



Advisor Resources Package

competence area 1

**sustainable tourism &
SDGs**

developed by **Mindshift**



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Advisor Resource Package: **introduction**

Addressed to:

- Sustainable tourism advisors
- VET providers
- Small tourism providers

offers a set of eight blended learning resources to support tourism and local development through the promotion of sustainable and efficient use of natural, cultural and economic resources in watercourse regions.



sustainable tourism & SDGs: about competence area 1

Sustainability focuses on meeting present needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to meet their own needs. It is composed of three pillars: economic/profits, environmental/planet, and social/people. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop in order to guide small tourism providers, in watercourse regions, to adopt more sustainable practices in their local businesses.



sustainable tourism & SDGs: in this competence area you will learn how to

- define sustainable tourism
- demonstrate how tourism has the potential to contribute to the SDGs
- describe the targets that are related to sustainable tourism development included in SDGs 8, 12 and 14
- support small tourism providers defining sustainability priorities for their business
- customise a plan for the implementation of the SDGs' goals by small tourism providers in watercourse regions
- advise small tourism providers on the importance of developing green skills
- debate on how to address sustainability and the SDGs in tourism activities in watercourse regions

Competence area 1: **guidance**



In this section you can find knowledge-based contents presenting key factual and conceptual information about the topics covered by the **sustainable tourism & SDGs** competence area

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They comprise a **set of 17 goals** which are an urgent and universal call to action to end poverty, improve health and education, tackle climate change, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Sustainable Development Goals

Under SDG 8 '**Decent work and economic growth**', countries are called to promote sustainable economic growth, high productivity and technological innovation to achieve full, productive and decent employment. As one of the top global sectors, particularly in terms of job creation, tourism should provide decent work opportunities and policies should favour tourism's positive socio-economic impacts.

SDG 8



Under SDG 12 '**Responsible consumption and production**', countries are called to reduce the ecological footprint by changing the way goods and resources are produced and consumed (e.g., efficient management of shared natural resources, toxic waste and pollutants disposal practices, recycling and food waste and security). The tourism sector needs to adopt these practices to accelerate the shift towards sustainability.

SDG 12

SDG 14 'Life below water' aims to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution, as well as address the impacts of ocean acidification, by enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of ocean-based resources. **Coastal and marine tourism** rely on a healthy marine ecosystem and, therefore, tourism must act as a vehicle for the **blue economy**, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.

SDG 14



Sustainable tourism 'takes full account of its current and future **economic, social and environmental impacts**, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities' (World Tourism Organisation). Sustainable tourism does not refer to a specific type of tourism. It is an aspiration for the impacts of all forms of tourism.

Sustainable tourism



Ecotourism is a segment of tourism that involves '**responsible travel to natural areas** that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education' of both staff and guests (The International Ecotourism Society). It is about minimising and raising awareness of social and environmental impacts in natural areas.

Ecotourism



The Blue economy 'encompasses **all industries and sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts**, whether they are based in the marine environment (e.g., shipping, fisheries, energy generation) or on land (e.g., ports, shipyards, land-based aquaculture and algae production, coastal tourism' (European Commission)

Blue economy



Oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, streams, dams and other water resources drive economic growth, but at the same time, these blue Earth's natural resources are fast-depleting by unsustainable tourism-related activities. Blue tourism is a segment of tourism that involves the promotion of **sustainable tourism practices** around any **watercourse**, so as to attract visitors and make sure critical environmental and social impacts are reduced.

Blue tourism



The greening of the economy based on the SDGs will change the skills required and tasks involved in many existing occupations. Green skills are the **skills needed to adapt processes, services and products to climate change** and the environmental regulations related to it. They include the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.

Green skills

Blue skills are usually included and considered as part of 'green skills' and refer to the **skills necessary to determine and manage water quality and demand** in coastal and marine areas. Directly related to the increased importance of the **blue economy**, blue skills is a relatively new term to refer to the need to invest in education and awareness-raising to support sustainable practices in this sector.

