



A Generic sustainable tourism tour

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Introduction

The STAR Sustainable Tour

- To understand how sustainability can be promoted through a cultural, historical or food tour
- To use the STAR game with tourists
- To understand the EU directives and initiatives
- To become green and sustainable.

This sustainable tour guide was created to help the tourism industry, tourists and the general adults, become greener and more sustainable. By applying small changes to their regular activities, by informing tourists and their staff, they can promote different versions of their products and services.

The STAR sustainable tour's objective is to present a tour which has derived from the STAR project's results and aims to ensure that you as tourism stakeholder, has the necessary information to make your services sustainable. Enjoy!





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A sustainable tour - features

What are the sustainability features that can be included in any tourism tour?
This guide will aim to answer this and propose various approaches to create a tour that will have sustainable characteristics and features.



This document targets tourism entrepreneurs, adult trainers, SMEs and other tourism providers and guides them towards the creation and design of more sustainable services and products.





A sustainable tour - features



Sustainability Canva – steps that you can use: The STAR project created the below Canva template that can be used for businesses willing to make the sustainability and green transition. Go through the different steps and write down what is applicable to you.

What is your mission statement?	Benefits for the tourism sector to move towards sustainable practices	Skills and competences needed by my staff to adopt sustainable principles and design related services and products.	Which practices can I change to become more sustainable / adopt greener practices? Checklist/ tips	The customer: training them to become more green and sustainable travellers
What service / product will you create?			Tools that can be used	
Costs associated with moving towards sustainable touristic actions		EU Green Deal information		

Consider the following:

- Which of your services / products can you make more Green and sustainable?
- Which skills do I and my staff need to attain?
- Which benefits will I yield from this?
- How can my clients support this transition?
- What are the related costs?
- Which tools can I use?
- EU information available.



Click on the arrow to access the STAR website and download the full template and supporting Canva resources.





A sustainable tour – General features

Sustainability Focus:

Whether you organize food or cultural tours, they should prioritise sustainability while aiming to minimize environmental impact. Features such as eco-friendly practices related to using low-carbon transportation options, supporting sustainable sourcing of ingredients, and selecting accommodations with green certifications, are key.



Authentic Experiences:

Offer authentic experiences that allow participants to experience local culture and traditions. Examples: Exploring historical sites, participating in cultural festivals, or visiting traditional villages, allow tourists to engage with the local community and gain a deeper understanding of the destination's cultural heritage.

Support for Local Communities:

Allow for collaboration with local artists and professionals, etc. to provide authentic experiences and ensure that the benefits of tourism reach the grassroots level. By engaging directly with local communities, you contribute to the social and economic well-being of the people living in the destination.





A sustainable tour – General features

Education and Awareness:

Your tours should provide information into sustainable practices, conservation efforts, and the importance of cultural preservation. Your guides should have the respective knowledge and be able to organise interactive experiences, so that participants gain a greater understanding of the connections between sustainability, culture, and responsible travel.



Measuring Impact:

Track your tour carbon emissions, collaborate with certified accommodations, conduct impact assessments on local communities, and monitor the positive effects of conservation initiatives.

Engaging Participants:

Offer hands-on experiences which allow travelers to taste local flavors, participate in cultural activities, and interact with community members. This creates a sense of connection and meaningful engagement, leaving participants with lasting memories and a deeper appreciation for the destination.





A sustainable tour – examples

Introductions – how to greet people and what to say

Make sure to introduce yourself and your company. Make a note on the fact that the order of the tour is paperless to decrease the use of paper. The use of technologies facilitate the digital and sustainable transition of any company.



Green routes:

Introduce any feature in your tour that is green and sustainable i.e., a walking tour without the use of car transport. In case of car / van / bus usage, promote their low carbon emission status.

Meeting place:

Select meeting places which are shadow rich (summer) and not in air conditioned areas. The meeting place should be close to the tour route to avoid further transportation taken to/from the start /end points.





A sustainable tour - examples



Planning of your trip - Study your trip: Flights, routes, buses, public transport and green accommodation. The Green journey starts at home.



Check if there is an **official environmental certification** for your country or destination. This can be a Blue Flag for clean beaches or a Green Key hotel certification.



Check the weather conditions at your destination and pack accordingly so you can take as little luggage as possible





A sustainable tour - examples

★ Highlights

- Use local and organic food.
- Taste seasonal menus.
- Promote Waste Reduction and Recycling.
- Calculate your carbon footprint.
- Allow for participant surveys.





