



SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
INTERNATIONAL

# THE BASICS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

**MODULE 1**



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# COURSE OUTLINE

## WHAT WE'RE COVERING

Sustainable tourism has become important to many travellers when selecting destinations and activities. Travellers are seeking deeper experiences when they visit and want to spend more time in a destination to learn about its culture and natural environment. This is a basic overview course on sustainable tourism fundamentals for your community or Destination Management Organisation.





An aerial photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a small town with colorful roofs is nestled in a valley. A road and a river or stream flow through the landscape. In the background, massive, rugged mountains are covered in snow, with sharp peaks and steep slopes. The sky is clear and blue.

# MODULE 1

# What is Sustainable Tourism?



# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

## A BRIEF DEFINITION

Sustainable tourism is an approach that prioritises protecting the natural environment, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting economic growth in local communities.

To achieve these goals, sustainable tourism involves activities such as reducing waste and emissions, preserving local cultures and traditions, and investing in local economies. It also involves promoting responsible travel practices and support of local business.

Sustainable tourism is a complex and dynamic concept that requires a comprehensive approach involving all stakeholders - government, business and community members - working together to develop, implement, and monitor initiatives. Plans must be tailored to the local context with a clear set of goals and objectives.

This approach has been adopted by many businesses, governments, and organizations around the world as a means to ensure the continued economic and environmental sustainability of tourism





## LOCAL PRODUCTS

Make sure that products by local artisans, bakeries and farms are promoted and sold. What the tourist spends should stay and benefit the community.

## ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Organise a group, association or destination management organisation that has members from each sector of the community. Establish clear roles and responsibilities with scheduled meetings to develop strategic and action plans.





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# LOCAL ECONOMIES AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

## Core Focus

Seek to ensure that visitors enjoy an authentic and positive experience while their presence and activities do not damage the environment or disrupt local life.

Focus on preserving the culture, environment, and economy of the destination to benefit both the visitors and the locals.

## Resources Available and Use

Make the most of your resources! But, minimize any negative impacts. How? Encouraging visitors to buy local products and to be mindful of their environmental impact by reducing their energy and water usage and adhering to any regulations on nature activities. Don't use single-use plastic!

## Communication

Provide visitors with educational materials about the local culture and environment. Establish a group of local guides.

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# SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Create Job Opportunities

Use Sustainable Tourism to create new jobs.

- Planning should include promoting businesses which provide visitors with local products and crafts.
- Develop and implement a plan to establish a local tour guide system with knowledgeable local guides.
- Create activities that encourage visitors to stay longer such as nature excursions, walking tours and visiting local farms and crafts.

## Nature

Develop plans for preserving and protecting the natural ecology.

- Design nature treks, bird watching, and educational walks about local ecological heritage.
- Give seasonal guided excursions that include activities for the visitor, such as mushroom hunts, gathering herbs etc.
- If there are nature trails, make sure they are clearly marked so that visitors do not wander into sensitive areas.

## Sustainable Accommodations

The community destination organisation of association should encourage accommodations to adopt sustainable practices which attract longer stays and higher rates, and promote those which do.

- Do not use plastic bottles or cutlery. Use glass instead.
- Accommodations should buy locally whenever possible.
- Provide visitors with written materials about local culture - in multiple languages.

## Culture

Visitors want to experience genuine local culture.

- Arrange activities that involve the visitor, such as cooking classes, creating a gift to bring home, and learning about local art.
- Create brochures about festivals and events and offer guided or unguided excursions.
- Promote activities that highlight local culture and encourage visitors to buy local crafts.

# THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN

## Critical Elements

### Concrete examples of a sustainable tourism plan:

- Identifying the current infrastructure, local economic conditions, and cultural and natural heritage of the area.
- Evaluating the amount of waste, water, and energy consumed, and the number of jobs created in the tourism sector.
- Promoting sustainable transportation and accommodation options such as public transport, bike rental, and eco-friendly accommodations.
- Encouraging low-impact activities and businesses such as eco-tours and organic farms.
- Investing in environmental monitoring and protection such as water quality testing and wildlife protection.
- Developing educational programs for visitors and providing locals with job opportunities.
- Implementing and monitoring the plan over time to ensure it is effective.



# Where to Next?

By now you see that creating a sustainable destination that attracts visitors who will stay longer and spend more locally involves a good deal of work. Here are some key steps:

- Gather a team that can work together to plan
- Form an association, group, NGO or another type of organisation which:
  - Has representatives from businesses, local residents, NGOs (if possible) and local government
  - Clearly establishes roles and responsibilities
  - Meets on a regular basis
  - Develops a strategic plan with action items to implement the strategy
  - Creates an inventory of tourism assets, with an emphasis on nature and culture
  - Begin planning!





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# UPCOMING BASIC COURSE MODULES

## Basic Environmental Impact

This module will discuss how sustainable tourism can have an impact on the environment and how it can be managed.

## Sustainable Tourism Strategies

This module will discuss basic strategies for sustainable tourism, such as using renewable energy sources, minimizing waste and supporting local businesses

## Creating a Destination Management Organisation

This module will discuss creating a DM Organisation, its structure and tasks.

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## HOW WE CAN HELP

SRDI provides advisory services for sustainable tourism development.

We are a non-profit, based in the UK and have experience in the design, development and implementation of community-based sustainable tourism initiatives. We adhere to Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria and methodology.

We are happy to provide a free assessment of your needs and propose solutions, from design to assisting with the implementation of your plans.

Our rates, as a non-profit, are extremely competitive and we can work with you remotely, on-site or a combination of both.

Contact us through our website or email us at [infosrdi@vesselkaconsult.com](mailto:infosrdi@vesselkaconsult.com)



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**Need help?**



Contact us : [infosrdi@vesselkaconsult.com](mailto:infosrdi@vesselkaconsult.com)

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