24
2.2 Aurinkomatkat-Suntours: Green Contracting for Hotels	26
2.3 LTU Touristik: Technical Assistance to Contracted Hotels	28
2.4 MyTravel Northern Europe: The '50 Steps Towards a Good Environment' Programme	30
2.5 Orizzonti: Green Checklist for Hotels	32
2.6 Premier Tours: Camps and Lodges that Support Local Conservation Projects	34
2.7 TUI Nordic: Promoting Codes of Conduct for Responsible Tourism Among Suppliers	37
3. Internal Management	39
3.1 Aurinkomatkat-Suntours: Staff Training on Sustainable Development	40
3.2 Dynamic Tours: Responsible Tourism Guidelines for Tour Guides	42
3.3 TUI Nederland: Station Centraal – The Paperless Experience	44
3.4 TUI Nordic: Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children	46
3.5 VASCO Travel: Motivational Training for Tour Guides	48
4. Product Management and Development	51
4.1 British Airways Holidays: Life Cycle Assessment of a Key Destination	52
4.2 British Airways Holidays: Offsetting CO ₂ Emissions from Air Travel	54
4.3 Discovery Initiatives: Holiday Programmes that Support Local Development and Conservation	55
4.4 MyTravel Northern Europe: Eco-audits of Destinations	58
4.5 Studiosus: Environmentally Friendly Transport Services	61
5. Customer Relations	65
5.1 Accor: Raising Awareness About Protecting Marine Ecosystems	66
5.2 Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten: Educational Information for Customers	69
5.3 LTU Touristik: Inviting Customer Feedback on Environmental Issues	71
5.4 TUI AG: Interactive Environmental Website	73
5.5 TUI Nederland: Promoting Responsible Travel in Curaçao and Bonaire	75
5.6 Viaggi del Ventaglio: Environmental Interpreter Programme	78
6. Cooperation with Destinations	81
6.1 Atlas Voyages: Supporting Research for Health and Hygiene in Morocco	82
6.2 Hotelplan: An Eco-Fund to Support Sustainability	83
6.3 Travel Walji's: Contributing to the Local Economy in the Karakorum Region of Pakistan	85
6.4 VASCO Travel: Restoration of the Sarica Church in Cappadocia	87
6.5 Viaggi del Ventaglio: Supporting Local Communities in the Dominican Republic	89

1 Integrating Sustainability into the Business





1.1 Exodus: Development of a Responsible Tourism Policy

Description of Good Practice

Recognising the increasing awareness of sustainability issues within the travel industry, Exodus, a UK-based adventure tour operator, developed a Responsible Tourism Policy in 2000. The policy, which formalises the company's commitment to environmental, social and economic sustainability, applies to all offices, including those in the field. Central to the policy is Exodus' commitment to develop socially, economically and ecologically sound trips in which:

- Local communities play a fair role in the operations and obtain a fair share of the benefits;
- Destinations receive long-term investments and commitments from the company, thus providing economic stability to both; and
- The company contributes to conserving the natural resources on which this type of tourism depends.

The key elements of the Responsible Tourism Policy are a Mission Statement, which describes the company's aspirations for responsible tourism and sets out commitments and goals, and a Code of Practice, which outlines the management practices necessary for implementation of the policy (see Box 1). The policy is implemented in three key areas: the company's own operations, customer awareness of the issues and destination sustainability.

Exodus carefully planned the development of its Responsible Tourism Policy, convinced that the development process itself could greatly contribute to the successful implementation of the policy in everyday business. The International Centre for Responsible Tourism, based in the UK, was also brought in to assist in the process.

The company created a Responsible Tourism Manager position, requiring expertise in both tourism and conservation, to send a clear signal to all levels of the company that the issue of sustainability was becoming an integral part of the company's business.

Responsible Tourism seminars for Exodus' entire UK-based staff, from operations, marketing, sales and finance departments, were organised to give employees an opportunity to contribute to the development of the policy, hence increasing the level of ownership and the effective identification of roles and responsibilities in the implementation phase. Participants in the two-day seminars helped determine action areas for the company's Responsible Tourism Policy and the business areas that would play a key role in the

implementation. In addition, the participants offered feedback on an earlier draft of the Code of Practice.



NEPAL. NAMANG TREE NURSERY FUNDED, SUPPORTED AND VISITED BY EXODUS GROUPS

Implementation

To ensure effective communication among staff and implementation of the policy, the company has instituted the following measures:

- New staff are given training in the policy, and there are training sessions and intranet updates at regular intervals for all staff;
- Co-ordination among staff in charge of policy implementation, reporting on initiatives and general updates, when relevant, occur at weekly

departmental meetings, attended by the Responsible Travel Manager;

- Client feedback forms and operator and leader feedback are used to monitor results; and
- The policy and actions taken to implement it are regularly reviewed.

The Responsible Tourism Policy is implemented in all business areas of the company. For example, at headquarters, Exodus has implemented recycling and energy management programmes.

To ensure that existing and new trips maximise benefits to local communities and the environment, Exodus' policy includes:

- Hiring of more local guides to provide better interpretative experiences and support to the local communities;
- Purchasing of local products and services, where appropriate, for all trips;
- Working with local operators to implement the policy; and
- Limiting group size based on the local situation, with a maximum of 22 people in appropriate circumstances.

The policy also aims at promoting and raising awareness of responsible travel practices among customers. For example, tour leaders are trained in responsible tourism principles and the importance of local issues and encouraged to be proactive on sustainability issues. In Morocco and Nepal, training seminars have been offered to local tour leaders, including information on the main environmental and social threats of tourism, particularly trekking trips. The leaders are introduced to best practices that they can promote and recommend when leading tours in environmentally and socially sensitive areas.

To further promote customer awareness, much of the company's literature, including brochures, trip notes, pre-departure information packets, feedback forms and web pages, include references to the policy and responsible tourism principles. In addition, key sales and marketing decisions have been made to ensure



PERU. PORTER BAGS BEING WEIGHED.
EXODUS PROACTIVELY SUPPORTS
PORTER WELFARE INITIATIVES
AROUND THE WORLD

BOX 1: Exodus' Responsible Tourism Policy

Mission Statement

Exodus operates tourism that fosters understanding, appreciation and conservation of the culture and environments we visit. We operate in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. We are committed to working with our clients and the people of our host destinations to ensure direct economic benefits at a community level, and to contribute to cultural and environmental conservation. With the continual monitoring of our operations, we aim to operate beyond best practice guidelines, endeavouring to set world-wide industry benchmarks for responsible tourism operations.

Code of Practice

We aim at all times to adhere to the following code in our operations:

- We will promote tourism that is economically productive, socially responsible and environmentally friendly.
- We will encourage considerate, culturally and environmentally conscious habits amongst those who travel with us.
- We will bear in mind the rights of the local population and respect local laws and customs.
- We will attempt to involve the host population in all tourism projects that we may instigate
- We will provide regular and ongoing training to our staff in the principles and practices of responsible tourism.
- We will ensure that our leaders and guides pass on to our clients an insight and understanding of the host destination.
- We will insist that our business partners in the host destinations meet our own high environmental and social standards, and that, where necessary, they receive training to improve their understanding of the issues.

that responsible tourism is a core element of Exodus' business, for example:

- The responsible travel section of the company's website is directly accessible from the home page;
- The Exodus newsletter includes a section on responsible travel; and
- Sales personnel have been encouraged to raise the issue when appropriate.

Finally, Exodus also implements its policy by contributing directly to conservation and development projects. Trip leaders are encouraged to inform the UK headquarters about any specific situation where an Exodus contribution could make a difference. The following are several of the projects that Exodus has been involved in so far:

- Providing financial and technical support to two tree nurseries at Manang in the Anapurna region in Nepal, to respond to deforestation and ensure that trekking practices do not worsen the problem;
- Supporting the Baobab Community Project in Tanzania, by staying at the site and encouraging clients to get actively involved;
- Providing financial support to a small-scale project to build a reliable water source for a village in the Atlas mountains, in Morocco;
- Supporting the Carpathian Large Carnivore Project in Romania, by including the community in its itinerary and donating an amount per passenger to the project;
- Supporting, in co-operation with Tourism Concern, the work of the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) and particularly the Porters' Rights Campaign.



ROMANIA, CARPATHIAN LARGE CARNIVORE PROJECT. SUPPORTED AND VISITED BY EXODUS GROUPS

Benefits

Since the Responsible Tourism Policy was implemented, Exodus has seen a number of benefits, including:

- Publicity surrounding the policy has encouraged bookings by a small but growing number of clients who cite responsible tourism practices as a reason for choosing Exodus over other operators.
- The policy has led to positive publicity in the media and industry recognition, helping to raise the profile of sustainable tourism in this sector of the travel industry. Exodus was highly commended in the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards for its operations.
- The policy has enhanced human and intellectual capital at Exodus. Involvement of the staff from the beginning has led to a feeling of ownership of the issues and policy, and employees feel good about being involved with a responsible company. The company found its staff readily willing to accept and apply responsible tourism principles; all they needed was direction in how to do so.
- Working with authorities in destinations to identify their problems and desires has helped to overcome some of the problems associated with tourism.

Comments

A Responsible Tourism Policy should be at the heart of any action or decision that a company takes, to ensure that sustainability will be at the core of the company's business strategy and decisions. Clients will see responsible tourism as an integral part of their holiday; where companies have no policy, it will be seen as a negative factor, leading clients to book with companies that do have a such a policy. Furthermore, as more companies implement responsible (or sustainable) tourism principles as their core values, more clients will recognise these values as an industry standard and become aware of the impacts of their travel choices.

1.2 First Choice Holidays – UK & Ireland Division: Development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy



Description of Good Practice

In 2002, First Choice, an outbound tour operator that offers package holidays and flight bookings, developed a strategy aimed at achieving the integration of sustainability principles into its business processes whilst remaining appropriate to the structure and culture of the organisation. Catalysts for this strategy development included the commitment First Choice had made upon becoming a member of the Tour Operators' Initiative, as well as its participation in the UK Sustainable Tourism Initiative. The company's commitment to move towards more sustainable practice is sponsored by the Managing Director of the UK & Ireland Division, thus ensuring leadership from the top of the organisation.

With guidance and facilitation from Forum for the Future, a sustainable development think-tank and charity, First Choice embarked on a series of workshops. Initially, the UK & Ireland Board Directors were involved, and subsequently about 25 senior managers. At these workshops, the company's activities were mapped, and their social and environmental impacts identified and prioritised, using the framework developed by the Natural Step (www.naturalstep.org). These priority impacts became the basis for the company's Sustainable Tourism Policy (see Box 1). The actual wording of the policy was drafted by a subgroup of the senior managers involved, before being reviewed by the entire team, 'signed off' by the First Choice Group Executive Committee and printed in the subsequent Annual Report & Accounts.

Whilst the policy sets the long-term framework for the strategy, the senior manager workshops also identified four priority workstreams considered fundamental for the company to address in the first year:

- The environmental impacts of First Choice itself;
- Customer behaviour;
- Employee engagement; and
- Overseas destinations – supply chain and discrete destination projects.

Implementation

Responsibility was assigned to senior executives for owning and delivering the workstreams, and a programme of work for each workstream was agreed. Progress is reported at quarterly board meetings and via monthly written reports. This structure is designed to integrate the ownership and management of environmental and social issues into the fabric of the business.



A LOCAL SUPPLIER - MRS. MARULA'S BAKERY

Some examples of work already underway include:

- Environmental Impacts: An environmental management system compliant with ISO 14001 requirements is being implemented to mitigate the environmental impact of First Choice's airline, office operations, retail outlets and customer literature.
- Customer behaviour: Responsible travel information has been disseminated to customers via brochures, website, pre-travel information booklets, in-flight magazines and videos, and resort literature.
- Employee engagement: A 'responsible tourism' training module, prepared with the guidance of the non-governmental organisation Tourism Concern, now forms part of each overseas holiday representa-

- tive's training programme and a Sustainable Tourism site is being built on the company's intranet.
- Overseas destinations: An environmental checklist of overseas accommodation suppliers has been piloted and is due to be rolled out over the course of 2003 to all priority bed stock suppliers. First Choice also participated actively in projects in destinations – i.e. in the Gambia, to help identify how tour operators and local enterprises could work more closely to mutual benefit, and in Cyprus, to develop an excursion that benefits local communities, the environment, customers and tour operators.

Benefits

Anticipated long-term benefits of this strategy include:

- Environmental protection of the company's core product (beaches, seawater, landscapes, etc.);
- Improved relations with and benefits to destination stakeholders;
- Business practices aligned with investor and consumer expectations;
- Attraction and retention of talented employees;
- Lower operating costs due to more efficient operating practices; and
- Reduced regulatory intervention.

Comments

One year after the development of the Sustainable Tourism policy, First Choice is receiving increased interest from both internal and external stakeholders in its sustainable tourism activities. Work is now underway to develop a formal stakeholder engagement plan to support two-way communication on sustainability issues. Involvement in sustainable development issues has helped First Choice play an active role in the recent launch of the UK's Travel Foundation, an independent charity that will fund sustainable tourism projects and which the company will support by facilitating a customer levy on package holidays sold from Autumn 2003 onwards.

Box 1: First Choice UK & Ireland – Sustainable Tourism Vision & Policy

Vision

Enable people to explore and enjoy the world without harming it.

Policy

We recognise that the environment, the communities and cultures within which we operate and our relationships with key groups and individuals are vital to the success of our business. We therefore commit in the long term to:

- Minimising the direct environmental impact of our operations and being proactively involved in activities and projects that work to protect and restore the natural environment.
- Working with customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, industry partners, local communities, and other relevant interested parties, to understand and respect their needs and also supporting them in delivering our commitments.
- Using the collective influence of the First Choice Group responsibly to create momentum to make tourism more sustainable.
- Being open, honest and realistic about our environmental and social impacts, targets and achievements in the context of our business objectives.

In support of the above we will work to:

- Engage First Choice employees and gain their commitment to action, by raising awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism and the benefits of addressing it.
- Promote fair working conditions throughout our own business and our supply chain.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, act in advance of it where possible and keep pace with best practice.
- Review current business practices and ensure plans are in place to embed the company's sustainable tourism vision.
- Deliver long-term strategic benefits and shareholder value by maximising the synergies that sustainable development provides.

1.3 Hotelplan: Environmental Reporting



Description of Good Practice

The Hotelplan Swiss Group, a Swiss tour operator that offers mainly outbound package tours and guided tours, published an environmental report illustrating the actions the company has taken in different operational areas to improve its environmental performance. After the company's first environmental report was released in 1998, Hotelplan decided to produce a public report on its environmental activities, taking into account the Global Reporting Initiative's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines and Performance Indicators.

The environmental report is divided into two main sections: statements, which includes the company policy statement and letters signed by the CEO, the Delegate of the Board of Directors of Environmental Affairs and the Manager of Corporate Ecology, and descriptions of activities taken in four key action areas – product management and development, internal management, supply chain management and co-operation with destinations. Additional information includes the company's goals for 2004 (see Box 1), key financial figures, a glossary and a statement of support by another tour operator.

Among the activities described in the 2001/2002 report are:

- **Product Management and Development:** This section includes the results of a study to assess the overall impact of Hotelplan's holiday packages to Tenerife and Crete and a report on the company's efforts to better understand the ecological conditions of its destinations.
- **Internal Management:** This section includes the results of an analysis of environmental impacts generated at the company's headquarters.
- **Supply Chain Management:** This section highlights the progress made in the use of Hotelplan's Environmental Award and lists award winners since 1998.
- **Co-operation with Destinations:** This section discusses the company's actions to support conservation and social development, including details on projects supported, goals and benefits achieved and funds disbursed.

The analysis of Hotelplan's environmental performance at headquarters is supported by:

- Quantitative data, presented as inputs (energy and materials) and outputs (products, catalogues, waste disposal and outside transport) in a table that also includes data from the biennia 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001, thus providing the opportunity to verify the company's improvements.
- Diagrams to help visualize the changes in performance from 1998 to 2001, as well as the weight of the different areas in headquarters.
- The results of the comparative study of the environmental impacts of holiday packages in Tenerife and Crete are also supported by diagrams, which help visualize the different impacts.



HOTELPLAN'S ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

BOX 1: Hotelplan's Environmental Targets for 2004

Company-based target

- Take the triple-bottom-line approach by weighting ecological, economic and social aspects to form the basis for the company's commitment to sustainability.

Globally based targets

- Sign the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.
- Successfully transfer environmental reporting to sustainability reporting, in accordance with the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Destination-based targets

- Continually develop projects in all relevant fields (energy, water, waste), mainly at important Hotelplan holiday destinations.
- Increase the level of awareness about the company's Eco-Fund by expanding customer information and increasing information frequency.

The 2001/2002 environmental report was written in about six months by Hotelplan's Environmental Department, the Delegate of the Board of Directors for Environmental Affairs, and the Manager for Corporate Ecology, with the additional assistance of an external consultant and a specialist in sustainable communication. The cost of producing this report was approximately 35,000 Euro (US\$41,805).

Before printing the final report, an internal consultation between the Department for Corporate Ecology and the Quality Management Team of the Hotelplan Group took place. The draft report also had to be submitted to the Environmental Committee for final approval.

Implementation

About 6,000 copies of the 2001/2002 Environmental Report were printed on 100% recycled paper – 4,000 copies in German, 1,500 in English and 500 in French. The report has been distributed internally to every employee of the Hotelplan Swiss Group, every resident manager and to partners at the destinations. The content of the report was disseminated outside of the Group through press releases to both the Swiss and international media, special presentations, partners and travel agencies. The report can also be purchased or downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.hotelplan.ch/de/environment/bericht.htm>

ated outside of the Group through press releases to both the Swiss and international media, special presentations, partners and travel agencies. The report can also be purchased or downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.hotelplan.ch/de/environment/bericht.htm>

Benefits

Hotelplan has found that the benefits of publishing an environmental report include:

- Stakeholders find out what the company has done and which improvements it has made throughout the year;
- Customers have the opportunity to measure and evaluate the environmental activities of Hotelplan as a company in a global context;
- Hotelplan can demonstrate to the public that it is striving to integrate environmental issues into all aspects of its business structure and to include all stakeholders in the process; and
- Customer relations have improved and credibility has increased.

Comments

In the interest of transparency, it is important to publish not only positive results but also areas in which improvement is needed over the next months (see Box 1). This makes it clear that, although much has been done in the past, more will need to be accomplished in the future, through increased involvement of all stakeholders.

"For the very first time, the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) have been taken into account – though only in part for the time being. A continual integration of the essential part of the GRI, the Tour Operator's Sector Supplement, so important for any tour operator, will not only help develop reporting towards full sustainability but also the operative commitment still mostly based on ecological considerations."

Mr. Hess

Delegate of the Board of Directors of Environmental Affairs, Hotelplan

1.4 Studiosus: Development of an Environmental Management System



Description of Good Practice

Studiosus, a German tour operator that specialises in educational tours, began to develop an Environmental Management System (EMS) in 1995, to comply with new German legislation on environmental audits. The company was certified in 1998 according to the European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and ISO 14001. That same year, Germany introduced an additional law, requiring companies to also consider the environmental impacts of their products. Studiosus responded to this new law by analysing the impacts of its organised tours on a destination's environment. In 2001, the company's EMS was revised according to EMAS II, and a detailed environmental statement was published on the company's website.

The EMS Policy Statement includes two central elements: compliance with relevant environmental regulations and a commitment to continuous improvement. The policy's action plan addresses four main areas: management, processes, products and international co-operation.

During the initial development phase, Studiosus contracted FUTOUR, a German environmental consulting company, to develop an EMS based on EMAS I standards and the company's own sustainable development policy, and to advise the company on how the EMS would apply to daily business. Studiosus then set up its own environmental committee, the Eco-Audit Team.

Implementation

Whilst the EMS policy was developed by Studiosus management with FUTOUR, the strategy and operational targets for each year are defined in co-operation with Studiosus' environment committee and the committee for social responsibility. At least once a year, these committees report to management on the results of the EMS. The internal environmental committee works with management to review the system and suggest changes for the following year.

