
Understanding the Sustainable Development of Tourism

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Sustainable Operations Management

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

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Sustainable Operations Management

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Rationale

Unlike many business sectors, tourism is an amalgamation of various industries offering products and services ranging from airline and cruise ship travel and accommodation to restaurant meals, entertainment, souvenirs and gifts, park services, recreational vehicles, resort development, safaris, leisure and recreational opportunities.

There is growing recognition that established management practices have led to undesirable social and environmental impacts, some of which, in turn, threaten the sustainability of tourism operations. It is consequently the management of tourism operations, at the local and individual level, that has major implications for sustainability. It is essential that forces of change begin with company policy and actions at the organisational level.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce, discuss and analyse sustainable tourism as applied to real tourism operations. This chapter will introduce students to the principles of sustainable operations, will explore the ways in which tourism operations can progress to limit their negative impact and play a more responsible part in tourism sustainability.

Learning objectives

After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

- ◆ Understand key sustainability principles as they apply to operations management in tourism
- ◆ Identify the potential socio-cultural, environmental and economic impacts of tourism businesses
- ◆ Identify strategies to balance environmental and socio-cultural sustainability with economic viability
- ◆ Implement key sustainability practices in tourism operations; and
- ◆ Evaluate performance in achieving sustainable practice in tourism operations.

Identification

International agencies such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have called upon the tourism industry to develop environmentally, socially and culturally

Industry insight: Accor

For many years, Accor has been committed to sustainable development and has received a number of awards for its activities, such as an award for the best environmental information tools in support of sustainable development in December 2000. Accor's sustainable policy is incorporated in every level of its businesses. Actions taken under this policy include:

Cooperation with destinations:

- ◆ \$1 per reserved room at Accor's Homebush Bay Novotel and Ibis hotels (Sydney) goes to support WWF.
- ◆ Financial support for five restoration projects of UNESCO program 'Memories of the future'.
- ◆ Financial support to develop small and micro enterprises in developing countries. These projects are carried out by the ONG Groupe Développement.

Customer awareness

- ◆ A leaflet for guests staying in its Red Sea hotels provides information on precautions that should be taken to preserve the coastal and marine environment.
- ◆ A comic book for children raises awareness of environmental issues.
- ◆ Support of ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography And Trafficking of children for sexual purposes) campaign against sexual tourism involving children.

Internal management:

- ◆ The charter is supported by an environmental guide for hotel managers to use as a training tool for hotel staff.
- ◆ Through the Academy Accor, all employees are trained on Accor's environmental policy by a six-minute video and a poster campaign.
- ◆ Development of a training guide on the rational use of electricity, water and gas for the hotels staff. The aim is that they reproduce best practices actions at home. 'A l'hôtel comme à la maison'.

Supply chain management:

- ◆ Accor has developed an Environmental Hotel Charter to be implemented in all its property hotels. The charter includes 15 actions to improve practices in waste management and recycling, technical controls, architecture and landscape, as well as awareness raising and training.
- ◆ For the Olympic Games in Sydney, Accor opened a 327-room hotel complex on the Olympic site in Homebush Bay. Its environmental features included the recycling of most of the rainwater and wastewater and 250 sq. m of solar panels on the rooftops, which produce 60% of hot water required for hotel bathrooms.
- ◆ Development of the use of renewable energies in many hotels.

Accor works in close collaboration with Groupe Développement, an international solidarity organisation set up in 1973 at the initiative of Air France, which is working towards sustainable development through microeconomics. Accor gave financial support to five projects on the development of small and micro enterprises in developing countries to fight against poverty. The projects are located in Egypt, Mali, Senegal, Chad, Colombia and Romania (Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, 2010)

Chapter extract

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