

Sustainable cruise tourism in the North Sea Region

SUMMARY OF A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE



European Union



The European Regional Development Fund

**The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme**



*Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region*

Sustainability and the cruise tourism industry

The cruise industry depends on high levels of natural environment quality and sociocultural heritage at destinations. However, if not properly managed, tourism has the potential to degrade these same assets. There is a growing awareness that the positive impacts of tourism can only be sustained if the potential negative effects of tourism can be minimised.

The principle of 'sustainable tourism' requires that we work towards ensuring that the benefits of the tourist industry are maximised and the costs minimised for all involved.

This Best Practice Guide has been developed within the project Cruise Gateway in WP 5 Cruise and Sustainability.

This is a short version. Read the entire Best Practice Guide Sustainability on www.cruisegateway.eu

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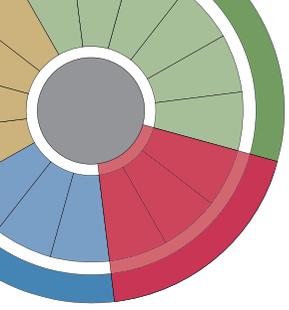


A framework for sustainable cruise tourism

This picture summarises which areas must be addressed in order to improve the sustainability of cruise tourism in the North Sea Region. It includes the key areas of economic, social and environmental impacts which are the cornerstones of any approach to sustainability. It also includes a range of 'technical' issues, which are focussed on the process of delivering a high quality sustainable tourism product.

While the specific impacts and strategies for addressing them may vary, each area in this framework indicates a common theme which is relevant to cruise ships, ports, and destinations. Each theme is covered in more detail on the following pages.





Financial Impacts

Managing lifecycle economic impacts in order to minimise costs and maximise benefits

For any business to be sustainable in the long term it must remain economically viable.

Cruise lines must ensure they operate efficiently and cost effectively in order to remain competitive.

Ports also need to be competitive, attracting cruise lines while ensuring that appropriate incentives are in place for cruise ships to minimise potential negative impacts on the local environment.

Cruise tourism has the potential to contribute substantially to the economies of destination regions. However, the extent of positive economic impacts varies significantly between destinations. Tourist attractions and surrounding regions can significantly impact the extent of financial benefits and the profitability of tourism services.

Employment

Attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse, skilled, and committed workforce, while maximising local employment and business opportunities

Cruise tourism is a significant generator of employment. Cruise ships, ports, and destinations employ large numbers of staff in a very wide range of roles.

Employee health, safety, rights, and benefits must be maintained, while ensuring that they have sufficient training to deliver a high quality service whilst managing sustainability impacts effectively.

Beyond their roles as direct employers, the various key players involved in the industry also have wide ranging indirect impacts on local employment and the development of small businesses in the areas in which they operate.



Employment Gothenburg
Photo: Peer-Erik Carlsson, City of Gothenburg



Botanical Garden
Photo: Jorma Valkonen, Göteborg & Co

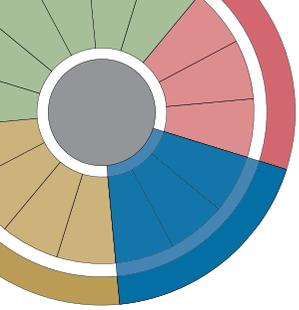
Reputation

Developing and promoting a sustainable brand, maximising customer satisfaction while ensuring effective communication with all stakeholders

Customer satisfaction and a positive image are essential for the long term viability of both cruise lines and the destinations they visit.

Developing a sustainable brand can help to manage reputational risks, enhance relationships with key stakeholders, and meet the requirements of a growing segment of consumers that place value on sustainability.

Responsible marketing activities and on-going dialogue are essential in developing an understanding of requirements and priorities, and in ensuring awareness of sustainability issues and what is being done to address them.



Management

Developing and implementing effective management strategies and systems to ensure sustainable operations, achieving the best outcome for the purpose and context

Addressing sustainability issues effectively requires careful planning and ongoing management.

Plans, policies and strategies must be developed which take into account a broad range of sustainability issues as well as detailed specific actions.

Impacts and risks must be monitored on an ongoing basis, and management approaches reviewed and updated to ensure continuous improvement.

Supply Chain

Building and maintaining positive relationships throughout the supply chain to achieve whole life value and deliver best practice, sustainable solutions

The cruise industry involves a complex supply chain, with numerous actors and diverse relationships between different groups. These include port services, tour operators, attractions, waste companies, transport providers, and suppliers of food, beverages, and other consumables.

Those responsible for procurement have the potential to use purchasing policies and performance requirements to drive sustainability improvements throughout the value chain.

By developing integrated supply chains with effective communication, cooperative relationships can be developed which deliver win-win solutions for all involved.

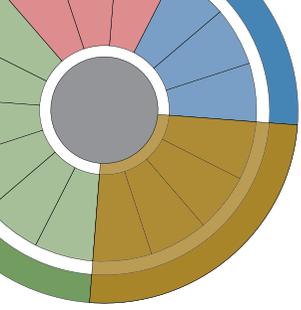
Quality

Ensuring high quality standards in the development and delivery of facilities and services, and implementing innovative solutions to achieve sustainable results

A key factor in achieving customer satisfaction is the quality of service provided.