Actions to achieve operational targets, and the so-called "continuous improvement circle", also called the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA circle), which are core elements of the EMS system, are summarised into a matrix in the company's environmental handbook. To facilitate the implementation process and ensure efficient communication, responsibility for each of the targets is assigned and stated in the matrix. Department managers are responsible for circulating the matrix among their staff, working with them on the targets and auditing the results. Staff is also kept informed of EMS activities through Studiosus' intranet, and information is available to the public on the company's web site at http://www.studiosus.de/ueber/nachhaltiges_reisen/umwelt_management/index.php.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

Benefits

The main benefit for Studiosus of implementing an EMS has been that it provides a logical and systematic base to reach operational targets each year.

Comments

Initially, it was difficult to apply EMAS requirements to the service sector, as the requirements were originally conceived for the technical industry sector. However, with the help of FUTOUR and the support of the Federal Office of Environment (BfN) in Berlin, Studiosus managed to overcome this hurdle and shape the company's policies and goals. As of yet, the company hasn't encountered any major obstacles in implementing the EMS. Its next step will be to combine its environmental management and quality systems into an 'integrated' management system.

Supply Chain Management





2.1 Atlas Voyages: Suppliers' Hygiene Control Campaign

Description of Good Practice

In November 2001, as part of a process of company re-organisation, Atlas Voyages, a Morocco-based inbound tour operator, developed a suppliers' hygiene control campaign. The company plans to implement a new contracting policy in 2004, based on specific terms and obligations related to food quality and hygiene.

The company identified 17 hotels and restaurants as its main 'repeat' suppliers, in terms of volume and frequency, to be the focus of the quality control campaign for hygiene and food quality. The London-based Cristal Society, specialists in the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) food safety system, conducted four visits to suppliers in 2002, at the request of Atlas Voyages. These visits raised suppliers' awareness of hygiene issues and their interest in improving their performance; some of the visited suppliers are now in the process of applying for HACCP certification.

Implementation

The first visit to suppliers was an audit and baseline diagnosis, followed by the provision of a document with clear policies, procedures and standards, and specific recommendations for each case. Follow-up visits were conducted to verify whether specific recommendations had been implemented and if steps had been taken to reach the outlined targets. All 17 suppliers are now fully complying with the designated standards. Regular annual visits will continue, to monitor quality and to begin implementing the next phase of development, which will focus on energy saving and waste recycling. The Quality Department analyses the progress of the campaign and creates monthly reports for each of the company's offices throughout Morocco.

To maximise effectiveness, the campaign is highlighted for all Atlas customers in a detailed questionnaire. The questionnaire includes all suppliers featured in the client's programme, whether or not they are part of the hygiene campaign, since Atlas intends to widen the process to all its suppliers and establish a new contracting policy.

Benefits

This programme has created benefits at several different levels:

- At the customer level, the quality of food and service is enhanced, an important benefit in a country where food is renowned but may also be the source of temporary troubles;
- At the supplier level, hotels and restaurants are helped to adhere to international standards of quality;
- At the official and legal level, the programme is helping Morocco build generalised rules and update national regulations to comply with international hygiene standards; and



KITCHEN AFTER RENOVATION,
HOTEL MOUNIA, FES, MOROCCO

- At a development level, the programme is creating a general awareness of the expectations of international tourists and tourism trends.

Comments

Because of Atlas Voyages' prominent market position in Morocco, this campaign has resulted in widespread awareness among suppliers, even those not working with the company. OFPPT, a national training and certification institution, confirms that there is now a long waiting list of Moroccan hotels that have applied for the HACCP audit and certification.



KITCHEN AFTER RENOVATION, HOTEL MOUNIA, FES, MOROCCO

As Morocco's objective of attracting 10 million tourists by 2010 includes a strategy for protecting the environment, the authorities would benefit from supporting consistent regulations that meet international standards. Atlas Voyages has made an important contribution toward developing such regulations for food safety and hygiene.



2.2 Aurinkomatkat-Suntours: Green Contracting for Hotels

Description of Good Practice

Aurinkomatkat, a Finnish outbound tour operator, introduced minimum environmental criteria into its partner hotels' contracts in 2003, including connection to a wastewater treatment system, and water- and energy-saving measures.

The programme, instituted in early 2000, has been implemented in phases, to give existing contract partners a two-to-three-year transition period to fulfill the criteria and understand what will be expected in the future. The first phase of the programme included monitoring of environmental performance, but did not actually require accommodation providers to meet all the requirements. By 2003, Aurinkomatkat had completed monitoring all of its existing partners, and environmental criteria are now integrated into all new contracts.

The sustainability criteria were developed based on existing tourism literature and using expertise from academia, with priority given to good water management and energy saving. The programme is now part of strategic planning for the future.

To complement the minimum criteria, the company has created a sustainability classification system for its hotels and holiday apartments, which will soon be available to customers. Currently, this information can be accessed by sales personnel who can assist customers in booking a more sustainable accommodation option. The classification system (see Box 1) will soon appear beside the traditional quality classification in Aurinkomatkat brochures and web pages. The classification system is based on a 100-point scale. By meeting the minimum criteria of connection to a wastewater treatment system, and water- and energy-saving measures, a facility can achieve the 30-point minimum required for inclusion in the sustainability programme.

Implementation

Aurinkomatkat informs its suppliers about the criteria and how to fulfill them through letters and personal visits, depending on the destination. Because many of the accommodations are family-owned enterprises, the environmental programme and the criteria are translated into the language of the destination. In some destinations, the Manager of Sustainable Tourism visits and arranges meetings for hotel owners and managers with tourism and environmental authorities.

Most of the monitoring of the programme is done by the Manager for Sustainable Tourism together with staff and agents at the destinations. The initial monitoring takes place through a checklist completed by a representative of the facility, which is then checked by Aurinkomatkat personnel at the destinations and verified annually in conjunction with the regular hotel check performed by destination staff.

In addition to the company monitoring, feedback from customers is collected through questionnaires and via the feedback mailing option at the company web sites. If there is negative feedback from customers or if issues arise that compromise the criteria, a hotel may have its environmental classification downgraded. Until December 2005, there will be no penalties for breaching the environmental criteria, because some contract partners may not fully understand what the policy and new requirements mean. However, after that, contracts will not be renewed without evidence of improvement in those practices that do not fulfill the criteria.

All Aurinkomatkat staff have been trained in sustainable tourism through lectures and round-table discussions. Training continues through discussions, an intranet site, a newsletter on sustainable tourism

and an information package. Responses to the programme from Aurinkomatkat agents and accommodation suppliers in the destinations have been positive, and some hotel managers have provided information on their environmental performance before being asked to do so.

Benefits

The programme enables Aurinkomatkat to work with its partners to achieve more sustainable tourism development. Asking contract providers to give information on their environmental performance is a way of making them more environmentally aware. By fulfilling the Aurinkomatkat criteria, an accommodation supplier can gain a competitive advantage and benefit from long-term cost savings that come from water and energy conservation strategies. In addition, Aurinkomatkat will benefit from a more positive public image in terms of sustainability issues.

Comments

One danger in integrating environmental criteria into the contracts with hotel service providers is the risk of losing touch with the socio-cultural and economic sides of sustainability. An 800-room hotel has a different scale of impact than a six-room holiday apartment hotel, and their resources are not comparable. It is important to realize that the five-star multinational resort with eco-certificates is not necessarily a 'better' choice than the family-owned apartment building that has no environmental programme but which employs the family next door and helps the local economy by encouraging tourists to buy food and other goods from local stores. Therefore, indicators for social, cultural and economic sustainability have been integrated into the programme. Achieving the minimum level in the classification system has been made easier in order to take into account small family-owned properties that cannot invest in environmental technology to the same extent as large hotels by giving an additional five points to small-scale locally owned accommodations. Thus, a family-owned six-room holiday apartment hotel in the Greek islands that uses water- and energy-saving measures and treats its sewage appropriately will be included in the Aurinkomatkat programme. Achieving a higher environmental classification will require more investment.

The next steps in the programme include the development of environmental criteria for transport companies (mainly airline and coach services). Aurinkomatkat will begin monitoring these partners in 2004 and draft a set of criteria based on the results of that monitoring.

Box 1: Aurinkomatkat's Sustainability Classification System

The classification system is based on performance on 35 sustainability measures. A hotel can receive a maximum of 100 points.

Points are awarded for:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Independent and locally owned accommodation | 5 points |
| • Environmental/sustainability policy, certificates, awards | 5 points (maximum) |
| • Wastewater treatment system | 15 points |
| • Waste management system | 1 point/measure (max. 12) |
| • Water saving and monitoring measures | 5 points/measure |
| • Energy saving measures | 10 points |
| • Renewable energy sources | 10 points |
| • Sustainable purchasing policy | 2 points/measure (max. 10) |
| • Community relations programmes | 5 points (maximum) |

Hotels can be classified at four levels:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| • Minimum level of acceptance | 30-39 points |
| • One star | 40-59 points |
| • Two stars | 60-79 points |
| • Three stars | 80-100 points |



2.3 LTU Touristik: Technical Assistance to Contracted Hotels

Description of Good Practice

In summer 2000, LTU Touristik, a German tour operator that specialises in package tours to all continents, launched a campaign to help contracted hotels improve their environmental performance. A small manual, *Das umweltfreundliche Ferienhotel* (The Environmentally Friendly Holiday Hotel) was produced to give technical assistance to contracted hotels (those that are not directly operated by LTU Touristik).

The manual was developed because experience with contracted hotels had shown that most hoteliers felt a general sense of responsibility for the environment, but needed suggestions for how they could implement good environmental practices. The manual is also intended to open a long-term dialogue with contracted hoteliers.

Topics addressed in the manual include drinking water, outside areas, energy, purchasing, waste and communication. Each section includes a general description of the problem and concise suggestions about how to solve it, presented in simple language and a user-friendly layout (see Box 1). Great importance is attached to explaining why actions should be carried out in the way described and symbols show how much time an action will take (a clock showing different amounts of time) and the investment required (a money bag filled to different levels). Many examples are given of how actions to improve the environment can save money.

The manual was developed by the company's Environmental Manager, with the assistance of a consultant, based on the results of a questionnaire distributed to contracted hotels. LTU Touristik's Environmental Department also held personal meetings with hotel managers in a number of destinations, allowing them to learn firsthand about the contracted hotels' environmental practices and environmental impacts. The first edition of the manual took four months to write and produce.

Implementation

The manual, which targets hotel managers and other staff members responsible for hotel operation, was launched in all destinations worldwide where LTU Touristik does business. Now in its 3rd edition, the 20-page manual is published in German, Greek, English, French, Italian and Spanish. In 2002, about 15,000 manuals were distributed, and several large hotel companies ordered the manual to use for staff training or reprinted it on their own.

Where possible, the manual was distributed personally to hotel managers. Tour guides, buyers and the head of the destination agency delivered the manuals during routine visits, explained LTU Touristik's objectives and offered initial suggestions for environmental practices. These representatives then reported



back on the first reactions of the hotel managers to LTU Touristik's Environmental Manager. Along with the manual, hotel managers received a personally addressed letter and a one-page questionnaire about whether they were able to use some of the practices in the manual, whether they needed further information and which environmental protection measures they already implemented. Nearly 20 percent of all contracted hoteliers have offered feedback to the company.

If hoteliers need further assistance beyond these first contacts, LTU Touristik provides it through its Environmental Department's two-person technical assistance team, thus guaranteeing a continuous dialogue with hotels that want to improve their environmental performance.

Training is offered to buyers, heads of destination agencies and tour guides, and the Environmental Manager personally updates them on the campaign. Information is also provided on what type of

technical assistance is expected from them and how to make an informal evaluation of the visited facilities. The company's web site provides all interested employees with more detailed information.



LTU'S HOTEL BROCHURE IN 5 LANGUAGES

Benefits

The benefits of the environmental manual are an improvement in the environmental performance of the contracted hotels and a long-term dialogue with the contracted hoteliers on environmental matters.

Comments

Ensuring that the manual is an effective tool for change requires offering solutions that are concrete and realistic, and that will lead to a decreasing consumption of water, energy and other resources. However, relying solely on manuals has its limitations – there is no enforcement of the voluntary practices nor incentive for their implementation. LTU Touristik's long-term goal is to be able to prove the benefits of environmental action and to establish environmental standards for holiday hotels. As a second step, LTU Touristik plans to collect all information about environmental action introduced by the hotels and report its findings to other hotels and eventually to its clients. This programme will be introduced in approximately 50 hotels and one ship operated by LTU Touristik, including the Calimera, Primasol and LTI International Hotels. Many hoteliers confirmed that they feel encouraged to improve their environmental activities because of the company's awareness of their efforts. Symbols indicate that the operation costs little and is quick.

Box 1: Extract from Hotel Brochure A tip for Dripping Taps and Leaking Toilets

Fix dripping taps and toilets immediately. One leaking toilet flush can easily lose 200 litres of drinking water a day – the equivalent of 73,000 litres a year. This measure is cheap and quick. More investment is needed to install a rain or wastewater system for flushing toilets, for example, which could replace approximately 50 litres of drinking water each day per hotel guest.



2.4 MyTravel Northern Europe: The '50 Steps Towards a Good Environment' Programme

Description of Good Practice

In 1996, MyTravel Northern Europe (MyTravel NE), Scandinavia's leading tour operator, launched the '100 Steps Towards a Good Environment' programme at its in-house hotel chain, Sunwing Resorts. Based on the results and experiences from this programme, the company developed a 50-step programme for its external hotel partners in 2000. Today, more than 70 of MyTravel's contracted hotels, both large and small, have implemented the programme. The 50 Steps Programme is included with mandatory environmental standards as a clause in the Service Agreement signed by both the hotel and MyTravel NE.

The 50 Steps Programme lists 50 environmental actions (see poster) that hotels are encouraged to adopt voluntarily. These actions are organized in 11 categories:

- Resort service & information;
- Accommodation;
- Cleaning;
- Food & beverage (kitchens);
- In-house supermarket (mini-market);
- Restaurants/Bars;
- Repair and maintenance;
- Garden, beach & pool area;
- Purchasing & storage;
- Administration & control; and
- Staff.

The 50 Steps Programme was developed internally, based on the 100 Steps Programme and the Nordic Swan eco-label's criteria for hotels. The development and promotion of the programme has been funded by MyTravel NE. The company's Environmental Director is responsible for the co-ordination of all activities.

Implementation

The 50 Steps Programme was launched by MyTravel NE at a number of hotel partner meetings in the Canary Islands, Greece, Turkey and Mallorca. MyTravel NE chose to proceed relatively slowly and involve only a few hotels at the beginning, as education of partners was and still is fundamental to the success of the programme. Today, with more experience, MyTravel NE has increased the number of hotels participating in the programme.

Once a hotel decides to implement the programme, a one-day training session is held with key personnel (maids, maintenance workers, hotel management, etc.) and the hotel receives a detailed manual to support its work. The hotel is also required to appoint a co-ordinator for the programme. A poster listing the 50 actions, printed and distributed by MyTravel NE, provides an opportunity for the hotel to communicate with its staff and customers about the programme and show how many actions have been adopted.

Experience has shown that education and involvement of staff are critical to the success of the programme. Therefore, MyTravel NE has translated the 50 Steps poster together with a more detailed description of each for display in hotel staff areas. This helps ensure that all personnel can be involved with the programme and are able to answer basic questions about the hotel's environmental work and the 50 Steps Programme.

All actions do not have to be done at once, and hotels are encouraged to ensure that each step is completed before it is checked off on the poster. MyTravel NE recognises that it will take time, possibly years, before all the 50 actions have been successfully completed and that some actions may not be possible to implement at certain hotels. The company also recommends that hotels work systematically

and start with the easy steps that do not cost too much. It is important that progress can be shown by taking new steps each year. Whilst MyTravel NE does not impose any fixed implementation time frame on hotels participating in the programme, it does require that, within the first year:

- Sewage and wastewater are treated in compliance with local laws; and
- Solid waste is separated into as many categories as can be processed by the local authorities.

Hotels that have chosen to participate in the programme are highlighted in MyTravel NE's catalogues and on its web site. Although MyTravel NE does not officially verify the implementation of the 50 Steps Programme, customer questionnaires include environmental questions, and MyTravel NE completes a yearly environmental audit of each hotel. Each year MyTravel NE also presents Environmental Awards to the hotels that receive the best results based on the customer questionnaires.

Benefits

Participation in the 50 Steps Programme has provided a number of benefits for MyTravel NE's partner hotels:

- Increased attractiveness to the growing number of environmentally aware customers;
- Contribution to the creation of a better environment for their customers and staff;
- The ability to attract more customers and secure more bookings; and
- Significant economic savings.

The programme has also encouraged more hotels to commit to integrating environmental considerations into their management practices. As more hotels start adopting environmental practices, more pressure is put on local authorities to provide for basic infrastructure, such as wastewater and solid waste processing systems.

The programme has also provided benefits for MyTravel NE, including:

- Hotels identified as participating in the 50 Steps Programme now get earlier bookings;
- Having environmentally certified products reduces the risk of losing customers that make environmental choices; and
- Communication tools, such as the 50 Steps Programme posters, have strengthened MyTravel NE's brand, demonstrating to customers that the company is about clear environmental choices and not just policies.



MYTRAVEL'S 50 STEPS PROGRAMME

Comments

The main limitation of the programme is the time required to introduce it at each hotel. The next step for MyTravel NE is to train more of its staff so that more hotels can receive training and participate in the programme.

The hotels have reacted very positively to the programme, and information, tools and training provided by MyTravel NE have made it easier for them to get started. One of the best incentives for the hotels is to receive environmental recognition in MyTravel NE's catalogues and web site. This recognition allows them to attract more customers and secure more bookings.

It is MyTravel NE's wish to be able to use externally verified eco-labels for the hotels, as these have a higher level of credibility among customers and hoteliers. Therefore, MyTravel NE is now supporting the adoption of the European Union's eco-label for hotels, the EU Flower, in all of its Sunwing Resorts.



2.5 Orizzonti: Green Checklist for Hotels

Description of Good Practice

In 1997, Orizzonti, an Italian inbound tour operator, launched its own environmental programme, 'Attenzione per l'Ambiente' (Care for the Environment), aimed at opening up a constructive dialogue on environmental issues and raising awareness among its suppliers, authorities at destinations and its customers. The objective of the programme was to generate interest amongst all stakeholders and stimulate good environmental management practices. The programme includes activities targeting the customers (with an information brochure) and decision-makers at destinations (through checklists for destinations).

An environmental checklist was also developed for suppliers, particularly for hotels and self-catering accommodation (see Box 1). The information collected through this checklist enables Orizzonti to inform customers about which facilities have implemented environmentally friendly practices and what these practices are, and to offer these facilities a marketing tool that recognises their commitment to the environment.

The checklist includes 33 questions grouped into two sections: water and energy saving, and pollution. Recipients are asked to answer each question by simply ticking 'yes' or 'no' (only two questions ask for quantitative information). Space is provided for establishments to provide further information about their environmental activities.

The checklist was developed in co-operation with Check Soluzioni per il Turismo, an Italian consultant that specialises in tourism and environmental conservation. The checklist, which took three months to develop, takes into account existing national legislation and scientific guidelines on environmental management in tourism facilities. An important reference in preparing the checklist was the European Union's Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

An assessment of hotels and self-catering accommodations in seaside and mountain resorts was conducted before defining the criteria for the checklist, in order to identify and define the issues affecting the two main types of accommodation used by Orizzonti. Some suppliers were also asked to evaluate the checklist before it was used.



INFORMING CUSTOMERS THROUGH A BROCHURE

Implementation

The programme is coordinated by Orizzonti's Environmental Monitoring Office. The checklist is sent every year to accommodation suppliers by email with a cover letter introducing the programme, summarising the results of previous years and noting that all answers will be treated confidentially. The checklist was distributed for the first time in 1997, to 700 Italian hotels and self-catering facilities. The reply rate was about 25 percent. In 1998, an additional 115 hotels and self-catering facilities in France were added, and the reply rate was about 26 percent. In 1999, about 900 checklists were distributed, and a total of 233 (about 26 percent) were completed.

The information collected from the checklists is published in Orizzonti's brochures, with an introduction explaining the

environmental programme in detail and describing the checklist. An ECO symbol highlights the hotels that have adopted ecological initiatives. The 33 questions in the checklist are numbered, and the number appears next to the ECO symbol to indicate which actions have been implemented by each of the hotels that completed the questionnaire, allowing clients to make comparisons and informed decisions when selecting their accommodation.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effective implementation of the 33 criteria is conducted through customer feedback forms and routine visits by Orizzonti staff to the contractors. A customer feedback form (pre-addressed) is included in the brochure distributed with travel documents. The forms are collected and evaluated by the Environmental Monitoring Office. When customers file negative comments, Orizzonti requests explanations directly from the hotel manager. Technical support is offered, by both Check Soluzioni per il Turismo and Orizzonti staff, for suppliers expressing an interest in improving their environmental performance.

