



SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT
INTERNATIONAL

ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION ORGANISATION

The Basics
MODULE 2

COURSE OUTLINE

WHAT WE'RE COVERING

Welcome to the basic course on setting up a sustainable tourism destination organization! This course will provide the basic foundation needed to establish a successful organization for your community that can promote and manage your destination's sustainable tourism activities and make it attractive to visitors looking for in-depth experiences.





Why Do We Need a Formal Organisation?

THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION ORGANISATION

AN OVERVIEW

A "formal" organisation does not mean that it must be a legal entity or NGO. The formality of the organisation rests in its structure, clear roles and responsibilities, a vision and mission and a commitment to design, manage and coordinate a strategic program, including marketing strategies to promote the destination's events, products, services, landmarks, and attractions. Getting this right is crucial to success, which is why destination management takes a strategic approach to link up these sometimes very separate elements for the better management of the destination.

This basic course will take a practical approach so you can create a suitable environment and quality delivery on the ground. It will help you learn how to ensure that visitors' expectations are met.

By the end of this course, you will have a basic understanding of the role and responsibilities of the organisation and the steps involved in setting it up.



DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION OR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION?

Do not let names distract you from the purpose of your organisation. A Destination Management Organisation (DMO) is an organization tasked with promoting a destination as a tourist and business travel location. It is typically responsible for marketing the destination to potential visitors, providing visitor services, and managing tourism resources. They are typically public-private partnerships between the local government and the tourism industry. By working together, they aim to develop the destination's tourism sector, stimulate economic growth, and create jobs.

We are concentrating more broadly. A community organisation is less formal and does not need to be a public-private partnership; but, it is created by local stakeholders, in writing and with clear roles and responsibilities, to develop and manage a unified, sustainable tourism strategy to increase visitation while protecting the local ecological and cultural heritage. It is not just for marketing.

In many instances, the organisation can be an association of like-minded stakeholders without the need to form a registered legal entity unless required by practicalities or law. No matter what, its role should be to lead and coordinate activities under a coherent strategy in pursuit of this common goal for the benefit of everyone in the community.

THE DESTINATION

A destination can be anything, including a country, region, province, district, city, park, museum, neighbourhood, etc.

Your community, such as a town or village, would be considered a destination, together with the region surrounding it. In a city, the destination could be your neighbourhood.

ORGANISATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stakeholders

The first step is to identify the stakeholders who will be involved in the organisation. This will include local government representatives, businesses, NGOs like those involved in heritage or ecology, and public representatives that have a stake in the success of the destination. It is important to have a wide range of stakeholders involved so that strategies can be tailored to the needs of the destination.

Legal Requirements

It is important to understand the legal requirements for establishing any type of organisation - whether a legal entity or an association of stakeholders. If there is no one familiar with legal matters among the stakeholders, consult with a local lawyer. There may be a variety of local, regional, and national legal requirements that must be met.

Financial Requirements

The first financial requirement is an operating budget covering all costs, expenses and money for research, such as analyzing tourism data. Include funds for any investments that might be needed.

The second financial requirement is capital which can come from a variety of sources, including private investors, grants, and public-private partnerships. Finally, create a fundraising plan including strategies for raising money from both public and private sources.

Marketing/Promotional Strategies

One of the most important considerations for a marketing strategy is the target audience. Focus on those that are most likely to be interested in the destination such as experiential travellers, businesses and event planners. Responsible travellers are interested in destinations committed to sustainable practices and community involvement in preserving culture and nature. Once a target audience is identified, consider the most effective ways to reach them, such as print and television advertisements, as well as digital platforms.

THE SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PLAN

Creating a strategic vision and plan is required to unite the organisation, acting as a shared statement of intent to manage, develop and promote a destination and sustainable policies over a specific period of time. It identifies the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders, sets out clear actions and allocates resources.

There are multiple main components in a strategic plan. These include destination vision and goals, stakeholder engagement, visitor experience, infrastructure and facilities, destination marketing, environmental management, cultural heritage, transport, visitor information, visitor safety and security, crisis management, monitoring and evaluation, funding, governance and partnership, and digital and technological innovation.