Cruise lines, ports, and destination attractions must all ensure that quality issues are managed effectively, and that facilities provided and services delivered meet or exceed customer expectations.

As requirements evolve, innovative approaches and technologies must be sought out to achieve continuous improvement and drive sustainable change.



Travel

Enabling sustainable transport choices, ensuring efficient mobility while minimising the potential negative impacts of transportation

Tourism is travel, but transport issues are even more important for cruise tourism than for other sectors of the industry; almost every aspect of a cruise holiday involves travel.

For cruise lines, it is essential to ensure that itineraries are effective and attractive, that berthing is efficient, and that traffic congestion on arrival at destinations is minimised.

Ports and destinations need to ensure that good quality transport infrastructure exists to support cruise tourist excursions, while minimising the potential negative impacts of transport, particularly in terms of traffic, noise, and air pollution.

Increasing the use of environmentally friendly vehicles and promoting more sustainable transport options are effective ways of achieving this.

Wellbeing

Promoting and ensuring the health, safety and security of everyone involved

Cruise tourists consider health, safety, and security issues to be very important aspects of an attractive, enjoyable cruise.

Cruise lines also take these concerns very seriously, and pay a considerable amount of attention to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of both guests and employees on-board ship.

The level of shoreside crime and guests' perception of safety has a considerable impact on the attractiveness of destinations.

Ports and destinations also need to take these issues into account, as well as ensuring the health and safety of their own employees, and minimising potential negative impacts on the health of surrounding communities.



Barken Viking
Photo: Klas Eriksson, City of Gothenburg



The Röhsska Muséum
Photo: Jorma Valkonen, Göteborg & Co

Collaboration

Engaging in collaborative partnerships and inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders, building productive relationships, sharing best practice, and driving sustainable change

An extremely wide range of actors is involved in delivering any tourism product. Collaboration is essential for any sustainable tourism initiative to be successful. Each of the key players in the industry needs to develop relationships with all of their main stakeholders.

The level of engagement may vary, from consultation exercises or involvement in decision making to long term partnerships. Collaboration may be developed through port associations, destination partnerships, community involvement initiatives, or knowledge sharing networks.

It is also important to increase the level of collaboration between cruise lines and ports throughout the region, in order to develop a common understanding of requirements and develop standardised technologies, processes, and sustainable solutions.

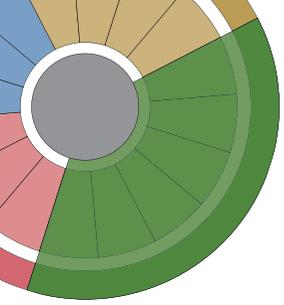
Culture

Protecting and enhancing features of archaeological interest, the historic environment and cultural heritage

The existence of areas of historical and/or cultural significance is a key factor in the attractiveness of tourist destinations.

It is essential for ports, and especially destinations, to prevent damage to cultural heritage sites, to ensure awareness of cultural issues and the historical value of attractions, and to promote features that enhance the distinctiveness of the destination.

Equally, it is in the interests of cruise lines to ensure that these attractions are preserved, enhancing the experiences of future visitors.



Land Use and Soils

Managing, protecting, and enhancing land and soil resources

Although cruise ships spend much of their time at sea, the cruise industry has various potential impacts on land use and soil quality. These can range from contamination of soils due to water pollution or spills in port, to the impacts on land use of tourism development, and associated visual impacts on the landscape.

Appropriate land use planning, careful design practices, and effective environmental management of operations can help to minimise these impacts while ensuring the continuing attractiveness and viability of destinations.

Resources and Waste

Ensuring the prudent, sustainable management and use of material resources and minimise waste through the waste hierarchy

Cruise ships generate large volumes of waste every day, and this waste must be managed effectively. Ports must ensure adequate facilities are available to deal with these wastes in a sustainable manner.

Both ports and destinations also need to manage their own consumption of materials and production of wastes.

Minimising the use of materials, while ensuring that materials with low environmental impacts are used, is the first step in achieving sustainable resource use. Following the waste hierarchy – avoiding, reusing, and recycling waste before resorting to energy recovery or landfill – provides a means of minimising negative impacts.

Effective management of material consumption and wastes can also provide substantial benefits in terms of cost savings.



Sorting of waste
Photo: Peer-Erik Carlsson, City of Gothenburg,

Biodiversity

Protecting habitats, species, and the integrity of ecosystems, and promoting opportunities to enhance and conserve biodiversity

Destinations offering unique natural habitats and unspoilt environments are attractive for many tourists, but a high level of tourism in an area can have severely negative impacts on these same environments if not managed effectively.

Conversely, the income generated from tourism activities in these areas also has the potential to contribute to their conservation, restoration and enhancement.

Cruise lines and destinations need to work together in ensuring that natural heritage features are protected, and impacts on local biodiversity are minimised.

