



Advisor Resources Package

competence area 7

**networking & local
partnerships**

developed by **TRH**



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Advisor Resource Package: **introduction**

Addressed to:

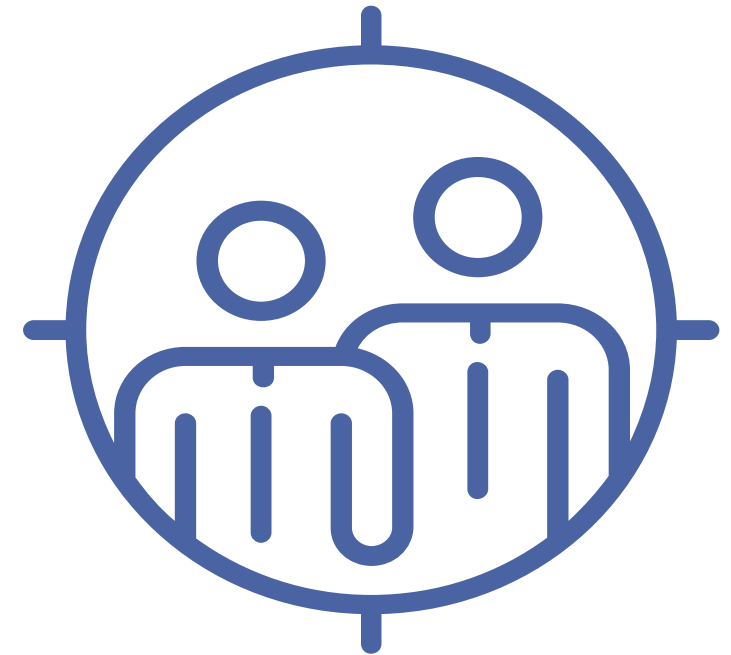
- Sustainable tourism advisors
- VET providers
- Small tourism providers

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.



networking & local partnerships: about competence area 7

The tourism industry is a complex global environment in which networking among diverse actors and stakeholders is essential in order to supply integrated tourism products and provide the best service to the visitor or tourist. This competence area explores the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire in order to build local networks and partnerships amongst the various stakeholders, such as tourism enterprises, tourists, national tourism offices, infrastructure providers and other types of supporting organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism to build competitive advantage as a sustainable blue destination.



networking & local partnerships: in this competence area you will learn how to

- define the importance of networking and local partnership within sustainable tourism
- describe how networking can be effective in boosting local partnerships to promote blue tourism offers
- identify best practice examples within the tourism sector
- identify opportunities for local collaboration networks
- demonstrate how local networks and partnerships could be operationalised in their region
- argue for the creation of local sustainable networks centred on blue tourism
- collaborate with tourism stakeholders to encourage networking and local partnerships
- guide and promote a more collaborative approach to sustainable tourism locally through tourism networks

Competence area 7: **guidance**



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

The tourism industry is a tricky environment in which networking among various partners is necessary to provide integrated tourist products and give the best service to the end user. The necessity to create networks of close collaborative relationships seems to be even stronger in tourism when compared with other industries since tourism enterprises are predominantly micro and small-sized organisations, fragmented over a geographic area.

Networking

Local partnerships are vital for small tourism providers to stave off competition from bigger global players and remain competitive at a local level. Partnering up with like-minded small local businesses, tourism industry bodies and local community and environmental organisations can give tourism providers stronger roots, better exposure and a better chance to succeed with sustainable practices in their local area.

Local Partnerships



Networking with other local businesses can lead to growth in other blue tourism businesses. A local water-based tourism partnership has the potential to provide growth for the local blue tourism generally and by working together, blue tourism providers can reduce their impact on climate change through the sharing of resources in a closed-loop type system).

How Networking Can Boost Local Partnerships to Promote Blue Tourism



Authorities in Thailand took the decision to close Maya Bay as the tourism hot spot was having a negative effect on the local flora and fauna with as much as 50% of the Coral destroyed. The initial plan was for a 4-month closure, but it was eventually reopened 4 years after its initial closure, with the authorities' efforts leading to a revived ecosystem and a return of many animals to the area. New tourism infrastructure sees restrictions in place that now better protect the area for its long-term preservation.