Benefits

The checklist has had a number of benefits, including greater awareness among stakeholders and an increasing number of requests for accommodation that complies with ecological criteria. Orizzonti has also received major press coverage for its action.

Comments

The main limitation to using a checklist is that it cannot include many criteria. The principal challenge for Orizzonti is to deliver the correct message to clients, hence the use of the numbers in the brochures rather than just the general ECO logo, to allow customers to know what each establishment does. Building awareness is a long-term challenge for Orizzonti, because it takes time to engage both the supply side (in this case the hoteliers) and the customers. Planned next steps for the environmental programme include revising the 33 criteria to take into account developments in national legislation and removing those that will already be required by law. Orizzonti will also build a database with which to assess annual progress made by each establishment.

Box 1: The Orizzonti Environmental Checklist for Suppliers

Water and Energy Saving

The facility:

1. uses low-energy light bulbs.
2. uses a separate electrical circuit on each floor.
3. switches off the electrical system at night.
4. uses solar energy for the production of hot water.
5. can modify light intensity.
6. has a central vacuum system for cleaning the environment.
7. has an air conditioning system with variable capacity.
8. regularly maintains and cleans air conditioning filters.
9. has air changing systems.
10. allows clients to change the room or apartment temperature.
11. uses aerators in sink and/or shower taps.
12. has toilets with a flushing capacity of less than 12 litres.
13. collects and re-uses rain water.
14. waters green areas during the night.
15. waters green areas with grey water.
16. checks light and water consumption periodically.

Pollution

The facility:

1. has used non-toxic paints in internal decoration.
2. has sound-proof rooms.
3. is sound proof throughout.
4. has given preference to wooden furniture.
5. changes sheets and towels on request.
6. uses low environmental impact products.
7. analyses wastewater quality.
8. has a separate green area for the clients.
9. has analysed internal air quality.
10. collects solid waste separately.
11. collects glass separately.
12. collects plastic separately.
13. collects aluminium separately.
14. collects paper and cardboard separately.
15. has built the facility using mostly local inputs.
16. raises client awareness by written notes.
17. has separate smoking areas.



2.6 Premier Tours: Camps and Lodges that Support Local Conservation Projects

Description of Good Practice

Premier Tours, a US-based tour operator specialising in safari tours to Southern and East Africa, selects accommodation facilities (tented camps and lodges) in national parks and private game reserves that are committed to sustainable practices on a day-to-day basis and apply a sensible 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.

As an example, the Southern Africa 20-day tour includes:

- Makololo Plains Camp in Zimbabwe, which is jointly owned by a rural family that runs a small trading store just outside the park;
- Chitabe Camp in the Moremi Wildlife Reserve in Botswana, which donates a portion of guest revenues to a local Wild Dog Research Project;
- Vumbura Camp in the Okavango Delta in Botswana, which is part of a successful rural community development programme in which villagers have been given land to the north of the Okavango River;
- Damaraland Camp in Namibia, where the local community benefits directly by earning ten percent of the night revenues;
- Cape Town in South Africa, where a visit is included to the New Rest settlement where revenue collected from visits has been used to buy three brick-making machines;
- Phinda Game Reserve in South Africa, where 11,000 hectares of commercial farmland have been restored and re-stocked with game. Local communities now benefit from new business ventures in the harvesting of wood and medicinal plants, transport, butcheries, charcoal manufacture, brick making, and vegetable, poultry and fish production; and
- Rocktail Bay Lodge in KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, where a portion of guest revenues supports the KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation Services, a 20-year-old turtle monitoring and satellite tracking programme.

Camps, lodges and reserves are selected on the basis of a number of criteria. Brick-and-mortar establishments in environmentally sensitive areas are avoided, as are over-crowded camps, so that guests can be given personalized attention and impacts on the environment and on game viewing can be minimized. Premier Tours favours camps that:

- Employ full-time ecologists whose job it is to ensure that camps are as environmentally friendly as

Box 1: The Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust

The Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust was set up by Premier Tours' principal ground handler, Wilderness Safaris of Johannesburg, South Africa. A portion (US\$25) of every guest's fare is set aside for the trust, which provides quick access to essential funds to solve wildlife dilemmas as they arise. No administration fees are charged for running the trust. Trust Fund projects include support to:

- A turtle project at Rocktail Bay Lodge, which includes paying game scouts' salaries during the egg-laying season and the provision of satellite tracking equipment;
- Community conservation groups in the Okavango Delta, Botswana;
- Lobbyists from Botswana trying to prevent Namibia from taking too much water from the Okavango River before it reaches the Okavango Delta;
- A large-scale water project for communities on the boundary of the Kruger National Park in South Africa; and
- The formation of a Community Wildlife Conservancy in Damaraland, Namibia, in an area that is home to both the elephant and the black rhino.

possible;

- Provide electricity through solar-powered panels or have generators run only while guests are out of camp;
- Do not allow hunting, but support photographic safaris;
- Provide for a direct or indirect spin-off to local communities and/or conservation projects;
- Have lined tanks for safe sewage processing;
- Have garbage removed to appropriate places for safe disposal.

Extensive discussions are held with key partners to obtain the maximum market intelligence necessary to make sound decisions on future tour packages. This aspect of the business is vitally important, because the tour packages selected serve to portray the company's image to thousands of travel agents and consumers.



TURTLE MONITORING

Implementation

To maximize the success of this approach, Premier Tours has adopted an evaluation strategy for its service providers. Premier Tours makes frequent visits to its destinations to update information on facilities and check on adherence to acceptable environmental standards. Client feedback is an important indicator of whether the necessary criteria are being met on a constant basis. Feedback is generally obtained through questionnaires distributed at destinations. Telephone calls to clients after their return also provide valuable information.

To communicate the elements of Premier Tours' philosophy to clients, the back cover of the company's brochure explains its operating philosophy and commitment to the environment through conservation and local community involvement. In addition, clients are informed about achievements in this field during the trip, so they know that a portion of their tour fare is being donated to an environmental project. Tailor-made itineraries include a detailed explanation to customers of why each element has been selected.

Benefits

Premier Tours' policy has resulted in benefits both on the ground and for the company. In the destinations that Premier Tours visits, benefits have included community development funds in rural areas, environmental protection and enhanced longevity of the tourism industry for future generations. Specific benefits include:

- The existence of Makalolo Plains Camp and others in the area has assisted in the management of the entire southeastern section of Hwange National Park, where the park authorities previously had neither the necessary funds nor the resources to carry out this task. Some 40 water holes have been sunk in the park, allowing game to spread



HWANGE SHOP

and natural vegetation to flourish, resulting in an increase of big game such as buffalo and elephant;

- The donation of funds from Chitabe Camp to the Wild Dog Research Project has increased knowledge and understanding of these animals, which are currently facing possible extinction;
- At the Damaraland Camp in Namibia, a conservation area of more than 80,000 hectares has been created to protect the area and its wildlife, and the local community has benefited from a joint venture scheme and employment opportunities;
- Contributions by Rocktail Bay Lodge and the Wilderness Safaris Trust (see Box 1) are helping the KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation services to protect several species of marine turtles;
- All the camps contribute to fire control, road maintenance and game counts both inside and outside parks; and
- White rhinos have been reintroduced to Chief's Island in the Okavango Delta, Botswana, after being locally extinct for many years.



ECO-FRIENDLY ENERGY SYSTEMS

The main benefits for Premier Tours business have included:

- Premier Tours has been able to acquire new clients as a result of a strong reputation. The company has been selected for two consecutive years by the highly prestigious Conde Nast Traveler Magazine as one of the 'Top 100 Travel Agents' in the United States. In addition, the company has been rated by several travel guides and other publications as 'Highly Recommended'. This is in part due to high service levels provided to clients who are actively encouraged to call or e-mail the office as often as they like prior to their trip to discuss any and all aspects of the trip, a policy that has led to an extremely high repeat and referral business.
- The company recently began to pursue a new market segment, non-profit organisations such as museums, zoos and universities that promote group educational tours. In the short term, this strategy has already proven successful due to a strong reputation for service and the company's commitment to the environment and local communities.
- The company has an excellent track record in retaining employees, because of a highly stimulating work environment where new challenges are regularly met in the creation of new packages and constant education is offered on existing products, including staff educational trips. In addition, the provision of an incentive scheme in the form of profit sharing once a sales target has been reached has resulted in key talent being retained.

Comments

For a company such as Premier Tours with fairly limited resources to contribute directly to sustainable development, it is important to select the right products and suppliers. The challenge is to scrutinise past, present and projected performance in order to establish a pattern of commitment to the environment. This is best done by visiting projects and carrying out site inspections to discuss the issues with those who have an interest or stake in the project. By supporting such projects and encouraging others to get involved, product suppliers will be encouraged to re-direct their operating procedures in order to contribute to environmental quality, which is an important factor for the tourism market.

2.7 TUI Nordic: Promoting Codes of Conduct for Responsible Tourism Among Suppliers



Description of Good Practice

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), has established a close relationship with the 'Blue Village' hotels (see Box 1), in order to integrate sustainability practices into the Blue Village quality requirements. This relationship focuses particularly on promoting hotels' environmental and social responsibility and supporting the dissemination of sustainability information to customers.

The decision to pursue this partnership was based on the recognition that Blue Village customers support environmental actions, such as recycling and water saving, and that they regard engagement in responsible tourism development as part of a hotel's quality performance.

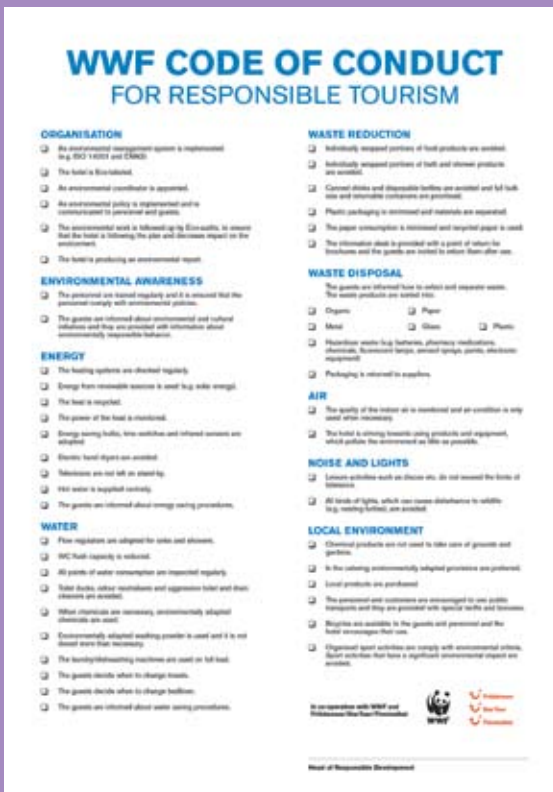
All Blue Village Hotels contracted by TUI Nordic are required to have implemented the hotel section of the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Code of Conduct for the Travel and Tourism Industry and the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism. In particular, the hotels must have in place an Environmental Management System (EMS), appoint a staff person responsible for environmental matters, have a written environmental plan, use non-polluting products, give priority to local suppliers and goods, sort solid waste, treat wastewater and introduce water-efficient hardware.

In terms of information provided to guests, Blue Village hotels have to inform their customers about UNESCO's World Heritage Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling (see Box 2) through information in the reception area and in each room and briefings by trained tour leaders and hotel employees.

The company worked with Blue Village hotel managers to create a common communication system that

BOX 1: What is a 'Blue Village' hotel?

The 'Blue Village' hotel is a quality property in sun and beach destinations, designed for families and couples. The concept was launched by TUI Nordic at the end of the 1990s to meet requirements from customers with extra needs when it comes to service. The 'Blue Village' label is earned by adopting a pre-defined quality concept. These hotels can be either independent or chain hotels. Within the premises of the hotels, customers can find leisure areas, swimming pools, bars and restaurants, playgrounds for children, etc., and activity programmes within the hotel are arranged. Blue Village customers book early, and they know what they want. The concept is often more important than the holiday destination itself. Most customers of the Blue Village hotels originate from the Nordic region and have booked their holiday with the TUI Nordic brands: Fritidsresor, Star Tour and Finnmatkat.



would allow benchmarking between hotels, support the message of sustainability to customers and become a part of the Blue Village concept. The common platform also allows tour operators to use the same information in brochures and leaflets, thus reinforcing the sustainability concepts.

In developing the sustainability requirements, the company decided to use widely accepted Codes of Conduct, as they would permit a flexible approach to communication and allow different methods of implementation. This decision was supported by the fact that TUI Nordic, together with other stakeholders, had been active in the elaboration of both Codes. In a second phase of the programme, UNESCO's Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling were included in the information platform. These guidelines were developed in collaboration between the Nordic UNESCO World Heritage Foundation and TUI Nordic.

Implementation

The quality criteria and environmental requirements for each hotel are included in the Blue Village Product Agreement, which is an appendix to the ordinary agreement signed by TUI Nordic and the hotels. Management in each hotel has been trained on the content of the Codes of Conduct and the company and hotels have developed a common model for customer communication.

Hotels monitor their own performance in implementing the Codes and report regularly to TUI Nordic's Concept Department. Each hotel also reports on performance and lessons learned at a yearly conference, giving them an excellent opportunity to exchange views and experiences. In promoting Blue Village hotels, TUI Nordic includes information on the hotels' environmental performance in its catalogues and on its web site.

Benefits

The inclusion of environmental and social elements in the Blue Village concept has had a positive effect on the image of the hotels. Surveys have shown that Blue Village customers value active commitment from the hotels and believe that information is important. By implementing environmental management systems, the hotels have also been able to reduce their operational costs, for example by lowering their water and energy consumption.

The Blue Village total quality concept has also generated benefits to TUI Nordic, including early reservations, enhanced reputation, increased client satisfaction and customer loyalty.

BOX 2: Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling

These guidelines for responsible travel were developed by the Nordic UNESCO World Heritage Foundation, in co-operation with the tourism industry.

1. Show respect for natural and cultural heritages.
2. Respect local traditions.
3. Take your time.
4. Ask before you take someone's photo.
5. In good trade, both parties are satisfied.
6. Do not give money to begging children.
7. Buy locally produced products.
8. Support local environmental activities.
9. Reduce the use of natural resources.
10. Travel in low season.

Comments

The Blue Village concept is regularly being revised and improved. At the time of writing, TUI Nordic, in co-operation with WWF, planned an Environmental Day in the Children's Club in select hotels for the winter season 2002/03. Activities such as 'green treasure hunting' and conversations about exotic, often endangered, animals were planned to be included in the programme of activities. In addition, most of the hotels are working on the development of their environmental management systems, including third-party verification.

The environmental and social components of the Blue Village concept are also being successfully implemented in other hotels, such as the Blue Star concept hotels and properties in Thailand that use the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children as an information tool for customers. As a further step in the development of Responsible Tourism principles, a process to introduce accessibility criteria for disabled people has begun, based on Equality's "Tourism for All" certification system (www.equality.nu). All Blue Village Hotels will be certified with the Equality label by the end of 2003.

3 Internal Management





3.1 Aurinkomatkat-Suntours: Staff Training on Sustainable Development

Description of Good Practice

To encourage and promote sustainable and environmentally sound tourism within its internal operations, Aurinkomatkat, a Finnish outbound tour operator, has created a sustainability awareness-raising and capacity-building training programme for staff.

The training sessions are designed for the entire head office staff, as well as all destination managers and staff. The topics addressed in the sessions are the environmental, economic, cultural and social impacts of tourism, destination-specific issues, sustainability actions for staff, and recommended practices to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The training programme was designed and developed by Aurinkomatkat's Manager for Sustainable Tourism as part of the company's overall strategy for sustainable tourism. The modules took about a week to develop and are regularly revised. The development of the training modules and the newsletter was financed from the company budget and considered part of the terms of reference of Aurinkomatkat's Manager for Sustainable Tourism.

The content of the training is not very technical, and the language used is very simple, with the aim of connecting with the audience's emotions and 'inviting' staff to work together according to the ethical guidelines that Aurinkomatkat has adopted. Training materials include a PowerPoint presentation, videos and handouts.

For the specific topic of sexual exploitation of children, the training modules are based on material from ECPAT, an international network of organisations working to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The training of key staff was done by ECPAT Sweden and the Secretariat of the Code, and follow-up training was done internally.

Implementation

The training sessions are carried out by the Manager for Sustainable Tourism. The first training, consisting of 27 sessions of two hours each for the entire head office took place in the spring of 2000. A new round is currently being planned. Additional training was given in small, dedicated groups, such as contract managers or key persons for topics such as destination management or child sex tourism. Staff was divided in groups of 20 people or less.

All destination management staff go to Finland twice a year to receive one to three hours of training, during which they get an 'up-grade' from previous sessions. In addition, all new destination staff receive basic training in sustainability issues prior to leaving for their destinations, and all new guides get a two-hour training session on sustainable tourism, with an additional hour-long session focusing on combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children. No evaluation or monitoring is carried out on the staff's performance during or after their training sessions, and no grading system is used.

Aurinkomatkat's customers and stakeholders are informed about the staff training, via the company's web site and brochures.

To support the training sessions, a staff newsletter on sustainable tourism has been produced since January 2000. The newsletter is distributed via the company's intranet when there is news to be conveyed. Six issues were produced in 2000, five in 2001 and five in 2002.

Benefits

Aurinkomatkat has seen a number of benefits of having its entire staff continuously trained and informed on sustainability issues, including:

- Staff members are now taking their own initiatives to improve sustainability performance in the office and in destinations;
- The training sessions encourage participation and the sharing of ideas;
- There is increased information on sustainability for customers;
- Aurinkomatkat has improved its relationship with partners by showing that it cares;
- There is a feeling of commitment among staff; and
- The circulation of the newsletter enables staff to be informed of the progress that is being made and what difficulties are faced.

Comments

Awareness-raising and capacity-building on sustainability is essential, as it motivates staff to work together for a better future and ensures staff commitment to developing sustainable tourism. The training programme has succeeded in part due to the high level of general awareness on these issues in Finland and the concern among experienced colleagues who have seen the development of the major destinations during the past 20 to 30 years. The only limitation of the programme has been the lack of time for employees to devote to sustainable tourism development.

The same modules from Aurinkomatkat's staff training programme are used in the company's supplier awareness-raising programmes, with particular links to Aurinkomatkat's supply chain management practices.

Aurinkomatkat is currently developing an internet-based information system on destinations that will initially be open to travel agents, and later to the public. The information channel will also be used to promote sustainable tourism and work against commercial sexual exploitation of children.



3.2 Dynamic Tours: Responsible Tourism Guidelines for Tour Guides

Description of Good Practice

Since 1992, Dynamic Tours, a Moroccan tour operator, has been heavily involved in building professional associations linked to mountain and rural tourism. The company has focused on sustainable tourism strategic planning for its European clients since 1996, a policy that has led to the implementation of ethics charters and guidelines on the environment and local communities. In 2000, Dynamic Tours developed a 'Mountain and Desert Guide's Charter' for its guides, as a mean to build awareness on their roles as liaisons between the travellers and the tour operator on:

- Environmental problems;
- Economic impacts of the groups in a given area;
- Financial resources created by the tourist activity and their allocation to the preservation of local species and heritage; and
- Social and economic development of the visited areas..

In addition to detailing the guides' responsibilities in regards to travellers, the charter offers guidelines on:

- Greeting procedures for travellers;
- Quality criteria;
- Waste control and treatment;
- Energy and water consumption;
- Behaviour with local people;
- Contribution to the preservation and restoration of cultural sites;
- Fair distribution of revenues; and
- Contribution to the local economy through travellers' purchases from local cooperatives.

The Charter was developed based on the results of an audit conducted from late 1998 to early 2000, which focused on the company's mountain and desert teams to determine:

- The impact of group travellers on the environment;
- The presence of trash on the trails and areas the groups visited;
- The level of tourist activity at visited sites; and
- Links between tourism activities and the economic development of visited areas.