Water

Enabling the efficient, sustainable use of water resources, and mitigating potential negative effects upon the quality of inland and coastal water bodies

Cruise ships and their passengers have a wide range of potential impacts on the water environment. Ships produce potential pollutants in terms of ballast water and oily bilge water. Passengers produce large volumes of sewage and other waste water every day. These outputs have potentially devastating impacts on marine water quality and biodiversity.

In order for wastewater discharge into the sea should be avoided, ports must provide adequate facilities for receiving and treating wastewater from ships.

Ports must also ensure procedures are in place to minimise the risk of spills and polluted run-off, while monitoring water quality in the area.

Finally, buildings within ports and at destinations have to ensure effective water resource management, particularly in terms of minimising the quantity of water consumed.

Atmosphere

Protecting air quality, minimising greenhouse gas emissions and the potential impacts of air pollution and noise

Cruise tourism has impacts on the atmosphere which range from the local to the global level. Shipping has traditionally relied on heavy diesel fuels which result in the emission of significant quantities of pollutants. These can have major negative impacts on the environment, and can result in a wide range of health problems for local communities if used when ships are in port.

Recently there has been a shift towards the use of cleaner fuels and emission reduction technologies, which result in considerable reductions in pollutants. Ports can provide incentives for use of these approaches, as well as increasing the availability of clean fuels and converting their own vehicles and equipment to low emission alternatives. Measures may also be required to minimise the impacts of noise and vibrations at the port on local residents.

Destinations should promote and facilitate the use of low emission transport options.

All players must also take appropriate steps to minimise the emission of greenhouse gases and adapt to the potential impacts of climate change.

Energy

Maximising energy efficiency and minimising total energy consumption, sourcing energy from sustainable sources wherever feasible

Energy use is a significant source of costs and impacts for all members of the cruise industry.

For cruise ships, the key issue is fuel efficiency, and various techniques are available to assist in reducing fuel requirements.

The issues affecting electricity consumption on board a ship are similar to these associated with buildings at port and attractions, and the techniques available to increase efficiency are also similar. These include increasing the insulation of the external fabric, installation of efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, and use of efficient lighting and appliances.

The potential for increasing the use of renewable energy sources should also be investigated by all involved.



Jondal Glacier, Educational and Nature Trail
Photo from Cruise Destination Hardangerfjord

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRUISE PORTS

Cruise ports provide a key interface between cruise ships and the destination. As a result, they have the potential to impact many aspects of the sustainability of the cruise tourism industry. Cruise ports in the North Sea Region should:

- » enable cruise ships to pursue sustainable approaches through provision of appropriate infrastructure, while establishing incentives to encourage cruise line sustainability;
- » this involves assessing, managing, and monitoring the impacts of their own operations, providing an example of best practice for others;
- » ensure that efficient, sustainable transport linkages exist between the port and the destination;
- » design cruise terminal buildings to be robust, flexible, and fit for purpose, providing high quality, healthy internal environments while minimising environmental impacts throughout construction and operation; and,
- » develop collaborative relationships, such as integrated supply chains, destination partnerships, cooperation with cruise lines, and knowledge sharing networks between all of the major actors in the region.

Pursuing sustainable strategies can to improve staff health, motivation and productivity, reduce lifecycle costs, and enhance the attractiveness of the port and the competitiveness of operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRUISE DESTINATIONS

Cruise destinations need to develop and manage tourism-related activities and services in a way that ensures their long term viability as a tourist destination. Destinations, and attractions and facilities associated with them, should:

- » develop and implement systems to manage and monitor their impacts;
- » engage their supply chains, setting performance demands while supporting suppliers to drive sustainability improvements;
- » Implement measures to maximise socio-economic benefits resulting from cruise tourism in the region, such as employing local labour and suppliers, and involvement with surrounding communities;
- » improve the environmental consequences of their activities, by enabling and encouraging sustainable travel; sourcing sustainable materials and food; minimising production of waste and emissions of light, air and water pollution; and maximising efficiency of energy and water consumption;
- » ensure that visitor satisfaction is maximised, through staff motivation, addressing overcrowding issues, responsible marketing activities, feedback mechanisms, and the development of high quality shore excursions;
- » implement strategies to minimise costs through resource efficiency; and,
- » preserve the distinctive character associated with their cultural heritage, landscape attractiveness, and sensitive habitats and ecosystems.

IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE

This booklet is an introduction to ‘Sustainable Cruise Tourism in the North Sea Region: a best practice guide’ which provides details of many of the possible strategies which could be pursued by the cruise industry in the North Sea Region in order to continue to improve its sustainability.

Different strategies will be appropriate in different circumstances. The most appropriate solutions in a specific context will depend on the most significant current impacts, the potential cost-benefit, local priorities, and the people involved. Each option must be explored, its relative merits considered, and appropriate means of implementation established.

In order to increase the sustainability of the cruise industry, it is essential for the multiple actors involved to collaborate. By working together, it is possible to continually evolve approaches which achieve benefits for all involved, while enhancing the reputation of ports and destinations in the NSR for sustainability.

Sustainable development is not a goal – it is a process of change.



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