Best Practice Examples within the Tourism Sector

It is estimated that the world's wetlands independently supply \$47 trillion worth of ecological services yearly. Services such as coastal flood defenses, carbon sequestration, and breeding grounds for commercial fish, and support at least 1 billion jobs. Local enterprises can take advantage of this opportunity to promote the Blue Economy via networking and local partnerships to create jobs and maximise their profits.

Opportunities for local collaboration networks



Tourism bodies and authorities have a clear role to play in helping local tourism providers to create partnerships and work together for the overall benefit of the area. They should be the place that small tourism businesses can turn to when they need to find a partner for a specific need or want to become part of a network. Businesses themselves should also take the initiative to contact potential like-minded partners directly.

How Local Networks and Partnerships Could be Made Operational in their Region

Tourism can play a critical part in the conservation of marine protected areas, and collaboration is a keystone idea in the management of relationships between tourism and environmental preservation. Appropriate strategies and practical mechanisms include participative structures and consultation to attain a balance between the demands of tourists and the environment; likewise, local and regional collaborations and partnerships to create benefits for all stakeholders.

Local sustainable networks centred on Blue Tourism



Stakeholder collaboration has been considered necessary for the success of sustainable tourism. Stakeholder collaboration can be especially beneficial in addressing specific factors relevant to local tourism destinations that may hinder the success of the destination.

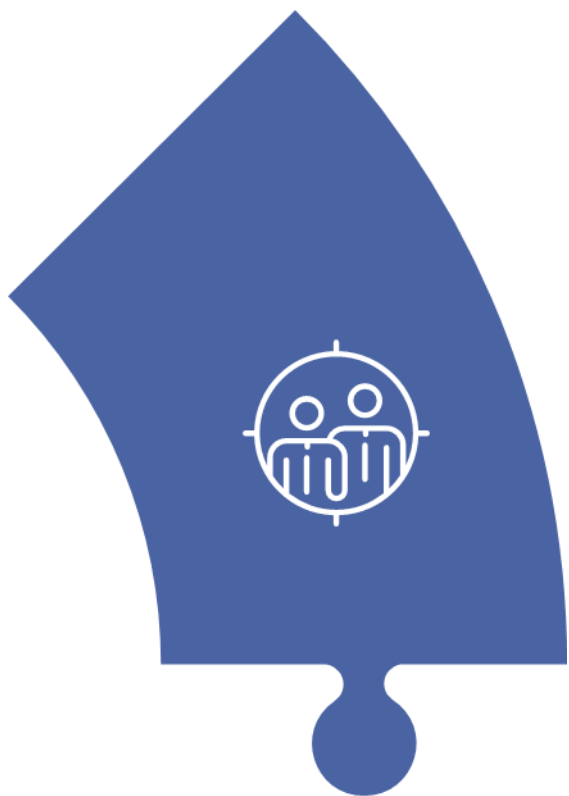
Stakeholders to encourage networking and local partnerships

Local tourism networks have the potential to provide a more sustainable blue tourism economy by focussing on working together to provide an overall tourism package that encourages sustainable tourism activities and sustainable practices amongst network members and local tourism authorities. Local tourism networks can promote their sustainable approach to tourists, thus encouraging individuals to take a more sustainable approach also.

Guide and Promote a More Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Tourism Locally through Tourism Networks



Competence area 7: **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 **networking & local partnerships**

Task card 1: defining networking and local partnerships priorities for your business



outline

This action card aims to support the **sustainable tourism advisor** in guiding the small tourism provider in defining networking and local partnerships 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 networking and local partnerships priorities.

Action 1: **collect information**

Step1: access the effects of networking and local partnerships

Step2: read about networking and local partnerships and its relation to the tourism sector

Step3: research your business and see what is and isn't working



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/xknyxQep55M>

Action 2: **make a diagnosis**

Step1: find businesses with similar practices to your own

Step2: determine what you are missing that other businesses could provide

Step3: identify business activities where networking and local partnerships could have a higher impact on your business



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/5fNmWej4tAA>

Action 3: **assess and define**

Step1: use the PESTLE Analysis Model for sustainability impact and priorities of your business.