Implementation

In order to support the charter's implementation by its guides, Dynamic Tours organised training sessions between 2000 and 2002, which focused on different aspects of the guide's charter, including:

- Welcome procedures;
- Animal and plant life conservation in protected areas;
- Enhancement of travellers' observation and interpretation behaviours;
- Mountain rescue procedures; and
- Conservation of rural heritage.



CAMELS IN THE MOROCCAN DESERT



A GLIMPSE MOROCCO'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Each guide gets two weeks of training sessions per year; approximately 100 Dynamic Tours guides have been trained since the beginning of the programme. The total cost of the programme, including the five training sessions, has been US\$70,000.

During each tour, the guide produces a trip report (using a standard form), outlining how well guidelines and procedures were applied in the different areas the group visited. The trip reports are assessed by the marketing and operational managers. Throughout the trip, the guides and local team meet with local authorities, non-governmental organisations and/or village association representatives, to build awareness on the environment, help in existing projects and identify actions or programmes to implement.

Benefits

Dynamic Tours' efforts to promote sustainable tourism have led to the building of a high degree of awareness among local authorities on the benefits of controlled tourism development in fragile areas. Co-operation between Dynamic Tours, its clients and local people has helped to promote clean-up operations in visited areas, waste collection and treatment and other environmental programmes. Travellers who see these good practices frequently request information on how they can contribute to responsible development efforts.

Comments

Morocco's goal of 10 million tourists by 2010 requires that all projects include an integrated development strategy for a safer, cleaner environment, and awareness of the negative impacts of uncontrolled poorly planned development is growing. Other tour operators in Morocco are learning from Dynamic Tours' experiences in promoting responsible tourism and are now adopting their own responsible practices, with the understanding that collective action is essential to sustainable development of tourism, especially in remote and sensitive areas.

The company has begun an awareness and audit campaign geared toward all parties concerned, and information will soon be available to all travellers in Morocco. In addition, regional projects for the development of tourism in protected areas (national parks) are being implemented.



3.3 TUI Nederland: Station Centraal – The Paperless Experience

Description of Good Practice

In December 2002, TUI Nederland, the market leader in the Dutch travel industry and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), opened the doors of Station Centraal, a unique travel store that seeks to improve customer satisfaction, increase sales and profit margins and substantially reduce paper waste.

Instead of being a static administrative booking centre for holiday products, like many regular travel agencies, Station Centraal is a multimedia experience centre, where people get informed and inspired to travel around the world.

Station Centraal is located in the old train station in Amersfoort, which was chosen for its central location and status as the fastest growing municipality in the Netherlands. The travel store offers special holiday products from both mainstream and sustainable tour operators, as well as its own themed and tailor-made products under the brand name of Lissone Lindeman. The centre has a travel bookstore, a restaurant in the style of a train dining car, a meeting and reading room and a luxury cruise and train department.

To achieve its goal of a paperless working environment, Station Centraal has developed its sales processes and administrative recording with the latest information technology. All information concerning a customer and trip, including basic data, notes, complaints, bills, insurance claims, etc., is recorded digitally, rather than in files or on paper documents.

Implementation

The paperless system is managed through the Alexandria Content Management System. This system is combined with scanning equipment, allowing Station Centraal to store and link all e-mails, files, faxes, bills and signed confirmations to a customer's file, which can be searched

with system criteria. Alexandria has been linked to I-Garda, the Internet version of the Garda reservation system normally used by Dutch travel agencies.

Station Centraal has also developed a Customer Relations Management programme, which will store valuable customer information, such as interests, hobbies and previous countries visited. This data is gathered from every customer who visits Station Centraal or who registers for the digital newsletter through www.stationcentraal.nl.



ONE OF THE SIX 'COCOONS' TO SEDUCE PEOPLE TO TRAVEL In addition to paperless administrative data



recording, Station Centraal is also moving toward printing on demand, a process whereby tailored information is printed according to the needs of the customer, eliminating the need for large numbers of expensive and detailed brochures. Station Centraal has so far introduced printing on demand for the holiday products of Lissone Lindeman, its in-house tour operator.



THE EATING FACILITY WITH A FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION 'WINDOW' FOR DESTINATION DOCUMENTARIES

Benefits

A principal benefit of Station Centraal's specialised paperless systems has been the significant reduction in paper waste at the centre:

- The use of the digital content management system has resulted in an estimated reduction in paper waste of about 37,500 pages, which equals about 187 kilograms (412 pounds). This estimation is based on 7,500 customer files each consisting of five pages, which weigh five grams per page.
- The use of printing on demand for Lissone Lindeman holiday products has resulted in an estimated reduction in paper waste of about 780 kilograms (1,720 pounds) in one year. This estimate is based on the average weight of a travel brochure of 750 grams (1.7 pounds), handed out 20 times per week. The on-demand printed information for Lissone Lindeman averages about three pages.

Additional benefits have included:

- Improvement of business processes due to the newly developed IT software;
- New marketing opportunities with the Customer Relations Management database, which gives Station Centraal insight into travel market trends and potential customers; and
- Increased customer satisfaction from the one-on-one relationship Station Centraal can offer to customers through information technology.



THE FACADE OF STATION CENTRAAL,
THE EXPERIENCE TRAVEL STORE
OF TUI NEDERLAND

Comments

Since Station Centraal only recently opened and the new processes are still being implemented and altered where needed, it is difficult to provide additional quantitative results of the reductions in paper use. Nevertheless, Station Centraal demonstrates that it is possible for travel stores and agencies to substantially reduce the use of paper with a new business approach and modern information technology.



3.4 TUI Nordic: Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children

Description of Good Practice

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), recognising its responsibility towards the environment and the communities in which it operates, supports the work of ECPAT (see Box 1), a worldwide organisation combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, by implementing ECPAT's Code of Conduct in its operations.

The Code of Conduct for tour operators in relation to the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in travel and tourism was developed in 1998 by ECPAT, in collaboration with TUI Nordic and other stakeholders.

Signatories to the Code of Conduct commit themselves to:

- Include the aim of working against CSEC in their policy statements;
- Train staff on how to combat CSEC;
- Provide information about CSEC to customers;
- Put pressure on suppliers by including a clause against CSEC in their contracts (with hotels, for example);
- Provide information to key people and organisations by creating a network in destinations to raise awareness among local people; and
- Annually report the company's achievements to the Code Secretariat.

Implementation

TUI Nordic's actions to implement the code include:

- Official recognition in the company's responsible tourism development policy statement of the connection between tourism and CSEC, and of the company's support to ECPAT;
- Delivery of training modules to all staff, including background information on child abuse and exploitation, information on ECPAT and argument training (to respond to arguments that are frequently used to try to absolve tour operators of responsibility);
- Distribution of information to all customers through brochures, leaflets and the company web site; and
- Awareness-raising programmes for customers, during welcome meetings, and in hotel books and information leaflets in four pilot destinations (Brazil, Dominican Republic, India and Thailand). An in-flight video is shown to customers and a specific clause is included in hotel contracts.

The company's efforts are supported by five ambassadors, who have been trained by ECPAT/Sweden. These ambassadors were highly involved in launching TUI Nordic's policy statement. The company prepared its own training module, which became a required part of training for overseas staff. A free copy of the book *Rosario is Dead* by Swedish author Majgull Axelsson is also distributed to employees and is a compulsory part of the training session.

In pilot destinations, selected in collaboration with ECPAT, TUI Nordic works with hotel suppliers. In particular, a clause is included in all contracts with suppliers in pilot destinations explaining TUI Nordic's

Box 1: ECPAT

ECPAT (initially End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism and now End Child Prostitution and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) was founded in Thailand in the early 1990s, to respond to the sexual exploitation and trade of children. The group now has offices in 45 countries and addresses child exploitation worldwide. In 1996, a world congress in Stockholm brought together 122 countries that adopted a declaration and an agenda for action, which includes the responsibility of the tourism industry. In 2002/2003, ECPAT conducted a survey of 1,000 individuals about their knowledge and attitudes on CSEC, which showed high levels of awareness and indicated that people feel that CSEC has a strong connection to poverty and that the problem is most frequent in Asia and in Eastern Europe. For more information, see www.ecpat.org

involvement in this issue and highlighting the fact that the company will immediately cancel any agreement or contract if abuse results from a hotel employee acting as an intermediary (see Box 2). Since the introduction of this clause, no contracts or agreements have been cancelled.

Co-operation with ECPAT and TUI Nordic's progress on this issue is continuously reported back to the organisation and to its customers, using brochures and internal news materials.

Benefits

ECPAT has reported that the number of pedophiles in Thailand is decreasing. However, this decrease comes at the expense of other countries, particularly in Central America, where ECPAT is only now getting more strongly involved.

TUI Nordic has seen a number of benefits from its involvement with the ECPAT tour operators' Code of Conduct, including:

- Increased credibility in its commitment to the development of responsible tourism;
- Increased customer interest in this commitment. A number of letters and comments from customers saying that they like the actions and commitment undertaken have been received;
- Appreciation from employees, who are proud that their company is addressing this topic; and
- Positive reactions from local suppliers and local communities.



TOUR OPERATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT
AGAINST SEX TOURISM

Comments

During the winter season 2002/03, a customer survey on attitudes towards the problem with CSEC was conducted in Phuket, Thailand, by a master's student, to compare levels of awareness among Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian tourists about the Code of Conduct. All the respondents knew about the CSEC problem, however only eight people (all Scandinavians) said they had been informed by their tour operator about CSEC and the tour operators' measures to combat the problem. The rest of the respondents, regardless of nationality, said they had received information about CSEC via the media.

The main challenge of this initiative was to take the first step, understand the problem and define TUI Nordic's role in the process. ECPAT/Sweden contributed greatly to this process. The enthusiasm of the company's employees was critical to the success of the programme, which has been widely implemented by tour operators throughout Europe and is compulsory for members of the Tour Operators' Initiative.

Box 2: Extract on Sexual Exploitation of Children from TUI Nordic's Hotel Contract

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is an increasing problem. Specifically, there is a growing problem with child prostitution in tourist destination countries. TUI Nordic recognises that the problem is linked with tourism, and our firm belief is that sexual exploitation of children is a fundamental abuse of a child's human rights and dignity. For this reason, TUI Nordic has decided to contribute to the task of tackling the problem and thus protecting children from sexual exploitation. A way for the tourist sector to achieve this is by promoting good practices and self-regulation. In this work, we recognise the influence we have as a major player in the tourist sector. Even if we have no reason at all to believe that this kind of abuse has been carried out in your hotel, hotels often are the scene of the abuse, whether we like it or not. For this reason, we urge you to support us in the campaign against this problem. We believe that, by staying vigilant and taking a few simple steps, you will ensure that neither your hotel – nor its good reputation – are compromised. We would also like to take the opportunity to inform you about our position if we learn that commercial child abuse has taken place at a hotel contracted by TUI Nordic. If the abuse has been a result of an employee at the hotel acting as intermediary, we will, with immediate effect, cancel any agreement or contract.



3.5 VASCO Travel: Motivational Training for Tour Guides

Description of Good Practice

As part of its commitment to social responsibility, VASCO Travel, which offers travel services and tours in Turkey for about 200,000 customers per year from Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, has provided motivational training on sustainable tourism to its guides since the firm was established in 1995. The training seminars include sessions on personal, social and economic aspects of development; the effects of tourism on social, economic and cultural development; sustainable development in tourism; and preconditions and obstacles for intercultural learning and understanding

The training is part of VASCO's overall Environmental Management System, which received ISO 14001 certification in 2002. The company's goal of 'respect for natural, cultural and social elements during tours' reflects its recognition that a tourist destination consists not only of sea, sand and natural wonders, but also includes the local population's traditions and customs, and the commitment to preserve its cultural identity. VASCO believes that tourism offers the opportunity for creating a bridge of understanding between different people and cultures and seeks to convey that belief to its guides through the training sessions.

The motivational seminars were created to help guides:

- Be aware of their key role as mediators in an intercultural learning process;
- Be open-minded to other people, especially those from a different culture;
- Verify and improve their abilities and communication skills;
- Recognise their own prejudices and those of the tourists, and hence correct them;
- Better understand tourists – their cultural backgrounds, personal expectations and attitudes;
- Help tourists understand everyday life in the host country; and
- Work creatively in a team of colleagues.

For example, one of the daily excursion tours offered by the company goes to a small agricultural town in the mountains, whose inhabitants are mostly conservative and fairly religious, and where sights



VASCO TOUR GUIDE WHILE CONDUCTING AN EXCURSION

visited include a bazaar and mosques. The guides use the skills gained in their training to explain the importance of local customs and traditions and to encourage tourists to show the necessary respect in their actions and attire.

Implementation

The German-based Study Group for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung) conducts training sessions for VASCO tour guides, transfer escorts and hotel representatives. Each seminar lasts for six days and includes videos, simulation training and the assignment of practical topics, which are then presented individually by each participant at the end of the session.

Since the beginning of the programme, VASCO has provided training for 123 guides; in 2003, 15 guides will participate in motivational seminars.

Successful completion of the course results in certification as an 'intercultural teacher'. The Study Group also awards grades to the participants. Seminars take place during normal working days, at mutually convenient times for VASCO and The Study Group, and are conducted in German. The organisational details – including hotel reservations, transfers, booking of a conference room and acquiring the necessary equipment – are coordinated between VASCO's Human Resources Department and the Study Group.



VASCO TOUR GUIDES DURING A MOTIVATION SEMINAR

Customer feedback is gathered through a questionnaire distributed to all clients during their vacations by the tour operators with which VASCO does business. The responses are collected before departure and are the results are evaluated at the tour operators' headquarters before being sent to VASCO for review and analysis. Letters of complaint or praise also serve as a useful tool for evaluating successful and unsuccessful handling of customer issues. The Study Group also evaluates its own success in conducting the training. Customers and other stakeholders are informed about these training courses via the VASCO web site and brochures.

Benefits

Interviews with guides following the motivational seminars clearly show a positive change in their views of tourism and tourists. Trained guides learn how to interpret tourists' expectations better, and communication between guide and tourist is enhanced, increasing clarity, reducing the chance for prejudices or misunderstandings, and promoting intercultural learning.

Comments

Because the programme is essentially a long-term process of educating or re-educating people to deal with other people, results can be difficult to measure. However, no overwhelming challenges have been met so far, mainly because the participants are excited about the opportunity to take part in the training.

4 Product Management and Development



BRITISH AIRWAYS
Holidays



discoveryinitiatives
Aspirational travel that supports conservation worldwide



MY TRAVEL
Northern Europe



Studiosus



4.1 British Airways Holidays: Life Cycle Assessment of a Key Destination

Description of Good Practice

To improve the planning in one of its key destinations, St. Lucia, British Airways Holidays (BAH), the airline's wholly owned subsidiary, and a long-haul and city-break specialist, undertook a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of the island's tourism products, to assess it as a holiday destination and develop recommendations for how to promote sustainable tourism.

An LCA is a form of analysis used to identify inputs and quantify environmental impacts from 'cradle to grave'. In general, the LCA framework is based on four basic components:

1. **Goal definition and scope:** The tourism product(s) are identified and the required level of detail is defined. This stage sets the time and resource constraints that will determine the depth of the study.
2. **Inventory analysis:** The inputs and outputs associated with the products – energy and raw materials used, emissions to the atmosphere, discharges to water and depositions to land – are quantified. This is known as conducting a life cycle inventory (LCI), which can be used on its own to assess environmental issues of concern.
3. **Impact assessment:** The environmental impacts identified in the LCI are reviewed and the data are classified, characterized and evaluated so that different environmental impacts can be compared and weighted in importance. The impacts addressed include water pollution, air pollution, noise, aesthetic damage, habitat loss, natural resource exploitation and disruption of natural cycles.
4. **Improvement assessment:** The results are reported and the need and opportunities to reduce the impacts of the product on the environment are then evaluated. The feasibility of implementing changes to lessen these impacts are then considered.

Implementation

BAH developed its LCA methodology for tourism products based on the application of the process in other industry sectors and guidelines produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (Life Cycle

Box 1: Results of the St. Lucia LCA

The UK CEED study found that the greatest environmental impacts from tourism came from infrastructure development and inadequate waste management. The study recommended that BAH review the environmental performance of its suppliers, particularly hotels.

The study determined that the general impacts of tourism on St Lucia include:

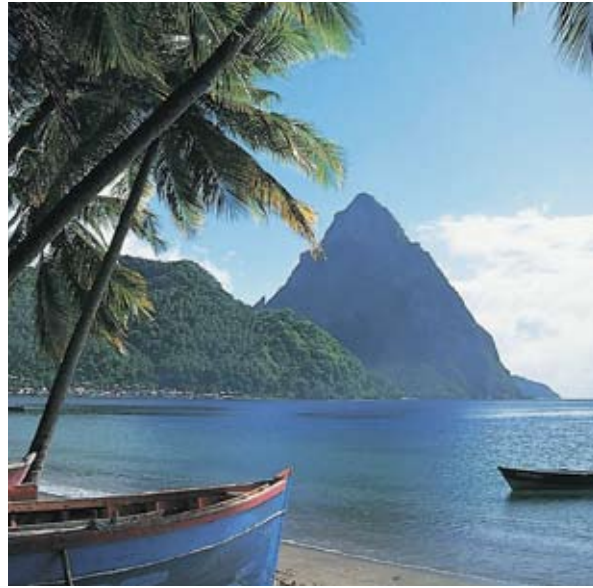
- Land consumption, habitat loss and disturbance to ecosystems caused by site and infrastructure development;
- Destruction of coral reefs through increased sedimentation from land clearing for the construction of hotels and roads, and artificial beach maintenance;
- Water pollution from hotel wastewater treatment plants failing or operating below optimum capacity;
- Inadequate solid waste management and disposal systems, which have led to the leaching of pollutants from landfill sites; and
- Water pollution and anchor damage to reefs caused by water sports.

UK CEED also reported on the environmental impacts of all-inclusive resorts, noting that 'All-inclusive resorts are generally associated with significant environmental impacts. One example is the habitat loss resulting from the construction of the Jalousie Resort between the Piton peaks in an area nominated for World Heritage Site status. However, whilst all-inclusives tend to have greater environmental impacts than most conventional hotels in St. Lucia, in most instances this is not because of the type of holiday package per se. Rather, it is because all-inclusive resorts tend to be owned by international chains operating larger scale resorts, which occupy land on the beachfront. The evidence suggests that the environmental impacts of conventional hotels of a comparable size on the shoreline are of a similar scale. Indeed, several all-inclusives in St. Lucia were originally built as conventional hotels and Jalousie has been converted to a non-inclusive.'

Assessment: What it is and how to do it, UNEP IE, Paris, 1996). The methodology was then tailored to the demands of the tourism sector by an external consultant, the UK Centre for Economic Development (UK CEED).

The LCAs were performed by UK CEED, which obtained the necessary information through research channels, the World Bank, academic reference material, regional organisations, on-island research and local contacts. The assessments were made with the support of the local tourist boards.

The results of the assessments, which included an evaluation and recommendations for the tour operator, the host government and tourists, were published and presented to hoteliers and more than 34 St. Lucian organisations (see Box 1).



ON THE BEACH IN ST. LUCIA

Benefits

The benefits of the LCAs have included environmental improvements in St. Lucia and better quality holidays for visitors. For example, as a result of the recommendations of the LCA, the St. Lucian government developed national policies on waste management using funds from a tourism tax. New types of tourism such as nature and heritage tourism have also been developed.

The LCA included a special report on the impacts of all-inclusive hotels on the economy, environment and society (see Box 1). This report enabled BAH to join the debate on the benefits of all-inclusive holidays. In the longer term, tourism in St. Lucia may benefit from better tourism planning and a greater awareness of the impacts of tourism. A second LCA is planned for 2003 to provide a basis for comparison.

Comments

One of the challenges in implementing the LCA was convincing stakeholders that it really was needed, even though it was not required by legislation. The study would not have succeeded without good leadership and a long-term view. Press criticism of tourism in the island reinforced the need for the study, which had the full support of the St. Lucia Tourist Board.

However, LCAs are not easy to conduct. The technique relies on quantitative data that enable comparisons to be made of the environmental performance of different products, such as a comparison of energy and water consumption for all-inclusive and conventional holiday products. These data are often hard to find or unavailable for holiday products, and so new research may be needed. For example, a detailed transport survey was required to determine whether transport demands are higher for all-inclusive or conventional holidays. Similarly, a study was required to assess the demand for different types of excursions for the two types of holiday.