A sustainable tour - features



Depending on your tour, click on the following links to view more information online.

Click on the icons to access more information

VIDEOS



PODCASTS



ARTICLES



INFORMATION ON
SUSTAINABILITY



to accommodate different types of tours and needs.



A sustainable tour – quotes from practitioners

Think local:

1. What do natives eat and where?
2. What is produced in this area?
3. Will locals get work from my purchase?

ACT: Towards the end of the trip calculate your footprint and do your part. Re-evaluate what you can redesign your service or product

Use accommodation that choose environmental impact. Check the possible certifications.

Choose an environmentally friendly mode of transport.

The tour starts at your home and back. Plan all steps of your trip or your service.

Be green and think of CO when you plan a trip / entertainment

Sort your waste to make it easier to recycle.

Walk as much as possible or rent a bike when checking out points of interest.

Reuse your towels at your hotel.



NEXT: The GAME App in your tour



Using the Game app in your tour

The tourists also have a responsibility to become more sustainable and adopt greener practices when planning a trip and when being on one. The STAR project has created a game app informing tourists to become greener.

Consider sharing the link to the game app with your clients prior to their visit or trip, to plan accordingly and learn more about becoming a sustainable traveler.

Take the opportunity to review other similar initiatives by local, regional or central authorities to share with staff and customers.

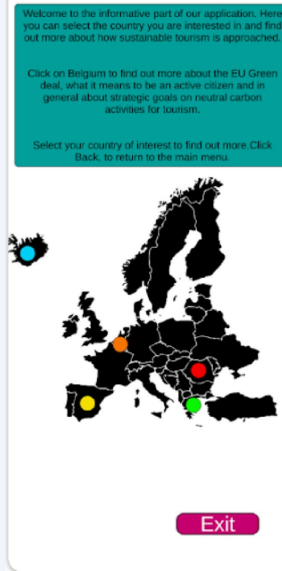
The game app can be accessed from the STAR project website.



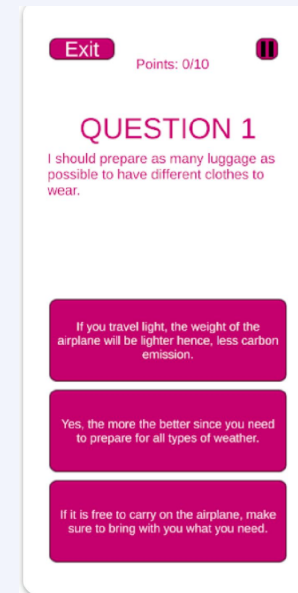
Using the Game app in your tour



Play the game.
Select the topics
you are
interested in.



**Learn about the
partners' countries** and
related sustainability
information.



**Pledge to become a
sustainable traveller** by
answering correctly to
the game questions.



**CLICK HERE TO
ACCESS THE GAME APP**



Using the Game app in your tour

Why use the STAR Game app?

Inform the tourists on:

- Planning their trip, think about luggage, reaching the airport, boarding the planes etc.
- Interact locally and consider the environment.
- Less luggage = less weight which = less plane fuel,
- How to move around, food waste and recycling,
- And many more on the game.



Using the Game app in your tour

Send the STAR Game app link to your customers when they book your services, products or accommodation.

Share the STAR Game app with your staff, collaborators and network.

Point out that the STAR Game app is available in different languages

Make sure to ask your clients when you meet them, if they accessed the game. If yes, how did they find it? What will they use on their trip?

Learn about sustainability features in each partner country:

- Greece
- Romania
- Iceland and,
- Spain

Learn more about the EU Green Deal and other European initiatives that are available as information on the STAR Game app.

Use technology as part of your tours and services to prepare for the digital transformation.



NEXT: Tour guide skills



Tour guide skills and knowledge

Transitioning to greener ways of working or utilizing and adopting more sustainable practices to develop services and products, translates into a specific skill-set needed by employees

As one can presume, **soft skills are more important than hard skills** when sustainability, green transition and fostering new mindsets, are needed.

Tour guide skills and knowledge



Skills and competences needed

1. Being able to tell the story – storytelling techniques are essential as “selling” sustainability is key.
2. Written and oral communication techniques.
3. Problem solving skills for external and internal stakeholders.
4. Facilitation and networking skills.
5. Systemic thinking and knowledge about SDGs. (Sustainable Development Goals)

Create a **conscious work force** by educating and informing your staff and collaborators. In particular, **inform them about SDGs, about how sustainable tourism should be promoted** and specific services and products that you can have.