Step2: analyse complementary networking and local partnerships priorities.

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



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/uOhBxB23Wao>

Throughout this action card, you have learned about **how tourism has the potential to contribute to networking and local partnerships** by completing a diagnosis of your business's existing networking and local partnerships practices and priorities. These initial steps support you to assess and define which networking and local partnership priorities are more appropriate to your business. You can replace the tools offered to others to make them more adaptable to your needs and knowledge. A periodic assessment of such priorities must be made so that you can enhance your business competitiveness and dedication to networking and local partnerships.

summary



Task card 2: drafting a networking and local partnerships plan for your business



outline

This task card seeks to **promote the implementation of networking and local partnerships** by small tourism providers in watercourse regions. Methodologies and tools will be presented so that a process of networking and local partnerships which could bring about change can be implemented. Through this introduction, development and implementation of new strategies a customised action plan will follow.

Action 1: **revise**

Step1: look at your SWOT Analysis and the changes needed to include new networking priorities

Step2: synthesise your SWOT Analysis by using the SWOT Analysis template

Step3: include key indicators specific to networking and local partnerships in your new SWOT Analysis



source: https://unsplash.com/photos/pc_HmXZ0e_w

Action 2: **present and validate**

Step1: design an appealing presentation of your SWOT Analysis

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

Step3: accumulate all feedback and make the necessary modifications to your SWOT Analysis



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/gMsnXqILjp4>

Action 3: **draft**

Step1: translate the SWOT Analysis into a strategic networking and local partnership plan (objectives, indicators, projects to be developed)

Step2: include a SMART methodology analysis

Step3: propose and define a networking and local partnership governance for periodic assessment



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/s8HyIEe7IF0>

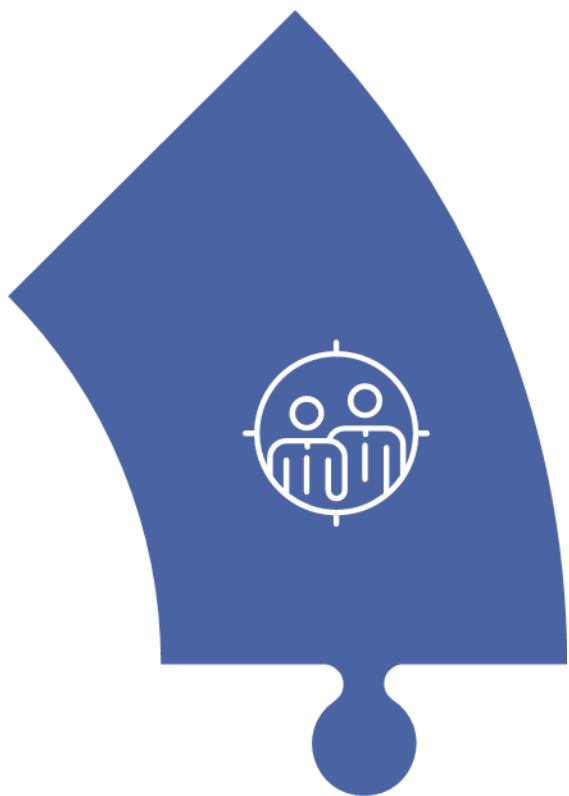
Throughout this action card, you have learned about the steps and tools to customise a plan and execute or integrate networking and local partnerships in your business.

You have performed a SWOT analysis on your existing business model and explored how you can adapt your business to integrate networking and local partnerships going forwards.

Based on the findings from your SWOT analysis, you have developed a networking and local partnership plan to help you on your journey towards sustainable tourism.

summary

Competence area 7: **hands-on resources**



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



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/n95VMLxqM2I>

Scenario 1: promoting networking and local partnerships

The owner of a small Airbnb home beside the sea wishes to make their business more sustainable.

They have identified networking, local partnership and sustainability priorities, defined a clear action plan and now want to promote networking and local partnerships among other businesses in the locality to match their new sustainable business model.

Scenario 1

A small Airbnb owner operates near a well-known tourist hot spot in their region. They own a small property very close to one of the regions beaches.

Every year, the region attracts a great number of tourists who come to relax, enjoy the beaches and do water sports.