Plan Components

Assessment of Assets

- Market Analysis
- Destination Inventory
- Stakeholder Analysis

Vision & Goals

- Vision Statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Performance Measures

Development Strategy

- Product Development
- Site and Route Planning
- Sustainable Infrastructure Development
- Visitor Management Strategies
- Marketing and Promotion

Implementation Plan

- Action Plan
- Budget and Resources
- Roles and Responsibilities

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Performance Metrics
- Review and Reporting

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN

Assessment of Assets

- Make an inventory of your tourism assets, such as historical sites, natural heritage, cultural events and unique aspects of the destination community that will attract visitors.
- Create a sense of place. Identify the current infrastructure and local economic conditions, current travel market and assess needs.
- Evaluate the amount of waste, water, and energy consumed, and the number of jobs that exist and can be created.
- Identify and plan for sustainable transport and accommodation options such as public transport, bike rental, and eco-friendly accommodations.
- Identify stakeholders that are both direct and indirectly involved in the tourism value chain.

Vision & Goals

Vision Statement: Define current values and principles and then your aspirations. Current values and principles should be combined with aspirational ones to develop the key attributes of the community. Make sure all stakeholders are involved.

- Identify key elements to create the vision statement. It could include product development, marketing and promotion, community relations, research and planning partnering and team building.

Goals and Objectives: Prioritize goals for the short, medium and long term; create an action plan to reach those goals. You should have a set of goals for each element included in the vision statement.

Performance Measures: Set measures of performance. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system and a risk assessment. Be flexible to take into consideration unanticipated events. Any monitoring and evaluation plan should indicate roles and responsibilities.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a key part of the overall planning process. Creating an M&E system requires several components and must reflect the goals and action plan.

- Each objective may have several goals and to reach those goals an action plan must be prepared. Keep in mind, some actions may be dependent on others.
- The M&E plan should indicate who is responsible for each activity and what measure (metric) is used to determine success. A time period should be shown to guide the activities and their implementation but also for the purpose of transparency for the entire team.
- Finally, make sure to create a risk assessment that shows the likelihood of the risk, its impact and what mitigation measures are in place.

Development Strategy

The Development Strategy involves many parts, depending on the destination.

The organisation should have a team with assignments to cover the following:

- **Product Development**
- **Site and Route Planning**
- **Sustainable Infrastructure Development**
- **Visitor Management Strategies**
- **Marketing and Promotion**

Each of these components needs its own "mini-strategic" plan that can be used to develop detailed action plans.

All the components have an impact on each other, so having an effective team made up of stakeholders leading each effort is important for success.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN

The Implementation Plan

You have established your organisation and included the stakeholders in the community in the entire process. Roles and responsibilities have been agreed upon, a monitoring and evaluation plan is in place, risks identified and managed, all tourism assets have been inventoried and an overall strategy has been set. Now what? Take all those pieces and put them into the Implementation Plan.

Below are the main components:

1. Introduction: The introduction of the implementation plan should clearly explain your organisation's purpose, vision, and mission as well as risk areas.
2. Project Strategy: You already have this finished! The section should explain the overall approach and strategy for achieving the project goals, objectives, target outcomes, and key performance indicators.
3. Project Timeline: Include the timeline you have already prepared! The timeline shows specific tasks and deadlines required to complete tasks.
4. Resources: Now, assess and identify your resources - something that has been partially done. List team members, equipment, facilities, and budget.
5. Communication Plan: Create an effective communication plan to ensure everyone involved is aware of what is happening.

The Next Step

Perhaps the hardest part of developing a sustainable tourism program in your community is establishing an organisation. But, a large group is not necessarily required if there is a core team of a few inspired participants.

So, put together a small, dedicated team and form the core of the organisation. Make sure, as much as possible, that your team:

- Have key stakeholders involved from the community, including businesses, local residents and local government;
- Clearly establishes roles and responsibilities and meets on a regular basis;
- Develops a strategic and implementation plan, including monitoring and evaluation.



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

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

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL



Need help?

Contact us : infosrdi@vesselkaconsult.com

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