Blue skills



Competence area 1: **tutorials**



In this section you can find a set of self-explanatory task-cards, specifically designed to provide real-world challenge and supply the practical information to develop your competences on **sustainable tourism & SDGs**

Task card 1: defining sustainability priorities for your business

outline

This action card aims to support the **sustainable tourism advisor** in guiding the small tourism provider in defining sustainability priorities for their business. To achieve that, the sustainable tourism advisor will present a set of strategies and tools so that **small tourism providers**, interested in committing to sustainability practices, can identify and then define their own sustainable business priorities within the framework of the SDGs.

Action 1: **collect information**

Step1: access the tourism4SDGs platform

Step2: read about the SDGs and its relation to the tourism sector

Step3: access the company's profile in the tourism4SDG platform and download the recommendations



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/Oalh2MojUuk>

Action 2: make a diagnosis

Step1: underline the recommendations that somehow relate to your business practices

Step2: map your business activities by using Porter's value chain model or other flow charts

Step3: identify the business activities in which the SDGs could have a higher impact



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/pqzRfBhd9r0>

Action 3: **assess and define**

Step1: use the Logic Model for analysing the sustainability impacts and priorities of your business by linking them with SDGs

Step2: analyse complementary sustainability priorities

Step3: define the final priority areas with higher impact for your business by using an impact matrix



source: https://unsplash.com/photos/_AdUs32i0jc

Throughout this action card, you have learned about **how tourism has the potential to contribute to the SDGs** by making a diagnosis of your business's current sustainability practices and priorities.

These initial steps will help you in assessing and defining what sustainability priorities are more relevant to your business. You can replace the tools suggested to others more adaptable to your needs and knowledge.

A **periodic assessment** of such priorities must be made so that you can improve your business competitiveness and commitment to sustainability.

summary

Task card 2: drafting a sustainability plan for your business

outline

This task card aims to **promote the implementation of SDGs** by small tourism providers in watercourse regions. Specifically, methodologies and tools will be offered so that a process of sustainable change can happen, through the introduction, development and implementation of new strategies for sustainability based on a **customised action plan**.

Action 1: **revise**

Step1: brainstorm about your business model (BM) and the changes it needs to include your new sustainable priorities

Step2: synthesise your BM by using the sustainable business model canvas (SBMC)

Step3: include in your new SBMC your business sustainable priorities and key indicators and SDGs



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/m2TU2gfqSeE>

Action 2: present and validate

Step1: prepare an appealing presentation of your SBMC

Step2: pitch the presentation to your team (internal) and relevant stakeholders (external)

Step3: collect all feedback and make the necessary changes to your SBMC



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/wD1LRb9OeEo>

Action 3: **draft**

Step1: translate the SBMC into a strategic sustainability plan (detail objectives, indicators, projects to be developed)

Step2: include a SMART methodology analysis

Step3: propose and define a sustainability governance for periodic assessments



source: https://unsplash.com/photos/376KN_ISpIE

Throughout this action card, you have learned about the steps and tools needed to customise a plan to implement and/or integrate the SDGs in your business. You have done this by analysing your current business model and by adding and/or integrating the sustainability priorities you have defined before from the Tourism for SDGs framework.

You have also been presented to the sustainable business model canvas tool, in a new model that can help you better visualise how your business is or can contribute to the SDGs. For further definition of new sustainable development strategies within a business reality, you can also use the **Sustainability Balanced Scoreboard** tool.

summary

Competence area 1: **hands-on resources**



In this section you can find scenario-based situations designed specifically to illustrate how **sustainable tourism & SDGs** competence area can be put in practice by small tourism providers



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/bpoe9uWciPU>

Scenario 1: promoting green skills

The owner of a small hostel near a riverside wishes to turn the business into a more sustainable venture. He/she identified a set of sustainability priorities and defined a clear action plan and now wants to **promote green skills among his/her staff** to match its new sustainable business model, forecasting their relevance for the implementation of SDGs in his/her business strategic priorities and daily activities.

Scenario 1

There is a small business owner operating near the most well-known and touristic river in his/her region. He/she owns a **small hostel** very close to one of the river banks.

Every year, his/her region attracts a great number of tourists waiting to enjoy the riverside – to relax, enjoy the beaches and do water sports.

However, every year there is an increasing concern with **water management, and waste disposal** in the river and environmental concerns grow stronger for all touristic operators.

Linked with environmental concerns is the fear of this area becoming less attractive or even prohibited for future tourists, thus **jeopardising all businesses** that depend on it.