4.2 British Airways Holidays: Offsetting CO₂ Emissions from Air Travel

Description of Good Practice

In 2001, British Airways Holidays (BAH), the airline's wholly owned subsidiary, and a long-haul and city-break specialist, decided to adopt measures to address the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions related to the air travel component of its packages. The company developed a partnership with Climate Care, a non-profit organisation that seeks to mitigate the environmental impacts of CO₂ emissions by funding renewable energy, energy efficiency and rainforest reforestation projects.

Implementation

As a first step, British Airways Holidays contributed £10,000 (15,105 Euro, US\$17,342) for projects selected and managed by Climate Care, offsetting approximately 1,500 tons of CO₂, or the equivalent of 12,000 person hours of flying. This contribution was incorporated in the price of a holiday and is referred to in the BAH brochure. Climate Care invested these funds in three projects:

- A low-energy light bulb project in Mauritius (10 percent);
- A reforestation project in the Kibale rainforest in Uganda (40 percent); and
- A hydroelectric project in Bulgaria (50 percent).

Benefits

BAH has seen a number of benefits from its partnership with Climate Care, including:

- A clear demonstration of the company's environmental responsibility;
- A way to address the main environmental impacts of their holidays (air travel);
- Development of a successful first experience in offsetting CO₂ emissions; and
- The opportunity to differentiate its products from those of similar operators.

In addition, there have been a number of environmental and social benefits generated through the Climate Care projects that BAH has supported, including:

- Less energy use and lower fuel bills for the users of the low-energy light bulbs in Mauritius;
- Re-creation of a valuable wildlife habitat in Kibale, Uganda, and employment for up to 1,000 people from local communities, as well as carbon sequestration; and
- Significant energy savings in Bulgaria by replacing an inefficient coal power station with a hydroelectric plant, and income for the local community.



CLIMATE CARE SEEKS TO
MITIGATE IMPACTS OF
CO₂ EMISSIONS

Comments

Further plans are being made to more actively involve BAH's customers in the programme and to offer them the opportunity to offset their specific flights' greenhouse gas emissions with the Climate Care 'Carbon Calculator' (www.co2.org). For just 80 pence (1.20 Euro, US\$1.39) per passenger per hour of air travel, BAH passengers would be able to make their flights 'climate neutral'.

British Airways has also put a number of measures into practice to reduce the impacts of its operations, for example reducing the running time of the Auxiliary Power Units that provide services for aircraft on the ground, saving about 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

BA believes that emissions trading is the best medium-term solution for aviation to reduce the environmental impact of its operations and has joined the UK Emissions Trading Scheme. BA is on track for a 30 percent improvement in fuel efficiency relative to 1990 levels by 2010.

4.3 Discovery Initiatives: Holiday Programmes that Support Local Development and Conservation



Description of Good Practice

Discovery Initiatives, a UK-based outbound nature tour operator, offers holidays and tours that support wildlife and conservation. Tour design is therefore a crucial step in the company's sustainability strategy.

The three key holiday types offered by Discovery Initiatives are:

- Footprint Holidays that 'don't cost the Earth' are relaxing or special interest tours that use organisations, operations or accommodations which make an active contribution to their local communities and their environment, and encourage fair trade. For example, a walking tour of Dominica, in the Caribbean, offers a chance to go off the beaten track to little-visited parts of the island and stay in all locally owned hotels and lodges.
- Insight Holidays allow individuals or small groups of holidaymakers to experience and gain a privileged insight into wildlife or communities as part of an overall holiday itinerary. For example, in Namibia, tours visit community wildlife conservation initiatives run by local people and contribute \$350 per client to these programmes.
- Discoverer Holidays allow individual holidaymakers to get actively involved as field assistants in specific research. For example, a tour in Kalimantan, Indonesia, on the island of Borneo, allows travellers to work with the leading orang-utan study programme in the world and contributes \$1,000 per client to the Orang-utan Foundation in Tanjung Putung National Park.

These holiday programmes are designed to use tourism as economic leverage with local communities, to support them in protecting their environment and culture. Each programme is designed to fulfill a number of strategic objectives, including:

- Promoting sustainable tourism;
- Supporting conservation efforts;
- Making financial contributions to wildlife and development agencies and conservation initiatives;
- Raising awareness about conservation issues; and
- Ensuring that the benefits of the tour programmes stay in the host countries.

The holidays are based on partnerships that increase awareness and encourage grassroots environmental action, offering a method of supporting small-scale and local community projects in a sustainable and proactive way. At the same time, tourists get practical opportunities to experience or become actively involved in projects that deliver credible outputs and to see and understand ecological or development issues that are of interest to them.



COMMUNITY TRACKERS

The holiday programmes generate funds directly (through fees paid by the participants) and indirectly (through increased membership and interest in co-operating organisations, legacies and other fund-raising opportunities).

The design of the holiday programmes in the three categories relies mainly on calls for proposals to be submitted by non-governmental organisations, international agencies or local tour operators. Proposals can be submitted for holiday programmes or research projects.

To minimise paper work, Discovery Initiatives offers to discuss ideas and questions with potential proponents before they prepare a full proposal. Based on this informal exchange, proponents are then asked to fill in a proposal based on a pre-defined outline and submit it, along with relevant material, literature and photos. On receiving the summary, Discovery Initiatives looks at its potential for inclusion in its programme, and, if suitable, a more detailed discussion and investigation will be entered into with the project proponent. Once a decision has been made to include an organisation, tour or proposal in Discovery Initiatives' programme it may be necessary for a Discovery representative to carry out a detailed reconnaissance of the area before it is placed in the brochure.

Proposals for all three types of holidays should highlight:

- The unique feature of the programme (the 'eye-catcher');
- A description the benefits of the proposal in terms of :
 - Planning the programme or itinerary so that it aids cultural understanding and interaction;
 - Ensuring the permission, support and participation of the local communities, recognising that theirs must be a quality experience as much as our own;
 - Avoiding any actions that offend our hosts or disrupt their livelihoods;
 - Using local services, resources and expertise wherever possible, to support local trading enterprises;
 - Ensuring the highest standards of environmental stewardship both in the field and en route; and
 - Ensuring that participants are well-briefed and prepared, and are able to have a well-informed, enlightening and enjoyable experience.

For Footprint or Insight Holiday programmes, applicants should also highlight a detailed itinerary, fitness requirements, names and expertise of tour leaders, programme costs and minimum persons required.

For Discoverer Holidays, proponents should include information about project personnel, timing, local ecosystems, research objectives and methodology, project justification, expected programme outputs, lists of required tasks and useful skills, fitness requirements, funding and costs. Proposals for Discoverer Holidays projects are reviewed according to specific criteria (see Box 1), and research projects are discussed with external experts and referees. All research proposals are subject to scrutiny with regards to their marketability, participant tasks, logistic feasibility and output.

Implementation

Because of the uniqueness of Discovery Initiatives' holiday programmes, communication with customers is a priority. Customers are informed about the projects at various stages of their holiday, including:

BOX 1: Project Criteria for Discoverer Holidays

Any proposed Discoverer Holiday should:

- Promote viewing, understanding, management and preservation of threatened habitats and endangered species on land and sea. These include monitoring, behavioural studies and protection of wild population.
- Contribute to sustainable development by producing measurable results (for example by engaging in activities such as community forestry, alternative energy and environmentally sound technologies).
- Concentrate on the preservation of ethnic diversity and culture (such as anthropological studies, recording traditional knowledge, cultural change, ethonobotany).
- Seek to raise awareness of the effects of deforestation, ozone depletion and pollution of all forms.

In addition, the projects should have the following characteristics:

- Take an interdisciplinary approach;
- Foster partnership between NGOs, institutes and local communities;
- Focus in particular on developing countries and countries in transition;
- Have full backing of the supporting organisation;
- Have marketability to attract individual and corporate participation;
- Encourage sustainability at the end of the project's life;
- Enhance employment opportunities locally,
- Complement and not supplement conservation efforts;
- Have specific and quantifiable outputs or actions;
- Require partnership in terms of funding or expertise.
- Have a duration from one month to five years; and
- Be revised on an annual basis.

- Before the visit, through literature and web sites, and a comprehensive trip dossier explaining the visited region, the host partner's role, the project, local language and culture and the clients' code of conduct;
- During the visit, through tour leaders, recognised wildlife experts, researchers and local experts who add local insight and knowledge; and
- After the visit, by becoming members of the host conservation organisations, and through a newsletter and the web site, lectures, talks and presentations and feedback requests.



KILLER WHALES IN THE SUN

Funds are transferred to the projects on a per participant or lump sum basis to cover project costs. Typical funds range from US\$150 to 500 per participant or a lump sum of US\$3,000 to 15,000. Other sources of income (such as from sponsoring organisations) are available to specific projects in addition to the participation fees. Discovery Initiatives also provides matching funds for specific projects and in-kind support. Initially, Discovery Initiatives did not monitor its payments to wildlife agencies, trusting in their own trustees and knowledge of how best to spend the funds. However, this policy is now being reviewed, with the goal of having greater influence on directly supported projects.

Since 1997, Discovery Initiatives has collaborated and partnered with 37 NGOs, including WWF UK, Rainforest Concern UK, Integrated Rural Development of Nature and Conservation (Namibia), Rivers Canada, Mongolian Association for Conservation of Nature, Big Game Parks (Swaziland), Chobe Wildlife Society (South Africa), Pacific Whale Foundation (Hawaii), Conservation International (USA), the Jane Goodall Institute (USA) and Orang-utan Foundation UK.

Benefits

Discovery Initiatives' tours have resulted in a number of benefits for conservation, local communities, the company and clients.

In the last four years, Discovery Initiatives' tours have contributed US\$300,000 to conservation initiatives and agencies around the world, an amount equal to 6 percent per annum of company revenue.

Benefits to local communities go beyond the direct financial contributions generated from the project. Communities also benefit from a greater sense of ownership and pride in their environment, as the tours demonstrate that the local environment can be an important economic resource.

The holiday programmes have also greatly benefited Discovery Initiatives' business, which grew more than 25 percent in 2002.

Finally, Discovery Initiatives' clients benefit from these holidays through enhanced cultural understanding, a fresh perspective and greater environmental awareness and stewardship. Customer feedback on these trips is overwhelmingly positive, and the company has high levels of repeat business.



4.4 MyTravel Northern Europe: Eco-Audits of Destinations

Description of Good Practice

In 1998, MyTravel Northern Europe (MyTravel NE), Scandinavia's leading tour operator, decided to expand its environmental audit for hotels to local authorities in its visited destinations, as the actions of local authorities often define the conditions under which hotels have to operate. If the community does not provide separate treatment for sorted waste, for example, it is difficult for a hotel to handle waste in an environmentally sound way. MyTravel NE therefore concluded that it might be able to make an important difference by conducting destination-wide eco-audits.

The audits are intended to:

- Assess the environmental performance of the destinations it visits;
- Increase MyTravel NE's and its customers' knowledge of the environmental situation at the destinations;
- Provide local authorities with information about what MyTravel NE has found important in relation to the environment; and
- Open up a dialogue with local authorities at destinations, and support and facilitate the implementation of environmental action plans.

MyTravel NE conducts its destination eco-audits using a questionnaire covering 30 issues (see Box 1). The questions asked also reflect the priorities in MyTravel NE's environmental policy: fossil fuel (energy), chemicals, nature and biodiversity, handling of waste and saving water.

In order to determine the most important questions for local authorities, MyTravel NE performed an environmental review of one of its most important destinations (Rhodes) and one hotel in 1995. Information provided by local authorities, hotels, external consultants and MyTravel NE employees was used to draw up the questionnaire.

Implementation

In 1998, each area manager was given responsibility for approaching the local authority, identifying the right contact person and, together with that person, completing the questionnaire. The area managers were trained in advance on the environmental issues covered in the questionnaire.

In 1999, only 12 of the 50 destination audit forms sent out to MyTravel NE area managers were completed, principally because it was difficult for the area managers to find the right person, and it was hard for a single tour operator to get sufficient attention from the local authorities.

After the first year, the area managers suggested ways of improving the questionnaire, which has now been updated. In 2002, MyTravel NE contacted local authorities in 44 destinations by sending a personal letter to the responsible person at the local authority explaining that the programme aims to determine how tour operators and local authorities can work together to promote sustainable tourism development. Fourteen destinations returned the completed questionnaires.



SUPPORTING WASTE SEPARATION

Information gathered through the questionnaires is shared internally, to support MyTravel NE business decision-making processes. In particular, the information is evaluated to identify how far the destinations have progressed and their relative performance. The results of the analysis are for internal use only, although key information is also made available to the public through the company web site. The programme is coordinated by MyTravel NE's Environmental Director at headquarters.

Box 1: MyTravel NE's Destination Eco-Audit Questionnaire

Policies and Planning

1. Does the local authority have a working environmental policy in place? (If so, please enclose.)
2. Is there any environmental legislation that is applicable to the destination? (Please enclose a list)
3. Have environmental requirements been integrated into local tourism development? (If so, in what way?)
4. Does the local authority employ any environmental officers? If so please give the name for the contact-person
5. Is environmental awareness established in the media and/or schools?
6. Are there any activities or groups working in the area to promote environmental awareness or protection? (Please write down names of the group and contact persons if possible)
7. Are there any measures planned to reduce traffic pollution and congestion? (if so which ones?)
8. Are there special roads/trails for bicycles?
9. Is unleaded petrol available?
10. Is non-fossil petrol available?
11. Is there a planning system for land use in the region that addresses environmental problems such as species depletion, deforestation or soil erosion?
12. Does the destination feature any nature reserves, national parks or biosphere reserves? (Numbers/ names/location?)

Water

13. Have local beaches been designated as European Union Blue Flag beaches?
14. Is the quality of bathing water regularly tested? (How often and at how many sampling points?)
15. How are the results of these tests made available to the general public?
16. Is tap-water drinkable and of good quality?
17. Is the quality of drinking water regularly monitored? (How often and at how many sampling points?)
18. Where does the tap water come from? (natural sources, desalination plants, imported)
19. Are there any water-saving measures in place or planned for the future? Please give examples.
20. Is all wastewater discharge connected to biological treatment facilities? If not, how is the wastewater treated?
21. If so, do the treatment facilities also precipitate phosphorus?
22. Does the treatment system have the capacity to take care of all wastewater produced during high season?
23. Is wastewater re-used? (If so, for what is it used?)

Waste

24. Are there any designated landfill sites and/or waste incineration plants? (Numbers/types/locations?)
25. Are there any special routines in place for the handling of environmentally harmful waste, e.g. batteries, fluorescent tubes, paint containers or CFCs? (Specify which types are taken care of and how)
26. Is waste collected by category, e.g. aluminium, plastic bottles, paper, glass etc.? (Specify what fractions are collected separately and how each fraction is treated)
27. Is waste separated after collection into different categories, e.g. aluminium, plastic bottles, paper, glass etc.? (Please specify what fractions and how each fraction is treated)

Energy

28. How is electricity generated for the local community? From oil, coal, solar cells, wind power or other sources? (Please specify approximate % of each source used)
29. Are there any energy-saving measures in place or planned for the future? (Please give examples)
30. Are you interested in co-operating with us to help us reduce the effect of tourism on the environment?

Benefits

The benefits of the auditing programme include:

- A destination audit can be used to reduce the environmental impact of tour packages by highlighting regional information on the availability of resources and the handling of waste;
- Information on the environmental standards of the destination can be distributed to customers so that they are made aware of local conditions and can select destinations with low environmental impacts if they wish;
- The information obtained from the questionnaires has been used by MyTravel NE to highlight destinations where there is a water shortage, and what each guest can do to prevent or minimise environmental impacts at the destination; and
- The questionnaires send a clear message to local authorities that MyTravel NE is interested in cooperating to reduce environmental impacts from tourism and improve overall performance.

Comments

Because several tour operators that have contacted local authorities have found it to be a difficult and long-term process, MyTravel NE has proposed that tour operators interested in this approach work together. There are many benefits to working on a destination audit jointly. Local authorities are more likely to respond to joint requests from a group of tour operators and will appreciate not having to answer many different questionnaires covering the same issues. Individual tour operators will not have to unilaterally contact all the destinations, which means that more time can be spent visiting local authorities in person at each destination.

MyTravel NE next plans to analyse the best ways to make information from the audits available to customers, identify those areas in which MyTravel NE can work with destinations, and increase the number of destinations that respond to the questionnaire.

4.5 Studiosus: Environmentally Friendly Transport Services



Description of Good Practice

In 1996, Studiosus Reisen, a German tour operator that specialises in educational tours, made an environmental 'Declaration of Commitment', signed by all employees (see Box 1). The Declaration is implemented through a series of specific, short-term goals. In the field of 'product ecology', nine goals were set in 1998 for the year 2000, including five aimed at providing more sustainable transport alternatives:

- Decrease transportation energy (in megajoules) by 3 percent per traveller;
- Achieve a 3 percent increase in the number of rail-and-fly tickets by improving the catalogue information about transport possibilities;
- Increase the use of the train for reaching destinations in at least five European tours;
- Extend train travel in EU countries from 11 percent by another 3 percent; and
- Expand the range of the Studiosus 'Stop the Engine' campaign to include at least ten additional bus companies annually.

Defining these transportation goals was part of an overall company process of creating an Environmental Management System (EMS) [See case study 1.4 for more on the Studiosus EMS]. The eco-audit process, a key element of the EMS, was helpful in defining these goals, because it allowed an assessment of their feasibility. Consultations with the internal eco-audit team, information dissemination to and involvement of the employees, and discussion with external consultants were all critical factors in defining goals and actions.



POSTER FROM STUDIOSUS' 'FAHREN & FLIEGEN' CAMPAIGN

Implementation

Studiosus adopted several measures to implement the five transportation-related goals, including:

- Decreasing transport energy through the use of non-stop flights, ferries instead of buses, public transport at destinations and reduction of internal flights within a destination;
- Increasing the use of rail-and-fly tickets by incorporating them in the price of tours, establishing new contracts with local transport companies and with the German Federal Railway, and promoting their use through press releases and better presentation of information about these tickets in brochures;
- Increasing the use of train journeys by adding five additional tours to destinations not currently

- accessed by train on Studiosus tours;
- Increasing train travel in EU countries with the introduction of a new series of tours using the train, signing new contracts with local transport companies and including a comparison of the transport energy used by trains vs. planes in brochures and price promotions; and
- Expanding the Studiosus 'Stop the Engine' campaign to include at least ten additional bus companies annually. Use of the 'Stop the Engine' sign is stipulated as part of the company's contract with all bus lines. Currently about 40 companies participate in the campaign and the sign is reproduced in 11 languages, including Arabic and Chinese. Customers are informed about the campaign in their travel documents and by their tour guides and bus drivers. Monitoring is carried out by tour guides, the customers and the product managers.



POSTER FROM STUDIOSUS' 'STOP THE ENGINE' CAMPAIGN

Studiosus also sends environmental questionnaires to partners such as bus companies, airlines and shipping companies, to ensure that its contracted companies perform according to the set standards. Feedback from customers is collected through a questionnaire distributed by travel guides at the end of the tour and either collected by the guides or mailed directly to the company by customers. An annual environmental report relating to the company's ISO 14001 audit is published, summarizing the results of the programme.

Box 1: The Studiosus 'Declaration of Commitment'

We will work towards maintaining cultural diversity and preserving the natural resources of our host countries and towards supporting tourism that places equal priority on being financially rewarding, socially aware and environmentally responsible.

We will honour the interests, the independence and the drive to self-sufficiency demonstrated by the inhabitants of the countries we visit. We will respect their laws, traditions, customs and cultural uniqueness. By means of encounters with these people and information about them, we want to create a public forum which simultaneously supports human rights.

We are dedicated to cooperative partnerships with the service industries and the local inhabitants of the host countries. We will work towards fair business conditions which support all participants fairly and equally. In as many aspects of our work as possible, we want to support the active participation of local inhabitants in our tourism.

We will give our tour guides special responsibility in ensuring that environmental and social awareness is upheld on our educational tours.

We will refrain from travel, excursions and expeditions to closed regions whose inhabitants are largely uninfluenced by western civilization and to environmentally sensitive regions, unless it is certain that such travel can be undertaken without exercising any destructive influences. We will not promise our customers 'contact with "uncivilized" peoples', because we are aware of the need of such peoples to be protected.

We want to contribute to encouraging a common sense of responsibility for environmental and social issues among all participants in travel.