There are increasing concerns about water management, waste disposal, and damage to the environment and ecosystem in the sea. In general, tourism operators and businesses in the region appear to be doing very little to prevent these issues.

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

Scenario 1

The owner wants to change their current business model to **include networking and local partnership priorities**, from which their business could implement more environmental-friendly practices.

The small Airbnb house owner is aware of the environmental challenges that have been affecting his/her region and the sea. For example, the disposal of plastic and toxic waste in the sea.

Every day they see this harmful behaviour happening, and thus, he/she wants to set the example so that others might join them and their region might become a **sustainable tourism destination** if they work together.

Scenario 1

The owner starts by assessing business priorities (increased customer numbers, more shoppers and visiting other local businesses), analysing its daily activities (cleaning the Airbnb, customer satisfaction, promoting other local businesses) and identifying priority areas where greener practices linked with networking and local partnerships would have a higher impact.

He/she creates 3 networking and local partnership priority areas: (i) reduce waste, (ii) increase water efficiency use and (iii) promote networking and local partnerships in the region (e.g. sharing resources, closed loop recycling).

He/she drafts a SWOT analysis and presents priorities to other businesses for validation and improvement.

Scenario 1

The Airbnb owner's fellow business partners show reluctance. They do not understand how these changes will help the environment and do not feel they have the know how or skills to help implement these good practices.

He/she translates their SWOT analysis into a strategic networking local partnerships plan with detailed objectives, indicators, and projects to be developed based on three priority areas they set out.

The small Airbnb owner then devises a series of workshops, one for each priority area to raise the other business owner's awareness of the environmental challenges in their region, and also provide them with the necessary skills to be the drivers of change in their businesses by working together.

Scenario 1

The workshops provided other small local tourism businesses with the necessary knowledge and skills to help the small Airbnb house owner become more sustainable along with the other business partners in their network. They were now able to:

- (i) identify the challenges
- (ii) understand their impact
- (iii) search for other businesses with the same goals
- (iv) come up with concrete suggestions for change.

Scenario 1

With local partners' support, the small Airbnb house owner was able to

- (i) reduce the consumption of plastic by using glass alternatives for customers staying at the Airbnb
- (ii) reduce water usage in the Airbnb by using signs asking customers to be aware of unnecessary consumption
- (iii) increase networking and local partnerships by getting other local businesses to become more sustainable and providing them with the skills and knowledge to do so
- (iv) decrease use of unnecessary resources by local partnerships through a closed loop recycling system allowing businesses to be more sustainable together.

Scenario 1: promoting networking and local partnerships

- Should the small Airbnb house owner extend his/her new found knowledge and skills outside of their region to help other businesses?
- What new skills should be expected from the other business owners in the region when another business owner decides to adopt a sustainable business model and promote networking and local partnerships?
- In what way does networking and local partnerships increase tourists' awareness?

Scenario 1: promoting networking and local partnerships

TRY to

- Brainstorm how networking and local partnerships can help you in promoting sustainable tourism.
- Identify the skills gaps among businesses in the region that could help one another to become more sustainable.
- Raise awareness among business owners in the region of how partnerships can help boost sustainability by working together.

AVOID

- Developing connections with businesses that cannot help you in achieving sustainability goals.
- Organise workshops promoting sustainable business practices.
- Assume that sustainable tourism is as important for other people as it is for you. The first thing to do is raise awareness, then ask for co-operation and change.



source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/uyPWOX9bt9Q>

Scenario 2: addressing networking and local partnerships

After years of closure due to excessive pollution and damage to the ecosystem, authorities decide to reopen a beach to tourists.

A small business owner decides to take the initiative to create a sustainable group with other small businesses.

These local businesses work collectively to help and encourage other entrepreneurs to take advantage of the beach reopening to start eco-friendly businesses.

Scenario 2

The region has many small businesses that rely heavily on tourists for profit but has seen a noticeable decrease in tourism after the beach was closed.

A small business owner starts up a local sustainable group after the beach reopens in partnership with other local small business owners in the region.

The small business owner hopes to encourage other businesses in the region to take advantage of the beach reopening and for future entrepreneurs to start eco-friendly businesses/activities on/beside the beach to attract tourists to the region while also promoting sustainable tourism.