Scenario 1

He/she wants to change his/her current business model to **include sustainability priorities**, from which his/her business could implement more environmental-friendly practices.

The small hostel owner is aware of the environmental challenges that have been affecting his/her region and the riverside, particularly those that fall under **SDG 12 and 14** - decrease in water level and water quality, disposal of plastic and toxic waste to the river.

Every day he/she sees this harmful behaviour happening from tourist operators and customers and, he/she wants to set the example so that others might follow and his/her region might become known as a **sustainable tourism destination**.

Scenario 1

The small hostel owner starts by assessing the business priorities (have more customers staying at the hostel, provide more tours across the riverside), analysing its daily activities (clean the rooms, provide breakfast, provide guided tours) and identifying the priority areas in which implementing environmental-friendly practices linked with SDG 12 and 14 would have a higher impact.

He/she comes up with three **sustainable priority areas**: (i) reduce plastic waste, (ii) increase water efficiency use and (iii) promote a circular economy model for the businesses organic waste.

He/she drafts a SBMC and presents these priorities to his/her staff, as they will be the ones most involved in its implementation, to validate the changes he/she wants to make.

Scenario 1

However, the small hostel owner's staff shows some reluctance. They do not understand how these changes will, in fact, help the environment and do not feel they have the necessary knowledge to help implement those good practices. He/she translates his/her SBMC into a strategic **sustainability plan** (in which he/she details the objectives, indicators, and projects to be developed) based on his/her business's three priority areas.

But before he/she starts with the implementation of concrete measures, he/she realises he/she needs to raise his/her staff's awareness of environmental challenges in their region, and also provide them with the necessary skills to be the drivers of change in his/her business. The small hostel owner devises a series of workshops, one for each priority area.

Scenario 1

The workshops are intended to help the small hostel owner to raise awareness among his/her staff regarding the environmental challenges facing the area and how the business, with their support, could contribute to a greener practices.

They were provided with the necessary **green skills to help the small hostel business become more sustainable**. They were able to (i) identify the challenges, (ii) understand their impact, (iii) search for green alternatives and (iv) come up with concrete suggestions for change.

Scenario 1

With their support, the small hostel was able to

- (i) reduce the consumption of plastic, by presenting glass alternatives in catering
- (ii) implement a new towel washing practice (only upon the request of customers and not every day) and
- (iii) start its own food waste composting to be used in their vegetable and fruit garden.

Scenario 1: promoting green skills

- Should the small hostel owner have a role in awareness raising regarding environmental challenges in its region?
- What new skills should be expected from the staff when a business owner decides to adopt a sustainable business model?
- In what ways do promoting the staff's green skills increase tourists' awareness?

Scenario 1: promoting green skills

TRY to

- Brainstorm the changes to your business model to include sustainable priorities with your staff before implementing them
- Identify the skills gap among your staff and then organise customised training sessions for green skills development
- Raise your staff's awareness of environmental challenges and the importance of acquiring green skills, to be agents of change in their jobs and in their region

AVOID to

- Develop a sustainability action plan, defining priorities, indicators and concrete actions without involving your staff in the process, as they might resist change
- Organise training sessions for green skills development without a clear identification of the staffs and your own business needs
- Assume that environmental concerns are as important for other people as they are for you. Raise awareness first, then ask for changes



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/DbzIcq5Rg0>

Scenario 2: addressing sustainability

The Government of a given country has decided to **build an artificial lake**, to increase agriculture and promote tourism in that region. A small business owner decides to take advantage of this and starts a **local boat trip business**. Over the years, several regulations are approved to turn all lake-related activities eco-friendly and in line with the SDGs adopted for that region and the local business needs to find innovative and sustainable ways to adapt.

Scenario 2

The Government of a given country has decided to build an artificial lake to take advantage of natural and cultural resources in that region.

The region integrates several municipalities that intended to consolidate their economic base around agriculture and tourism. Over the years, this region became a reference for job creation and economic growth, particularly related to increased tourism-related activities.

Taking advantage of this situation, a small business owner decides to start a local business offering boat trips on the lake. His/her main interest was profit.

Scenario 2

A couple of years later, the Government, together with the municipalities covered by the lake, decided to draft a sustainability strategy for the region focused on the **valorisation of sustainable tourism and agricultural sectors**.