We are willing to develop a common Code of Ethics for Tour Operators and work towards compliance within the framework of our professional associations.

Benefits

There have been several benefits from the introduction of environmentally friendly transport policies, both for Studiosus and for the environment, including:

- Studiosus uses trains to travel to destinations much more often than the industry average, thus reducing energy consumption per client. Between 1995 and 1997, the use of trains for Studiosus tours exceeded the overall average for industry as a whole in Germany.
- The company has gained positive publicity and improved its image through the programme. Several articles in newspapers and magazines have mentioned Studiosus as ‘the tour operator deeply committed to environmentally and socially responsible travelling in the German market’.
- Feedback from tour guides, collected through special questionnaires, has been generally positive.
- The company has seen an improved environmental and social sensitivity among partners and suppliers, both in questionnaires and in discussions with Studiosus product managers through a ‘dialogue of civilizations’ (Forum der Bereisten) that has now taken place in 28 destinations.

Comments

The environmentally friendly transport services discussed in this case study are one of the six sections of Studiosus’ environment matrix [see Case Study 1.4]. The other areas of action include: destination management, environmentally friendly accommodation, food supply, tour guidance, and communication about sustainable practices. By combining the elements of these six sections of the matrix, Studiosus developed some sample sustainable journeys with characteristics that include using only public transport (even for the long run), staying in small family-owned hotels, enjoying locally produced food, and meeting local people.

5 Customer Relations





5.1 Accor: Raising Awareness About Protecting Marine Ecosystems

Description of Good Practice

Recognising the importance of preserving the environment in tourist destinations and reducing the potential impacts generated by tourists on marine ecosystems, the Accor Group, a French outbound tour operator, launched an awareness-raising campaign in summer 2000 for customers visiting the Red Sea, a destination that is extremely sensitive to impacts from visitors. In 2000, this campaign, which was created by Accor's Environment Department in collaboration with Accor Vacances, was mainly based on the distribution of a short leaflet. In 2003, the campaign was expanded to include interactive activities designed to help visitors understand the importance of marine ecosystems and become involved in their protection. Complimentary printed materials and other communication media are also provided to customers to help them better understand marine ecosystems and how to preserve them.

The first leaflet, which was published in July 2000 in both English and French, explained why Accor is involved in this activity and provided general information on the impacts that are often caused by tourists on the beach and when scuba diving. For each category of impact, the leaflet offered three examples of the long-term results of careless behaviour. In 2003, a new leaflet (see Box 1) was produced, and information is supplemented in the hotels through movies, books and signs. As most of the customers targeted by this programme come from Russia, the explanations are given in French, English and Russian.

The new leaflet and the awareness-raising activities are developed by Accor in collaboration with NAUSICAA, a marine science and technology centre based in Boulogne-sur-Mer (France). NAUSICAA has been designated as a Centre of Excellence by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO for its actions in alerting the public to the need for better management of ocean resources. In preparing the leaflets, NAUSICAA contributed its knowledge of the marine world and Accor its knowledge of tourism activities.

Accor and NAUSICAA also collaborated to adapt a children's awareness-raising toolkit to Accor customers and activities. This toolkit contains instructions for educational games and materials required to organise these games.

Implementation

In 2003, Hurghada is the pilot site for this full awareness-raising programme, which will then be implemented, in a second phase of the programme, in the other hotels surrounding the Red Sea. In a third phase, this programme will be adapted to other Accor hotels near the sea.



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MARINE LIFE PROTECTION IN THE RED SEA



TOOL KIT FOR ORGANIZING AWARENESS
RAISING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

The staff responsible for the programme within Accor hotels came from Egypt to be trained at the NAUSICAA Centre at Boulogne-sur-Mer. Regular meetings between Accor and NAUSICAA are planned to monitor project development in Egypt.

The 2003 leaflet is distributed in hotel rooms, and at reception desks and activity desks. A 'Red Sea Corner' has also been created in the hotels, offering different books, posters and leaflets about marine ecosystems, their main threats and how hotel customers can contribute to their preservation.

At the entrance to the beach, large posters describe the zoning of the sea for leisure activities (scuba diving, boating, swimming, etc.) and remind guests of the main precautions to be taken. In support of the principles outlined already in the first leaflet, waste bins have been placed around the hotels. All staff are trained on the topics covered in the leaflet.

Once a week, the hotels organise a 'Sea Day', dedicating all the activities during that day to the marine environment. The day concludes with a 'Sea Night' and an award-winning movie from the International Festival of Sub-marine Pictures (Festival Mondial de l'image sous-marine), organised by NAUSICAA.

The activities developed for adults and children are the core of this programme. A 'Submarine path' has been created for adults, with visible buoys indicating and explaining notable spots and guided snorkeling circuits. To complement this tour, more explanations are given at the 'Red Sea Corner'. For children, sea-oriented activities are organised, based on the games proposed in the toolkit.

Benefits

The benefits of this awareness-raising programme have included:

- Increased awareness of tourists and local staff about the importance of protecting the marine ecosystem;
- A decrease in damage to corals and less garbage on the beach;
- New educational and entertaining activities proposed by Accor;
- An improved image for Accor in general and particularly with local authorities because of the company's contribution to a local training course on environmental resources management; and
- Increased credibility of Accor's environmental efforts, as a result of the partnership with NAUSICAA and the environmental audits of the company's hotels.

Comments



RED SEA MARINE LIFE

The 2003 awareness campaign is a new step towards a stronger integration of environmental considerations into the management practices of Accor hotels. As part of the campaign, and to reinforce customers' requests to protect the reefs, Accor hotels will be submitted to individual environmental audits to identify potential threats to the reefs directly generated by the hotels. The audits will be performed by NAUSICAA. Accor staff will also receive specific training by NAUSICAA on how to introduce these environmental activities to clients.

Box 1: Extracts from the 2003 Accor Leaflet

Introduction

The shoreline and the bed of the Red Sea are extremely fragile. Because thousands of us go and discover the Red Sea every year, our daily activities have altered it in certain areas. This is why every little action taken by each and all of us counts. Our well-being is linked to the resources that the Sea can offer us.

ACCOR has chosen to join forces with this dimension associating with NAUSICAA to offer activities to raise awareness of the marine environment. Information and activities are available for everyone, to discover and to learn to respect the sea while having fun:

- All the secrets of the sea presented in a reception and information area.
- A guided tour with commentary, in shallow water, where the fairy-like colours and multitude of shapes of the Red Sea's inhabitants can be observed to help each of us to understand the sea and its treasures a little better.
- Activities for children with a sea theme: workshops, walking in the water along the sea shore, trips out to sea.

Living in harmony with the sea

Everyone can help restore and preserve the Red Sea's riches by following some simple, yet absolutely essential advice.

- "Forgetting" waste (tins, plastic bags, rope...) on the beach or in the water can poison or choke a fish, a sea bird, or a turtle. Some of our waste takes up to 400 years to break down. So, make a habit of using the dustbins available for your use.
- When you are in the water, remember to stay away from the coral and fish to avoid upsetting or damaging the sea's fragile natural balance. Take a backseat and just observe this wonderful world.
- Taking a few underwater samples as "souvenirs" – a fish, starfish, piece of coral – weakens the delicate natural balance, which takes years to rebuild. Leave the sea its treasures; just observe and opt for photo souvenirs instead of a collection!
- The fish that you feed for your own pleasure lose their habits as predators, and this weakens the general balance of life in the reef. So why not try and guess who eats who or what!

5.2 Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten: Educational Information for Customers



Description of Good Practice

Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten (HLK), a German tour operator that is part of TUI AG, specialises in expedition and luxury cruises (river and ocean) around the world, particularly in sensitive and pristine areas such as the Arctic, Antarctica, the South Pacific Islands and the Amazon basin. In the 2002/2003 season, 1,349 passengers visited the Antarctic on board two of HLK's cruise ships, MS Bremen and MS Hanseatic.

Antarctic tours are challenging, because they are conducted away from traditional routes in extreme conditions, where the environment is pristine and fragile. HLK complies strictly with Recommendation XVIII-1, adopted at the Antarctic Treaty Meeting in Kyoto 1994, and with the rules of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators. To minimise the environmental impacts of its tours and improve the experience of its customers, HLK has also developed a handbook for travellers to Antarctica.

The 132-page highly illustrated handbook provides:

- Guidelines and practical information for appropriate behaviour in Antarctica (see Box 1);
- Historical, geological and scientific facts to accompany the lecture programmes offered on cruises; and
- Supplementary reading on Antarctica, covering topics such as the history of the region, facts about the sub-Antarctic islands, details on the Antarctic Treaty, information on the plants and animals of the Antarctic and a discussion of environmental issues in the region, for example the effects of ozone layer depletion and global warming.

In addition to receiving the handbook, each passenger and crew member receives a copy of Recommendation XVIII-1 and attends a presentation on how to behave in Antarctica. A group of experienced lecturers and naturalists is always on board each ship.

The handbook, now in its fourth edition, was written by six of the scientists and lecturers who serve on the MV Hanseatic and MV Bremen, all of whom have extensive experience in Antarctica.

Much effort was made to ensure that the handbook met the priorities and needs of all parties. For example, most HLK passengers expect comprehensive information on the landscapes, flora and fauna of the region,

not just during lectures but also on shore excursions. In addition, respect for nature and sensitivity to foreign ethnic groups are top priorities for HLK.



PENGUIN-WATCHING DURING A SHORE EXCURSION ON MV HANSEATIC

Implementation

The handbook is given to each passenger prior to departure. On-board lectures during the cruises are given by biologists, geologists, glaciologists, marine biologists, historians and others. The lecturers also accompany passengers ashore to answer questions and ensure that the Guidelines are respected. There is a designated 'focal point' during each cruise who can answer any questions the tourists may have after reading the handbook.

The handbook section on sustainable tourism is supplemented with a large selection of posters and other information on whales, birds, penguins and other animals, and on the Guidelines. The official training material for HLK tour guides on Antarctic cruises is based on the Guidelines, briefings, slide shows and the Antarctic Instruction book for Officers, Expedition Leaders and Cruise Staff.

Benefits

An important benefit of using the handbook is an increased understanding and respect among tourists for the fragile environment of the Antarctic. For HLK, the handbook is a good advertisement for the high standard of its cruises and helps the company achieve its aim of making its passengers ambassadors to the last still largely unexplored continent.

Comments

Based on the success of its Antarctica handbook, the company has also developed handbooks for travellers to the Arctic and for its Amazon River Cruises.

Box 1: Handbook for Polar Travellers: Behaviour and Instructions

Behaviour

We regard appropriate behaviour and attitude as a part of your equipment. Please overcome your sense of individuality and remain attached to your group at all times. We ask you not to go on any extra tours all by yourself and not to undertake any independent initiatives, especially when you are on glaciers. Falling into glacier crevasses is one of the most frequent causes of death in polar regions. Our staff and experienced tour assistants will show you the most environmentally friendly paths on site. Please obey their instructions.

Never approach even harmless animals closer than five metres. Warnings from the tour assistants accompanying you, and who always keep the landing area under surveillance, are to be taken seriously. The driver is responsible for the zodiac; only he is authorised to permit each voyager to rise or stand up.

If the ship's siren blows several times, this means there is an alarm situation. Every passenger should then return to the assembly point immediately in order to reach the ship as fast as possible. Smoking is prohibited in shore boats and in nature reserves. We should not leave litter behind – all we should take home are memories and photographs. We never visit stations without prior invitation.

Instructions for travellers to Antarctica

1. For reasons of animal protection and your own personal safety, keep the following distances from animals:
 - penguins, 5 m
 - breeding albatrosses, 5 m
 - breeding giant petrels, terns and skuas, 15 m
 - fur seals, 15 m (for your safety from aggressive bulls)
 - elephant seals, 5 m (never step between the animals and shore, in case animals panic and attack).
2. Be careful when you are moving on land.
3. Never stand between an animal and water, and never stand between young animals and their parents.
4. Never cross the outer boundary of a colony of penguins or seals.
5. Never touch the animals.
6. Never alarm an animal in order to take a photograph.
7. Keep as quiet as possible in order not to frighten the animals.
8. Do not step on sensitive mosses and lichens.
9. Do not take anything home from Antarctica except memories and photographs.
10. Bring back all litter to be disposed of on the ship.
11. Do not take food with you on land.
12. Enter research stations only when invited to do so.
13. Entrance to historical huts is permitted only in the company of an officially authorized person.
14. Smoking is strictly prohibited on land, as well as in huts and shelters of historical importance.
15. When on land, always remain with the group or leader of the expedition.
16. Please follow the instructions given by your expedition leaders, lecturers and biology experts

5.3 LTU Touristik: Inviting Customer Feedback on Environmental Issues



Description of Good Practice

LTU Touristik, a German tour operator that specialises in package tours to all continents, invites its customers to provide feedback on environmental issues, in particular problems encountered, positive and negative impressions, and suggestions on how to improve the environment in the visited destinations. The company has received more than 1,000 letters and e-mails from customers in the last five years. Some customers only want to give information, others need explanations, and many ask questions, either prior to their holidays to help them make informed decisions, or after their holidays to better understand their experiences. The number of the communications varies with the season; in general, more feedback is received in summer than in winter.

Implementation

A request for feedback (see Box 1) is placed in every brochure for LTU brands, inviting customers to send their comments in written form by mail or e-mail. The same request is posted on the company's website. This invitation reaches an estimated 4.5 million people, the total number of tourists who travelled with the company in 2001/2002. In some cases, questions also come from people who are not LTU customers.

The process of responding to requests is handled by the Environmental Department, with an average investment of up to 10 working hours per week. Every customer who sends a message receives a personal reply providing background information and indicating if action has been taken to resolve the issue that the client has highlighted.

Using the customer feedback system, LTU can inform hoteliers, excursion providers and local authorities about the customers' perspective and, in particular, of problematic areas that could affect demand for a specific destination in the long term (see Box 2). This communication helps destination stakeholders set priorities and identify mitigation measures to solve problems highlighted by the customers. In certain cases, LTU's Environmental Department makes on-site visits to ensure the problems are solved or to bring various people together to jointly solve the problem in the long run. Past successes have included hotel water-saving and waste-management measures, beach and walkway clean-ups and animal protection.

Benefits

There have been a number of benefits for LTU's Environmental Department and the entire company from this feedback programme, including:

- Requesting customer feedback gives LTU's Environmental Department the chance to receive

Box 1: Invitation for Feedback (from LTU-Touristik Brand Brochures)

'Dialogue for a better environment'

Environmental protection is an important concern for your holidays. A pristine environment will enhance your vacation and increase the long-term quality of your holiday destination. We would appreciate hearing your observations and opinions: Regarding your destination, have you noticed anything special concerning the environment? Any information we should know? Please be so kind as to write a letter or an e-mail! You can find information about us and our work at www.rewe.de, keyword: tourism-environment. We are conscious of our social, cultural and ecological responsibility for people, the environment and our common future. Because of this, we keep an eye on natural resources, respect the cultural traditions in our holiday destinations and aim to improve the quality of life for our customers, the local people and also our staff. We would like to achieve this target in an open dialogue with the responsible destination managers, our tourism partners and customers, as well as tourism and environment organisations. We face the challenge to design a future for tourism that is both environmentally and socially responsible.

a great amount of information about the state of the environment in its destinations, which can be used to identify the most effective initiatives to support environmental protection in destinations.

- The feedback gives valuable insight into what is important to customers, their views on environmental issues and their expectations for LTU's environmental performance.
- Using this knowledge, the company can increase customer satisfaction and the environmental quality of its products, whilst at the same time helping to protect the environment in its destinations.

The programme also helps raise the environmental awareness of LTU's customers and their attention to environmental and social problems.

Comments

The company has found that raising awareness among communities and providing information and educational assistance helps them to improve their environmental practices, often in a very short time period (for example, ending the use of insecticides in public areas at a popular destination in the Mediterranean region).

Although the information gathered through customer feedback has not yet been systematically collected or filed, the company plans to create a database of all customer feedback and make this information available in an environmental newsletter.

Im Dialog für eine bessere Umwelt



Umweltschutz ist auch im Urlaub ein Thema. Eine intakte Umwelt im Urlaubsziel erhöht Ihren Urlaubsgenuss und sichert die Qualität Ihres Ferienzels langfristig.

Wir legen Wert auf Ihre Beobachtung und Ihre Meinung: Ist Ihnen zum Thema Umwelt im Urlaub etwas Besonderes aufgefallen? Haben Sie eine Idee, die Sie uns mitteilen möchten? Schreiben Sie uns oder schicken Sie uns eine E-mail! Informationen über uns erhalten Sie unter dem Stichwort „Touristik-Umwelt“ unter www.rewe.de. Wir von ITS Reisen setzen uns für die Schonung der natürlichen Ressourcen ein, achten die kulturellen Traditionen in den Gastgeberländern und streben die Verbesserung der Lebensqualität unserer Gäste, der Bevölkerung im Gastland und unserer Mitarbeiter an. Dieses Ziel möchten wir im offenen Dialog mit den Verantwortlichen in den Urlaubsregionen, mit unseren Touristikpartnern, Kunden sowie Tourismus- und Umweltorganisationen verwirklichen. Wir stellen uns der Herausforderung, einen zukunftsfähigen, umwelt- und sozialverträglichen Tourismus mitzugestalten.

Einen schönen Urlaub wünscht Ihnen
Ihr Umwelt-Team von ITS Reisen, 51170 Köln
umwelt@ltu-touristik.com

OFFER TO CLIENTS TO CONTACT LTU'S ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT

Box 2: Examples of Customer Feedback

Dear Sirs and Madams,

You emphasize the importance of environmental conservation in your two catalogues, ITS and Tjaereborg 'Fernreisen'. I would be very interested to receive detailed environmental information for the hotels Ceysands in Bentota, Sri Lanka (ITS catalogue) and Coral Gardens in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka (Tjaereborg-catalogue), as I could not find more environmental information about the two hotels in your catalogues. Unfortunately, as a tourist you are often not involved personally in the environmental measures of the hotels. Therefore I would appreciate knowing which measures have been already taken up to contribute to a better environment in my holiday destination.

I look forward to your co-operation!

Thanks very much,
J.C., 2002

Dear Sirs and Madams,

We recently made our seventh visit to Greece (this year with ITS in Acharavi at Korfu). Unfortunately, the Greek people destroy their splendid country by throwing their waste on the streets. Along the streets, you can find bottles, cans, etc., even in holiday centres. Some cans are bleached, which gives you an idea how long it has been since the streets were cleaned. In the villages, there are a lot of construction ruins or buildings that were started but seem to have been abandoned for several years now. These ruins are a safety hazard and there is a very high risk of accidents, especially for children.

With kind regards,
K.M., 2002

5.4 TUI AG: Interactive Environmental Website



Description of Good Practice

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. In 1996, the company's Environmental Management Department launched its own web site (www.tui-umwelt.com), independent of the company's main site.

The site targets co-operating partners in TUI destinations, local authorities, municipal representatives, tourism officers, nature conservation organisations, experts in tourism and environment, travel agents, hoteliers and TUI guests (see Box 1). To make it easier to navigate the site, the information is organised by target audience, allowing each group to access information tailored to their specific needs through special micro-sites.

For example, the micro-site for TUI guests and travel agents provides comprehensive information about environmentally sound TUI hotels and the current state of nature and the environment in destinations. The information on destinations is based on annual environmental reports by TUI representatives, verified by destination representatives and the Environmental Management Department. The information on hotel management is based on annual environmental monitoring of hotels by TUI. Complementary information is provided to customers and distribution partners about current environmental projects in destinations, including information on reforestation, animal welfare, species protection, marine biology, biodiversity and climate protection. Travel agents can use the micro-site to promote environmentally sound TUI hotels and destinations with exceptional environmental initiatives.

A further micro-site is addressed to hoteliers and includes best practices for environmentally sound hotel management, with a particular focus on TUI's environmental work, such as environmental monitoring and environmental criteria for hotels, destinations and carriers.

The web site is not only a static medium for information dissemination, but also a dynamic meeting place, thanks to a voting system that allows users to vote online about subjects being discussed. Customer feedback by e-mail indicates that awareness of environmental issues is increasing.

The website provides the full range of environmental information in German and English, while summary versions are offered in French, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. The site attracts visitors from 82 countries worldwide, primarily during business hours, indicating a predominant use of the site by professionals.