Scenario 2

The first step the small business owner decided to take was to further his/her knowledge and skills on sustainability and how to promote sustainable tourism before going to other local small businesses about the local sustainable group and devising a plan to achieve this.

In the second step, the small business owner approached and recruited other local small businesses with their plan and how it would take more than one business to implement this plan to the region's beach.

Thirdly, the local sustainable group committee was formed to help promote sustainable tourism.

Scenario 2

The small business owner approached other aspiring entrepreneurs with a plan to promote a sustainable tourism on the beach and to determine how their new businesses could attract tourists to the region.

At an environmental level, the small business owner promoted sustainability at the beach and in the region. The local sustainable group helps minimise pollution.

At a business level, he/she was able to implement new sustainable practices in the region and implement networking and local partnerships with other small business owners. They also helped to support entrepreneurs set up new sustainable local businesses.

Scenario 2: addressing networking and local partnerships

- In what ways should local small business owners be more prepared for the adoption of sustainability regulations?
- How should small business owners work together to help promote sustainable tourism in their region?
- What is the importance of networking and local partnership for supporting sustainable tourism in their region?

Scenario 2: addressing networking and local partnerships

TRY to

- Keep up to date with the international/national/regional regulations on sustainability, to understand the expectations of sustainable tourism
- Engage with networking and local partnerships that share your aims and goals for sustainable tourism
- Promote networking and local partnerships with other small business owners in the region

AVOID

- Not updating your knowledge and skills to achieve sustainable tourism in your region
- Engaging with other businesses that do not share your goal of sustainability in your region
- Working alone. This is unrealistic and will not promote networking and local partnerships in your region to achieve sustainable tourism

Competence area 7: **practical tips**



In this section you can find a checklist of points to adopt **networking & local partnerships** practices in local turismo businesses

Acquaint yourself with networking and local partnerships and understand the prospects and responsibilities they represent to your tourism business in terms of providing innovative and successful sustainable solutions working together

Practical tip 1



Establish your networking, local partnerships and stakeholder connections and keep up to date with policy development on sustainable tourism. If your tourist business is matched with other businesses and stakeholders in your region, you can better engage with customers, staff and other stakeholders and businesses

Practical tip 2

Ensure to always involve other businesses in any modifications you want to make to your business model towards the choosing of more sustainable practices and equip them with the essential skills and knowledge. It is crucial to recognise that their direct contact with the tourist makes them the most efficient mechanisms of behavioural modification

Practical tip 3

Frequently check your businesses' eco-friendly practices and adjust them to ensure that you maintain a positive environmental influence without risking your tourism earnings. Ultimately, you should ensure you find the right balance between the environmental and economic sustainability. Network partners should hold each other accountable for their sustainable tourism performance

Practical tip 4

Competence area 7: **useful reading**



In this section you can find a list of relevant online resources to help you go further on **networking & local partnerships**

Best Practice Examples within the Tourism Sector

www.euronews.com/travel/2022/01/06/thailand-leo-s-beach-paradise-has-reopened-after-4-years-but-tourists-can-t-swim

Guide and Promote a More Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Tourism Locally through Tourism Networks

<https://doi.org/10.3390/su12198161>

How Local Networks and Partnerships Could be Made Operational in their Region

www.smartrural21.eu/smart-solution/ecotourism-network/

How Networking Can Boost Local Partnerships to Promote Blue Tourism

<https://oceantourism.org/portal/>



Local Partnerships

<https://prezi.com/6mse9hy8qg10/collaboration-and-partnership-in-tourism/#:~:text=Stakeholder%20collaboration%20and%20partnership%20has,of%20a%20high%20quality%20product>

Networking

<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/610725/cs-network-partners-influence-tajikistan-310516.pdf;jsessionid=38790985A034B1E12>

Opportunities for local collaboration networks

<https://news.globallandscapesforum.org/34364/wetlands-worth-an-estimated-usd-47-trillion-a-year>

Stakeholders to encourage networking and local partnerships

www.burrengeopark.ie/sustainable-tourism/code-of-practice/



You have completed competence area 7, well done!



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