This would be the main reference for all businesses in the region, meaning that it would directly affect every day operations of the small boat trips' business owner.

He/she would have to **find new eco-friendly ways to conduct its business**, so as to contribute to the region's overall sustainability strategy. At first, there was some reluctance, but then he/she started seeing this as a way to innovate and perhaps further grow his/her business.

Scenario 2

The first step the boat trip business owner decided to take was to discuss the new sustainability strategy at two levels.

First internally, with its staff, to see how the sustainability goals at the macro level could be translated into concrete activities within the company. Sustainability priorities were identified and an action plan was drafted.

Secondly, **at an external level, with other tourism business owners operating in the region and the municipalities**, to identify common strategies for all and propose joint sustainable projects based on public funding. These were then added to the small boat trips' business owner's sustainability action plan.

Scenario 2

Based on the two-level consultation done by the boat trips' small business owner, he/she was able to **comply with the Government's regulations** and support the environmental needs of the region where he/she operated.

At a business level, he/she was able to **implement new sustainable practices** with the support of the business's staff e.g., provide new services such as bike trips or walking nature trips around the lake, together with other tourism operators they were able to define a schedule for boat trips so as to not overuse the river, while each maintaining a profitable business. As a collective they were then able secure public funding for buying electric boats etc.

Scenario 2: addressing sustainability

- In what ways should tourism operators in watercourse regions be more prepared for the adoption of sustainability regulations?
- How should a tourism operator in a watercourse region engage with the relevant stakeholders to implement eco-friendly practices?
- What is the importance of public funding for supporting sustainable regional tourism?

Scenario 2: addressing sustainability

TRY to

- Keep up with international / European / national / regional regulations on sustainability, to understand the expectations for the tourism sector
- Engage with all relevant stakeholders (staff, other businesses, municipality) to collect the necessary feedback when devising a sustainability strategy
- Promote joint projects with other tourism operators and the municipalities so that the economic costs of being more eco-friendly are spread by all evenly

AVOID to

- Keep up to date by hearing about sustainability regulations that might affect your business by keeping up to date with all news worthy information.
- Drafting your business sustainability action plan adapted for the watercourse region you operate at without asking for feedback from the relevant stakeholders. They are also agents of change
- Networking is so important .Avoid the risk of isolating your business and jeopardising the economic sustainability of your business.

Competence area 1: **practical tips**



In this section you can find a checklist of points to adopt **sustainable tourism & SDGs** practices in local tourism businesses

Familiarise yourself with the SDGs and understand the opportunities and responsibilities they represent to your tourism business in terms of delivering innovative and effective sustainable solutions

Practical tip 1

Strengthen your stakeholder relations and keep pace with policy development on sustainable tourism, as the SDGs reflect stakeholder expectations and future policy direction. If your tourist business is aligned with SDGs, you can better engage with customers, staff and other stakeholders

Practical tip 2

Make sure to always involve your staff in any changes you want to make to your business model towards the adoption of more sustainable practices and provide them with the necessary training. Always remember that their direct contact with the tourist makes them the most efficient agents of behavioural change

Practical tip 3

Regularly monitor your eco-friendly practices and adapt accordingly, to make sure that you keep the positive environmental impact without jeopardising your tourism business profits. In the end, you should make sure you find the right balance between environmental and economic sustainability of your business

Practical tip 4

Competence area 1: **useful reading**



In this section you can find a list of relevant online resources to help you go further on **sustainable tourism & SDGs**

A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU

www.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240&from=EN

SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth

www.tourism4sdgs.org/sdg-8-decent-work-economic-growth/

SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production

www.tourism4sdgs.org/sdg-12-responsible-consumption-and-production/

SDG 14 – Life below water

www.tourism4sdgs.org/sdg-14-life-below-water/

Skills and career development in the blue economy

www.webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1645



Sustainable Tourism Development

www.unwto.org/sustainable-development

Towards a sustainable marine and coastal tourism

www.ecounion.eu/en/portfolio/blue-tourism/

What are green skills?

www.unido.org/stories/what-are-green-skills

What are the SDGs?

www.tourism4sdgs.org/tourism-for-sdgs/what-are-the-sdgs/

What is Ecotourism?

www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/



You have completed competence area 1, well done!



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