The contents of the site were developed by the staff of TUI's Environmental Management Department. Until recently, the site contained only static html pages, which meant that updating pages required input from an external agency with the necessary html skills. However, the recent re-launch of the site included a transfer of the existing information into a



INFORMATION IS GIVEN IN TEN LANGUAGES



IN 2001 THE WEBSITE WAS AWARDED THE GOLDEN UMWELT-ONLINE AWARD BY B.A.U.M AND THE GERMAN MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

database, with a content management system that allows the site to be updated and expanded in-house. The log files allow hits to be systematically analysed by time of day, access by country and access by net service providers.

Implementation

An important goal of site implementation was to make the domain name widely known. This goal was achieved by referring to the site when responding to all requests for information and preparing a two-language information brochure to explain the site's structure in detail to first-time users. Another important goal during implementation was the establishment of a feedback mechanism to improve the site.

Benefits

The interactive environmental website has proven to be a powerful communication tool with the following benefits:

- Partners, research organisations, environmental groups and journalists can access comprehensive information online about current departmental work;
- The site has enabled and strengthened communications and dialogue with TUI customers and environmental organisations in destinations;
- The site gives TUI guests the opportunity to find out more about the environment in their destinations and environmentally sound hotels before their trips;
- Feedback from TUI customers by e-mail shows that customers are being sensitised to environmental issues;
- Interaction with users helps build contacts with local people that can result in new initiatives;
- Customers' demands with respect to sustainable tourism can be identified and developed into environmentally friendly products;
- Online communication enables local people in the destinations to participate in the environmental aspects of tourism development;
- Paper consumption has been reduced, because information is provided online; and
- The site provides up-to-the-minute corporate environmental (and sustainability) reporting for stakeholders and shareholders, enhancing value and transparency.

Box 1: Goals of www.tui-umwelt.com

The goals of TUI's environmental website are to provide:

- Comprehensive information on all TUI Corporate Environmental Management activities to all target groups;
- Communication and dialogue with TUI customers, partners and environmental organisations in the destinations;
- Information to TUI customers about the environmental qualities of hotels, destinations and modes of transportation;
- An 'argument-aid' for travel agents when selling environmentally sound hotels and destinations;
- A view of TUI environmental activities as part of product quality and ethics that differentiate TUI from its competitors;
- A means of updating environmental information to complement environmental reporting for stakeholders, shareholders and financial analysts;
- An up-to-date and interactive site to sustain user loyalty and create a specific net community; and
- Support for TUI e-business and e-commerce.

Comments

In July 2001, www.tui-umwelt.com was awarded the golden 'Umwelt-Online-Award', in recognition of it being a particularly informative and user-friendly internet site on environmental conservation and sustainable development. The award is organised by B.A.U.M. (the German Environmental Management Association), with Jürgen Trittin, the Federal Environmental Minister, as its patron.

5.5 TUI Nederland: Promoting Responsible Travel in Curaçao and Bonaire



Description of Good Practice

In an effort to improve the sustainability of tourism in Bonaire and Curaçao, two islands of the Netherlands Antilles in the Caribbean, TUI Nederland, the market leader in the Dutch travel industry and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), began an 'Environmentally Aware Tourism' project in 1999. The project, which was created in the framework of the United Nations Year of the Oceans, aims to provide customers with information on responsible travel and sustainable products at various stages of their holidays, to promote well-informed choices for more sustainable island holidays. The project also seeks to improve the performance of local tour operators and guides; accommodations; and excursion and diving operators. For these three groups, ad hoc guidelines have been developed within the framework of the project.

Information on responsible travel and sustainable products and services available in Bonaire and Curaçao is disseminated from the start of travel. Even before the visitor has selected Bonaire and Curaçao as a destination, information is provided in the brochures of TUI Nederland's brands Arke and Holland International.

Box 1: Diving Guidelines for Bonaire and Curaçao

1. Guests must receive an orientation and explanation of eco-diving standards, including:
 - Maintain good buoyancy control;
 - Practice good finning technique and body control;
 - Ensure all equipment is adequately secured;
 - Avoid all contact with the bottom and/or marine life;
 - Handling, manipulation and feeding of marine life to be conducted under expert guidance only;
 - Take nothing except recent garbage out of the water; and
 - Restrict use of gloves and kneepads whilst reef diving.
2. Dive operation staff must practice eco-diving standards;
3. Corals and other marine life may not be offered for sale;
4. Environmental materials (e.g. marine life ID) must be available to guests and staff;
5. The dive operation must promote a strict 'no contact' policy for reef diving;
6. Pre-dive briefings must be given, reminding guests of eco-diving standards;
7. Dive boats must use moorings, drift dive or hand place anchors in reef environments;
8. Dive boats must have adequate garbage facilities aboard;
9. Dive boats must have a 'minimal discharge' policy in force;
10. Dive Operators on Curaçao must be members of the Curaçao Dive Operator Association (CDOA) and actively support the CDOA voluntary dive-tag programme benefiting marine life management and conservation projects. Operators on Bonaire must actively support the Bonaire National Marine Park, in addition to abiding by all local environmental laws, regulations and customs.

Once a client has chosen a holiday to Bonaire or Curaçao:

- TUI Nederland provides tips for environmentally sound practices in the voucher booklet that also includes their air tickets;
- During the nine-hour flight, KLM, a project partner, shows a video about the sustainable excursions and activities that are promoted in the framework of the project;
- Upon arrival, trained TUI Nederland hostesses introduce guests to the sustainable excursions and activities that are available; and
- The TUI Nederland resource book, available in hotel lobbies, further directs the guests towards sustainable excursions, activities and attractions.

To complement these communication activities, attractions, excursions and operators (particularly diving operators) complying with the programme's ecological criteria for tour guides are actively promoted among guests.

The Dutch touring club ANWB and the Antillean Department for the Environment (VOMIL/MINA), co-ordinate the project

activities. As the largest provider of organised holidaymakers to Bonaire and Curaçao, TUI Nederland plays an active role in the project. Apart from the active involvement of the private sector, the main financial sponsors of the project are the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Antillean Department of Environment, and the Netherlands Centre for Sustainable Development (NCDO), which have contributed a total of 52,000 Euro (US\$61,457).



BROCHURE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS FOR VISITING THE ANTILLES

The responsible travel tips for visitors and guidelines for selection of the ‘sustainable tourism products’ were developed in co-operation with relevant local stakeholders. This process was the starting point for engagement of local tour operators, accommodations and attractions providers. In total, more than 100 different parties are actively involved in the project, mostly on a voluntary basis.

Implementation

The project now has 20 partners, including tour operators, local and national government agencies, excursion operators, hotels and NGOs, which have signed a memorandum of collaboration. With the source market and the destination more than 6,000 km (3,728 miles) apart, good communication between the partners in the project is crucial. All 20 partners are informed of the various steps to be taken through the VOMIL/MINA newsletter. The Dutch co-ordinator, ANWB, is in charge of monitoring the effects of the project on customer behaviour.

A key tool for disseminating responsible travel tips to customers is a flyer, in Dutch, that encourages guests to ‘Enjoy our lovely islands but help us to keep them intact for future generations’. The flyer provides not only best practice tips for the tourist but also information on attractions and dive operators participating in the project on both islands. The flyers are also available at other distribution points, including dive shops and ‘green’ hotels.



ENJOYING THE UNDERWATER SPLENDOR OF THE ANTILLES

‘Green’ operators participating in the project and fulfilling the criteria are recognised with a certificate picturing the project logo, a blue cactus with an iguana. The certificate also lists the standards that the operator or attraction provider has committed to. Project partners can use the logo on their own communication and marketing material. The various sustainable products are promoted through the flyer, via website (www.natuurlijkantillen.info) and at the destination by the hostesses.

Benefits

The project has had many benefits for the islands, including:

- Hotels participating in the project have collectively adopted an environmental improvement programme, supported by TUI Nederland;
- Almost all dive operators on the islands have agreed to work according to diving guidelines that were formulated for the project (see Box 1); and
- Specific guidelines have been developed and implemented for local tour operators and attractions.

In addition, the project has contributed to:

- Increased awareness of all participating partners on sustainable tourism;
- Decreased environmental damage on the islands;
- Improved image of participating parties; and
- Incentives to improve tour operators’ practices in the destination.

Comments

This two-way approach of information and improvement appears to be successful in convincing tourists of the need to make sustainable choices while enjoying their holidays and convincing local hotels and attractions to improve their performance.

In the next phase of the project, the flyer will be produced in English for non-Dutch tourists, and the other Netherlands Antilles islands (Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Marteen) and the island of Aruba will participate. Each island will have its own separate flyer.



5.6 Viaggi del Ventaglio: Environmental Interpreter Programme

Description of Good Practice

In June 2001, Viaggi del Ventaglio (VV), one of the leading Italian outbound and domestic tour operators, launched its Environmental Interpreter Programme. The programme involves the introduction of an Environmental Interpreter at each VentaClub resort, to be a reference point for staff and clients on the company's sustainability policy and to serve as an ambassador of the policy to the surrounding communities.

The programme was launched with three objectives in mind:

- To raise clients' awareness about environmental issues in their destination;
- To support the dissemination and integration of sustainability principles and practices to resort staff and management, thus bridging the gap between the headquarters corporate sustainability policy and the resort-based operational staff; and
- To increase understanding and strengthen co-operation between VV resorts and the surrounding communities.

VV established clear tasks and responsibilities for the Environmental Interpreter, including:

- Be the reference point on environmental, social and cultural issues;
- Take part in the clients' briefings, to inform them about how to have a sustainable holiday;
- Organise informative meetings on destinations' key environmental features (coral reefs, mangrove forests, etc.);
- Establish and maintain contacts with local authorities and organisations;
- Cooperate with other staff in the resort to develop common activities (recreation, kids club, diving);
- Cooperate with the staff responsible for the organisation of excursions to select and brief suppliers on sustainability criteria and to include briefings in the excursions;
- Collect general information on sustainability issues in the destination;
- Interact with the hotel management (if not a VentaClub resort) to support the introduction of sustainability practices in management.



SHARM EL SHEIKH - VENTA CLUB REEF OASIS: CHILDREN
LEARN ABOUT THE UNDERWATER WORLD

The Environmental Interpreter Programme is coordinated by VV's Tourism and Environment Department, which carries out recruitment and training and provides assistance. On site, Interpreters report directly to resort managers, and their salaries are paid out of the resort budget.

Based on a feasibility study at VentaClub's Red Sea resort, which in particular aimed at identifying the most appropriate characteristics and contract scheme, the company considered sub-contracting the position. However, it was eventually decided to create internal positions, so that staff members could be trained based on the specific requirements of the organisation and the destinations.

The feasibility phase determined that the ideal Environmental Interpreter should have:

- Knowledge of environment and ecology, and sustainability in general;
- Understanding of the principles of anthropology and sociology of tourism;
- Proficiency in the language of the selected destinations;
- Experience in environmental education;
- Good communication skills; and
- Knowledge and experience on destination-specific subjects (such as coral reefs).

Programme development also focused on creating and gathering materials to support the work of the Interpreters, including books and other printed matter on general and destination-specific environmental issues, a reference manual developed internally for the Interpreter, and materials designed to teach children about sustainability issues.

In this initial phase, all training has been done on an individual basis by VV's Tourism and Environment Department. Recruited Environmental Interpreters spend one to three weeks at headquarters to study the destination in 'theory', prepare the necessary communication materials and receive inputs from the Environmental Manager. At the destination, training is continued on the job, with constant technical support from the Environmental Manager. In the future, all new staff can be trained directly on site by experienced Environmental Interpreters.

Implementation

The Environmental Interpreter Programme has been implemented so far in ten VentaClub resorts, selected based on their specific sustainability or environmental needs and strategic importance for the company.

These resorts include:

- VentaClub Reef Oasis and VentaClub Faraana in Sharm el Sheikh, on the Red Sea;
- VentaClub Gran Dominicus in the Dominican Republic;
- VentaClub Playa Maroma in Mexico;
- VentaClub Capo Caccia on the Italian island of Sardinia;
- VentaClub Bagamoyo in Calabria, Italy, especially aimed at children;
- VentaClub Temple Point in Kenya;
- VentaClub Rannalhi in the Maldives Islands;
- VentaClub Karibu in Zanzibar; and
- VentaClub Marsa Alam in Marsa Alam, on the Red Sea.



AN INFORMATION BOARD PROVIDES ADVICE FOR A RESPONSIBLE HOLIDAY!

The Interpreter is introduced to customers upon arrival, during orientation.

Among the activities undertaken by Interpreters in these resorts are presentations on marine biology, guided snorkeling tours, evening slide shows on the local environment, ecological beach excursions, children's activities and eco-volunteerism activities, such as beach clean-ups.

The activities of the Interpreters are regularly monitored by headquarters. The Interpreters report weekly to the Tourism and Environment Department on the programme, relationships with other departments, difficulties and problems, guest participation, general environmental issues, possible public relations opportunities, etc. In addition, although no specific question on the programme is included in guest satisfaction questionnaires, the forms are regularly monitored for voluntary mentions and comments. Once the role of the Interpreter has been fully institutionalised, questions to measure their performance will be included in the client feedback forms.

Information on the programme is available on VV's web site and through its owned travel agencies. From December 2003 onwards, the presence of an Interpreter will also be indicated in the catalogue for relevant resorts.

Benefits

For VV's clients, the programme represents an additional value to their holidays, allowing them to discover environmental, cultural and social characteristics of their destinations that most likely would have remained hidden. In the general comments section of the guests' questionnaire, several encouraging comments have been expressed, demonstrating guests' appreciation for these efforts.

Feedback from destination stakeholders has also been positive, in particular on the actions that have been carried out. For example, an excursion in the Dominican Republic has been improved by adding responsibility criteria, resulting in benefits to the local community.

Comments

In order to support changes in attitude towards sustainability, especially at the destination level, a competent and official 'voice' was needed. Thus, in hiring Interpreters, preference was given to those candidates who showed enthusiasm, deep personal commitment, a positive attitude and good communication skills – all characteristics that are considered far more important than outstanding technical skills.



MEXICO - VENTACLUB PLAYA MAROMA: GUESTS CONTRIBUTING IN THE TURTLE PROTECTION PROGRAMME

VV carefully considered whether to recruit Interpreters locally (i.e. in the destination country) or to hire from Italy. The local recruitment option has both advantages and disadvantages. A local recruit might better understand the destination, remain in the job longer and provide benefits to the local community through employment. However, experience proved that selection and training could be logistically difficult,



GUESTS CAN STOP AT ANY TIME AT THE 'ENVIRONMENT' INFORMATION DESK!

that there is in general a lack of capacity both in terms of knowledge and communication skills in some destinations, and that there might be a cultural gap between the customers and the Interpreter. Therefore, in this first phase, no fixed policy has been established, and the decision to recruit locally or in Italy is made based on existing opportunities in each destination.

Another challenge in the implementation of the programme is that each individual interpreter has to complete a tailor-made training session, which takes into account the key sustainability issues of the destination, the type of clients that

chose that specific destination and the various tasks that he or she will be required to perform.

In general, existing staff in the resorts have seen the Environmental Interpreter as a useful figure, if not indispensable for the life of a holiday resort. However, experience at the first pilot resorts demonstrated that there could be an initial 'rejection' period for this role.

Cooperation with Destinations





6.1 Atlas Voyages: Supporting Research for Health and Hygiene in Morocco

Description of Good Practice

As part of a company re-organisation plan, Atlas Voyages, a Morocco-based inbound tour operator, has committed to supporting rural development and child welfare. As a first step toward fulfilling this commitment, the company partnered with the Moroccan Association of Research Action for Health and Hygiene (AMRASH), which has a global, integrated vision of sustainability that is supported by a programme of activities geared towards environmental conservation, providing clean water supplies and social development.

AMRASH, which was founded by a pediatrician, with the help of a group of doctors, sociologists, business people and bankers, focuses on several major fields of action, including solidarity, mutual aid, village development, education, water, electricity and health. The Association's approach is based on an in-depth study of the project site and on getting villagers and local authorities involved.



AGUERSIOUAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

Implementation

Atlas Voyages will raise awareness of AMRASH's activities by distributing an informative flyer to its clients and partners and use its networking and lobbying activities to encourage other partners to support AMRASH.

In addition, in March 2003, the company made a symbolic donation of 2,000 Euros (US\$2,389) from its corporate budget for the first year of the relationship. This money will be used to complete the Aguersioual rural guest house in the Imlil Valley, which will help in generating employment and income for local people.

The guest house will also help fund the activities of a local community centre, including health care, education and cultural programmes (see Box 1).

BOX 1: AMRASH's Project in Aguersioual

The remote village of Aguersioual, in the Imlil Valley, has benefited greatly from an AMRASH-funded community centre that was built by villagers in 1997. The centre, which was built in a traditional design, includes classrooms, a small handicraft museum, a library, a sewing workshop and other facilities that can be used as a rural hostel, since the region is visited by tourists and hikers. The centre is also equipped with solar energy and irrigation systems. In addition, the villagers have worked with AMRASH to complete a water supply and sanitation project and establish a production co-operative. Lessons in Arabic and French for young illiterate adults, mainly girls and mothers as well as children too old to go to school, have increased the pride and independence of the young women of the village, whilst the sewing and knitting room has turned into a centre for income-generating activities by the women.

Comments

Atlas Voyages selected AMRASH as a partner because it is the perfect example of synergy between villagers, local authorities and a collection of countless little networks that share and exchange knowledge and skills at local, regional, national and international levels. By helping local people find the tools for change, AMRASH contributes to crucial and basic needs such as energy saving, illiteracy, mother and child care, and rural depopulation.

Atlas is currently developing a strategy to identify other activities with local communities and major international clients to raise funds for AMRASH.

6.2 Hotelplan: An Eco-Fund to Support Sustainability



Description of Good Practice

The Hotelplan Swiss Group, a Swiss tour operator that offers mainly outbound package tours and guided tours, established an Umweltfranken (Eco-Fund) in January 2001. Funds for the programme are raised through a contribution of five Swiss Francs (about US\$3) per customer booking any of the holiday packages in Hotelplan's 'Ferien am Meer' (Holidays at the Seaside) catalogue, which represents 20-25 percent of the company's sales. This catalogue is also linked to the Crete Declaration, signed in 1998 by Hotelplan and all other Swiss tour operators and travel agents to formulate principles for nature protection by the Swiss tourism industry (www.hotelplan.ch/environnement, heading DdC).

The fund was established to:

- Actively involve guests and stakeholders in destinations;
- Support the integration of social aspects into Hoteplan activities;
- Financially support Hotelplan's environmental commitment;
- Generate a competitive advantage by developing an ecologically sound product;
- Enhance Hotelplan's corporate image; and
- Safeguard the company's leading position on environmental matters in Switzerland.

In 2002, the fund raised about US\$750,000. The money is distributed among three categories of projects: internal and external sustainable tourism projects, environmental efforts by partners at Hotelplan destinations, and emergency help in case of natural disasters or one-off projects (see Box 1).

The Board of Directors of the Hotelplan Swiss Group and the company's Department of Corporate Ecology jointly created the Eco-Fund. The Tour Operations Department is responsible for calculating the final price of holidays, which includes each customer's five Swiss Franc contribution to the Fund, and for the development of project proposals.

Whilst awaiting investment in the selected projects, Umweltfranken funds are invested in accordance with ethical criteria, by Swissca Green Investment (www.swissca.ch/greeninvest/swissca/company/home-en.html) and managed by Zürcher Kantonalbank and WWF.

Implementation

Interested organisations apply to Hotelplan's Ecology Department for funding. The department director evaluates each project to determine whether it falls into one of the three funding categories, and approved projects are submitted to the Environmental Panel, which makes the final selection. Local stakeholders are sometimes included in project selection.



SUCCESSFUL WATER DRILLING, GOA, INDIA

In general, selected projects receive their funding in installments.

The use of the funds is monitored and project managers are asked to report back to Hotelplan on progress made before receiving each additional installment. When possible, representatives of the company's Ecology Department visit the project site.

Hotelplan communicates with its customers about the overall philosophy of the Umweltfranken, individual projects and responsible behaviour while on holiday through special billboards on the projects, informational brochures and customer briefings. For example, in the five Greek beach locations where a turtle project was supported in 2001, Hotelplan produced special billboards and printed an information leaflet with recommendations on appropriate behaviour while turtle watching. In Gibraltar, a marine biologist supported in 2001 as part of a research project focusing on whales was also involved in customers' briefings during whale watching excursions.

Hotelplan also provides information on the fund and projects in its corporate Environmental Report and Annual Financial Report, as well as on the company's web site (www.hotelplan.ch/umwelt) and in catalogues and leaflets in branch offices and at destinations. Internally, staff is informed about the projects and the progress made by the Fund through the intranet, meetings and training sessions.

Benefits

The Umweltfranken has had a number of benefits for the company, customers, local communities and the environment:

- Hotelplan has gained competitive advantages through awareness raising among staff and guests and the improved quality of its product;
- Customers enjoy a better quality product and have the opportunity to choose between better tourism offers;
- Local communities have gained a greater awareness of environmental issues and benefited from a transfer of experience and expertise; and
- The environment has benefited from reduced pollution and improvements in biodiversity conservation.

Comments

In creating the Umweltfranken, Hoteplan opted for investing in many small projects rather than in one, big flagship project. This decision was based on numerous considerations, including the realisation that it was easier to influence and control smaller projects, the recognition that administrative costs are often too high in projects with big NGOs, and the understanding that many smaller projects can raise awareness in several different destinations.

In the medium term, the company intends to expand fund-raising for the Umweltfranken to include other Hotelplan products. The use of part of the funds to financially support 'internal' projects is considered an investment in improving the quality of Hotelplan products.

Based on an assessment of the projects funded in 2001, Hotelplan realised that the projects had not focused sufficiently on key problems and, in particular, that the social component of sustainability was not sufficiently addressed.

Box 1: Umweltfranken Projects, 2001–2003

Umweltfranken funds have been used so far to support the following projects:

2001 Projects

- Care of the breeding grounds of the Mediterranean green loggerhead turtle along five beach sections in Greece.
- Support for a marine biologist and enabling scientific research and unobtrusive observation tours of marine mammals in southern Spain.
- A quantitative analysis of the environmental pollution of two standard holiday offers in Crete and two in Tenerife, and a compilation of an eco-balance for each holiday.

2002 Projects

- Organisation, execution and financing of a volunteer week for employees to help conserve Swiss mountain forests.
- Tapping of underground water resources with traditional means and construction of four wells for local communities in Goa, India.
- Sponsorship of an art project in Cape Verde that turns waste into works of art, which are sold to support a local aid and relief fund.
- Financial support for the World Without Mines Foundation.
- Quantitative analysis of all standard holiday offers in Crete and Tenerife (building on the 2001 pilot project).

2003 Projects

- Tapping of underground water resources with traditional means and construction of five wells for local communities in Rajasthan, India, providing drinking water for 5,000 people and water for 25,000 head of cattle.
- Organisation, execution and financing of a volunteer week for employees to help conserve coral reefs and desert ecosystems in the Red Sea region of Egypt

6.3 Travel Walji's: Contributing to the Local Economy in the Karakorum Region



Description of Good Practice

As part of a policy that calls for preservation of traditional culture and the local environment, promotion of local art and handicrafts, and encouragement of local inhabitants to be self-sufficient, Travel Walji's (Private) Limited, Pakistan's largest inbound tour operator, supports local entrepreneurs in Karimabad, in the Karakorum region of Pakistan (see Box 1). Travel Walji's (TWL) is the first tour operator to organise tours to this area.

TWL has provided the following support:

- Interest-free loans to build hotels;
- Taking tourists to visit the Handicraft Development Project that now provides jobs and extra income for many local people;
- Guide training conducted in collaboration with the Town Management Society for Karimabad, a group that seeks to protect the physical and cultural environment of Karimabad;
- The development of tourism in the region, which has increased demand for cultural shows and thus helped revive local music and traditional activities such as sword dancing; and
- The hiring of guides, assistant managers, drivers and trekking guides from the Hunza Valley, the wider region that includes Karakorum.

Box 1: The Hunza Valley

The Hunza Valley, in northern Pakistan close to the border with China, is part of the dramatic terrain of the Karakorum Mountain Range. Until the late 1960s, there was no access to the region, and trekking overland on foot from Gilgit took up to four days. In 1974, the Hunza valley was annexed to Pakistan and, over the next 11 years, the Pakistani Government, with support from the Chinese, built the Karakorum Highway, a 750-km (466-mile) road that runs along the old Silk Road up to the Chinese border.

Implementation

Although the region is now easily accessible, until TWL provided support to the region, most Hunzakurts were living below subsistence level, with many young people leaving the area for cities such as Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. TWL has used local transport and brought in its own buses, vans, cars and jeeps to encourage economic growth. The company has also worked with other institutional donors working in the area, in particular the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (see Box 2).

Benefits

About 30 percent of TWL's tourists going to and from China through the Khunjab Pass now visit Karimabad, which was the ancient seat of the Mir (the ruler) of the Hunza Valley,

and the 700-year-old Baltit Fort, located at the top of a natural amphitheatre formed by terraced slopes. The visitors purchase local handicrafts, watch traditional Hunza dance and listen to traditional Hunza music.

As a result of the activities of TWL and other donors:

- There are now 27 shops selling handicrafts, trekking equipment, food, postcards, local embroidery, carpets and gems. Traders have set up an organised Bazaar committee as a registered society;
- The restored Baltit Fort earns direct revenues of about US \$50,000 from the sale of tickets to foreign tourists and indirect revenues of about US\$ 200,000, benefiting central Hunza;
- By mobilizing local handicraft production through the Karakoram Handicraft Development Programme,



A STUNNING VIEW OF THE HUNZA VALLEY

78 women have been given direct employment, 1,500 households have gained additional income and a rehabilitation centre provides work therapy for 53 disabled men;

- Stone quarries in the area now employ 20 people and earn an income for the Town Management Society;
- A community-managed system for the daily collection and safe disposal of garbage has been implemented;
- Traditional wood carving, which has a long history in northern Pakistan, has been revived with a training scheme and the creation of a wood-carving enterprise;
- The environment and cultural assets are being preserved through the continued use of small gardens and fruit trees, and maintenance of the traditional irrigation and water supply; and
- More than 70 small family-owned hotels provide income for local people.



A KARIMABAD PLANNING SUPPORT SERVICES SESSION

The successful preservation of the local environment, the area's cultural heritage, and traditional music and dance through these programmes has inspired surrounding villages, many of which are now beginning to duplicate these efforts. TWL and its clients have benefited from the changed attitudes of local people, many of whom have gained employment or extra income from company activities in the area and now treat the company and visitors more sympathetically. Throughout the Hunza Valley, local communities have expressed their satisfaction with the work of TWL.

Comments

The greatest concern for TWL in establishing organised tourism in the region was the danger of degradation of traditional farmland as a result of the influx of visitors. The hillsides surrounding the bowl of Karimabad became dotted with new buildings erected on traditional terraces and centuries-old orchards. The situation has now been effectively controlled by the Town Management Society.

Box 2: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Karimabad

After the opening of the Karakorum Highway, local occupations and employment patterns began to change radically. This process was speeded up by the establishment of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in 1979, which led to the creation of village organisations. The new trades and occupations now supported by tourism include retail commerce, hotels and restaurants, guides and tour agents, and transportation of visitors in all-terrain vehicles and mini-buses. The Aga Khan Historic Cities Support Programme helped create the Karimabad Planning Support Services, which gave rise to a development plan that stressed orderly physical growth, the development of Karimabad and the maintenance of environmental and cultural assets. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture engaged a team to develop proposals to save Baltit Fort from further decay and to preserve the complex.

6.4 VASCO Travel: Restoration of the Sarica Church in Cappadocia



Description of Good Practice

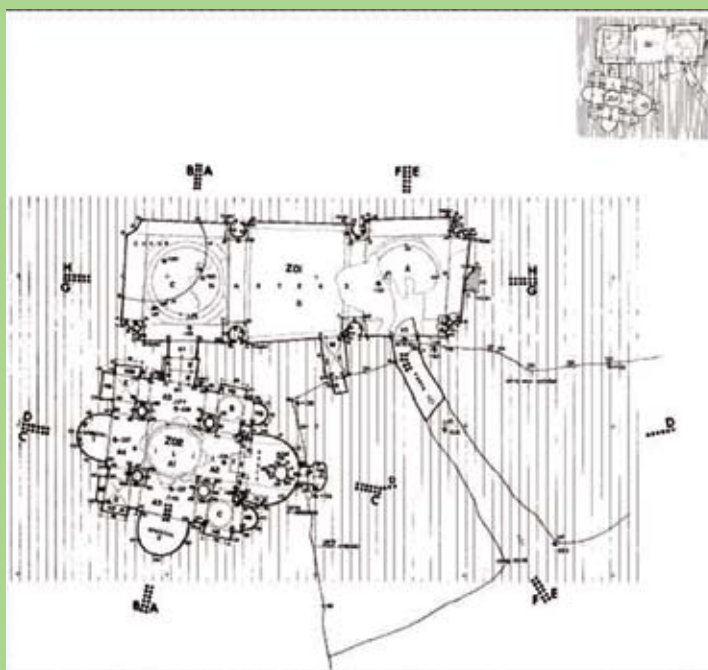
To contribute to local development and improve co-operation with local communities, VASCO Travel, which offers travel services and tours in Turkey for about 200,000 customers per year from Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, has initiated and financially supported the restoration of Sarica Church in Cappadocia, central Turkey. Sarica Church is a soft limestone carved structure, typical of rock cut churches in Cappadocia. The restoration project was considered necessary to preserve the church, as the soft limestone was being destroyed by moisture and humidity, and a large crack had developed in the building's structure.

Although Sarica Church was not originally on VASCO's itineraries, in summer 1996, a VASCO tour of Cappadocia with the Austrian Federation of Seniors came across the church by chance and recognised its need for preservation. VASCO's representatives realised that the church could disappear in a few years, as water was filtering in from the roof, destabilising the whole structure. As Sarica was a small-scale rock cut church, VASCO's General Manager decided to contribute directly to its conservation by financing the restoration work.

The project began in 1997, with the collection of church documentation phase, and the restoration work started in August 2001. Restoration plans were submitted to and approved by the State Monument Protection Board. During the restoration of the church, a building that once served as a dining room for the monks was discovered directly next to the church, and it is now being restored. This additional work has caused the restoration project to take longer than anticipated and required additional funds from VASCO.

Implementation

The restoration activities were co-ordinated by KA.BA Conservation of Historic Buildings and Architecture Ltd, a restoration company based in Ankara. The company was selected after consulting with experts at museums and universities. Within VASCO, the General Manager was personally in charge of the project and oversaw the whole process. On-site management was handled by KA.BA, which reported on a periodic basis to the General Manager. VASCO supported the work of KA.BA's staff of architects, workers and civil engineers. In addition, an associate professor of Byzantine Art History from Hacettepe University in Ankara and an expert on Cappadocian architecture served as advisors during the restoration process.



PLANS FOR THE CHURCH RESTORATION



EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE RESTORATION

VASCO invested about US\$150,000 in this project, including fees for all the workers, experts and architects; these funds came from VASCO's corporate budget. To help create wider support for the project, VASCO also used the name of Magic Life International, an affiliate company, which is widely known in the area.

VASCO's itineraries in Cappadocia now include a guided visit to the church, with a detailed explanation on the restoration efforts. Once the overall project is completed, a permanent exhibition will be available to all visitors on the restoration and rock cut type churches.

Benefits

The benefits of VASCO's support for the restoration of Sarica Church have included:

- The destruction of a historical cultural monument, part of the cultural heritage of Turkey, has been prevented.
- The attention surrounding this project has attracted tourists to the site, reducing the concentration of visitors at some other crowded nearby sites and contributing to the overall site management of Cappadocia as a whole.
- VASCO has received very positive feedback from the tourism industry: an article was published in the magazine of the Turkish travel agencies and the project has brought a high level of prestige to the company.
- The Turkish Ministry of Culture highly appreciated the project, as Sarica is a unique example of rock cut churches in Cappadocia. The restoration has helped VASCO earn the confidence of official agencies including the Ministry of Culture and the State Monument Protection Board, facilitating some of the company's other bigger cultural tourism projects.
- VASCO employees are proud of the project and of being a part of this endeavour.

Comments

The Sarica Church restoration project was the very first of its kind in Cappadocia undertaken with funds from the private sector. Private investment was needed for the restoration, as the Turkish government is only able to fund small projects. However, the Government did contribute to the project by streamlining bureaucratic processes.

The church restoration also offered the opportunity to further bridge a cultural gap, as visitors brought to Sarica were surprised that, in a Muslim country like Turkey, an old Orthodox Christian church was restored by a Turkish company. After September 11th, these themes are very often discussed during excursions and trips.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE RESTORATION

6.5 Viaggi del Ventaglio: Supporting Local Communities in the Dominican Republic



Description of Good Practice

Viaggi del Ventaglio, one of the leading Italian outbound and domestic tour operators, manages 40 hotels worldwide through its daughter company VentaClub. The company's commitment to sustainable development focuses not just on environmental management and performance in its hotels, but also on the environmental, social and economic conditions in receiving destinations and funds specific activities to improve the quality of life for local communities in these destinations.

In 1998, the company's president, Mr Bruno Colombo, decided to grant US\$1 per bed/night to the Dominican Ministry of Tourism, to help repair damage that resulted from Hurricane George, one of the most violent storms to hit the Caribbean in recent years. The hurricane devastated the Dominican Republic and severely affected the livelihoods of local people dependent on tourism.

The fund-raising operation began on 20 December 1998, with the opening of VentaClub Gran Dominicus and the establishment of an account called Contribución para Bayahibe de Viaggi del Ventaglio (Contributions for Bayahibe from Viaggi del Ventaglio). The contributions were paid into the account regularly by the company, on the basis of the number of bed/nights sold in each period.

Implementation

Contribution to this account lasted for one year and generated about US\$150,000. The money was used for two projects:

- Restoring and repainting local houses in Bayahibe: Most houses in Bayahibe were suffering from general decay before the hurricane worsened the situation, threatening a loss of the typical character that distinguishes this little fishing village. Part of the funds were used to restore and repaint 40 local houses in typical Dominican colours.
- Conservation and development of Saona Island: The island of Saona, located inside the Parque Nacional del Este in the Dominican Republic, represents a unique and beautiful, but delicate ecosystem, and is a favourite excursion for hotels located in the area. The main economic activities on the island are fishing and sales of handicrafts from Haiti. Ventaglio funds were used to reconstruct 63 houses in the village of Manojuan, which was badly damaged by Hurricane George, and to promote and develop local handicrafts, through small grants to local enterprises.



MR. COLOMBO MEETING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The funds raised by Ventaglio were directly managed by the Secretary of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, Mr Felix

Jimenez. The two projects were selected by Mr Jimenez and Mr Colombo, and managed and implemented by the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic.

Benefits

This initiative has generated benefits for the local communities, tourists, Dominican authorities and the company:

- For the local communities, the reconstruction of more than 100 houses helped to improve their standard of living. In addition, the community of Saona has gained additional income and increased value of its cultural heritage through the stimulation of the local handicrafts market;
- For the tourists, a more attractive environment at these destinations means added value for their holidays;
- For the Dominican authorities, the project has meant a new partner for their rehabilitation efforts; and
 - For the company, this action has strengthened its relationship with the local authorities, particularly the Ministry of Tourism.



RESTORED HOUSES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Comments

This initiative succeeded in part because concrete actions were identified and implemented in the areas where the company conducts its main operations. Although it was hoped that other companies might follow Ventaglio's example, this unfortunately did not occur. An important lesson of this experience

is that it is important to always deal with the same political contact point; change of personnel in the relevant ministries can slow down the process.

Comments from External Reviewers

How to improve the documentation of actions aimed at sustainable tourism development

The tourism industry has an enormous potential either to contribute to socio-economic development worldwide, or to devastate local environments and cultures. In this context, these TOI case studies on the tour operators' contribution to sustainable development break new ground in collecting best practices from tour operators aiming to contribute to sustainable development.


While the information presented is impressive, the creation of long-lasting change in the business community requires the development of a robust and well-defined business case. This is not always straightforward. It is often difficult to quantify some of the intangible benefits companies uncover – such as employee motivation, retention and attraction, gaining legal and local licenses to operate, and brand value and reputation. On the other hand, there are also clear tangible benefits that some companies have mentioned in this report, such as attracting new customers, willingness to pay more for more sustainable travel (sometimes!), increased customer loyalty and lower costs.

Future case studies should provide more details on the financial benefits that companies uncover, underlining the value of these initiatives to the company's own financial success, but also encouraging other companies to participate in the sustainability agenda.

Furthermore the social and environment benefits are clearly articulated in the case studies and demonstrate that many in the industry are working hard to create social and environmental value in the work that they do. Once again, however, while there has been some attempt to quantify and analyse these impacts, further analysis should be undertaken to provide a more detailed and compelling overall picture.

Nonetheless, this is an exceptional first effort by the TOI and the individual operators, and we hope that the initiative will go from strength to strength.

Kavita Prakash-Mani
SustainAbility



This document strengthens the message that tour operators are taking responsibility for their impacts at destinations through the collective clout of firms of varying size and product. The case studies provide an accessible source by reporting, through a single template, a variety of aspects of operations and planning, which allows other tour operators to benchmark against them and drive the sector's standards up.

In order to maximise the transferability to other firms, however, these case studies could be more specific on the corporate social decision-making and accounting. Details on the reasons why companies chose to take the actions here reported, and not others, would facilitate understanding of how priorities were set. In particular, for those companies where the actions reported are part of a tradition of sustainable activity, what were the precedents that allowed the actions to be implemented? It would have therefore been more effective and useful to record in more detail the corporate effort to facilitate sustainable change, in particular providing data on human or financial investment that can be quantified and measured against the reported benefits. Although neither of these two measures are fully quantifiable, they would make it easier for other tour operators to embark on the path of sustainability.

Xavier Font
Leeds Metropolitan University

Notes



Design by:



info@tge.ca

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

www.unep.org

UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. It makes a particular effort to nurture partnerships with other UN bodies possessing complementary skills and delivery capabilities and enhancing the participation of civil society – the private sector, scientific community, NGOs, youth, women, and sports organisations – in the achievement of sustainable development.

The mission of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (www.unep.org) is to encourage decision-makers in government, industry and business to develop and adopt policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner, safer and make efficient use of natural resources. It also encourages them to incorporate environmental costs, ensure environmentally sound management of chemicals, reduce pollution and risks for human beings and the environment, and enable implementation of conventions.

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

www.unesco.org

UNESCO's main objective is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication.

The main UNESCO partners in the Tour Operators' Initiative are the World Heritage Centre, which works to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage, and the Man and Biosphere Program, which promotes the development of a natural and social sciences basis for the sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity, as well as for the improvement of the relationship between people and their environment globally.

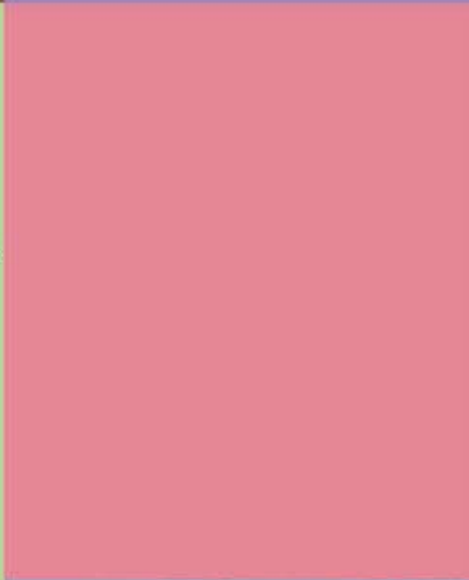
WTO – World Tourism Organization

www.world-tourism.org

The World Tourism Organization is the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. WTO's membership includes 144 countries and territories and more than 350 Affiliate Members representing local government, tourism associations and private sector companies, including airlines, hotel groups and tour operators. With its headquarters in Madrid, Spain, WTO is an inter-governmental body entrusted by the United Nations towards the promotion and development of tourism. Through tourism, WTO aims to stimulate economic growth and job creation, provide incentives for protecting the environment and heritage of destinations, and promote peace and understanding among all the nations of the world.



Tour Operators' Initiative
C/o United Nations Environment Programme
Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
39-43, quai André Citroën
75739 Paris Cedex 15 - France
Tel: +33-1-44371450 - Fax: +33-1-44371474
Email: unep.tie@unep.fr
<http://www.toinitiative.org>



TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