Tour guide skills and knowledge

Find tools that can really help your **company adopt SDGs** and help tourism companies to become more sustainable.

Create **informative and fund-raising campaigns** to promote your cause. This can take place within or outside your company.

Use your **company's and your personal network** to **promote** the cause. Do not forget to organize a **social media campaign**.

Tour guide skills and knowledge

Do not forget to search for good practices and other related case studies that will help you cause.

Who knows, perhaps you can **become a good practice** yourself!

Tourism always, in one way or another, **causes impacts on the environment and its resources**, the important thing is to analyse what kind of impacts they are. Your staff and you need to be aware of these costs and impacts by your company.



NEXT: An example tour



An example tour

Let us see an example food tour and what sustainability and green features it can have. Similarly, the tour can be a historical, cultural or other tour in the area of tourism.

Step 1: Planning the tour, what is the purpose of the tour, what kind of product do you want to make and sell (mission statement). It can be to introduce a specific landmark, history, culture etc to your guest..

Step 2: According to step 1, create a tour that meets your purpose. Where to take your guest, how to get there, what to promote to your guest, collaborators, price, etc.

Step 3: Testing the tour with customer / validating, evaluation - post feedback. Make changes based on the feedback offered.



An example tour

Step 1: Planning the tour

Firstly, you need to categorise your tour:

1. Does it fall under mass tourism provision? (make sure to have a general FAQ on your website)
2. Is it a niche or small tour? (Make sure to answer questions and offer a personalized service).

Offer information from your perspective as the tour organizer as well as information on what the guest is to expect. During this stage, you can also promote green and sustainable company aspects and tour features.

Step 2: Creating the tour (Finding collaborators, selecting a location, pricing your service, etc)

Categorise your tour:

1. Mass tourism tour? Does it involve travel by boat? Through a travel agency or is it a bus tour?
2. Niche or small tour

Offer suggestions for green and/or sustainable services and products that are part of your tour. Provide examples to your collaborators on how to support your tours. I.e., collaborating shops to put up informative signs.

Create examples of conduct and post on visible places or screens informing tourists. Keep in mind that **tourists are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious**

Step 3: Quality Testing - validating and evaluation. Get feedback to make changes based on it.

- A good start is to initially test with stakeholders and guests and then finalise the tour features (offer discount, etc)
- Offer suggestions on how to receive feedback from regular clients (i.e., online or through a QR code link where they answer 2-3 questions max.



An example tour

Step 1 - Planning the tour (1/3)

The first step is to decide your mission statement that is your long term strategy, why the organization exists and what is the goal of its operation.

In this case the mission statement is built around a certain tour since that is the main product and the focus point of the operation.

Since the mission statement is a long term strategy, additional tour or products will be in accordance with it.

The tour itself can be a unique experience, a geographic landmark, a location of historical importance, etc. Try to conduct a tour that brings guest to different locations that are less traveled and therefor support more fragile areas.



An example tour

Step 1 - Planning the tour (2/3)

When selecting the main product it is important to consider how can it be sold in a sustainable way and, if possible, chose the one that can be sold in the most sustainable way. Avoid, if possible, to select a tour that is difficult to organise in a sustainable way.

The next step is to find the best solution to make the tour as sustainable as possible. To do so, it is important to study the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with a special focus on goals number 8 and 12 that mostly relate to tourism. Also, make sure to study the EU Green Deal as it connects closely to the SDGs.

Many countries have built a framework or an action plan how to reach the SDG goals. Every country is different and have a different approach, adjusted to the countries distinction and what are the foundation of their tourism (skiing, historical, beaches ...).



An example tour

Step 1 - Planning the tour (3/3)

When planning the tour, make sure to study this framework / action plan and adjust the tour accordingly.

Make sure to teach your staff about the SDG, the EU Green Deal and your country's emphasis connected to it and the action you are taking to do your part.

It is vital that your staff leads by example and helps your guests to act in the most sustainable way during the tour. This will also increase the chance of the staff coming up with suggestions on how to do better and offer greener services.



An example tour



Step 2 - Create the tour (1/4)

With the mission statement ready and sufficient knowledge of the SDG, the EU Green Deal and local emphasis and the main product/goal decided, it is time figure out how to do it in a sustainable way.

There are many ways to make the tour more sustainable. Let´s first focus on your collaborators and chose the ones that are more sustainable.

- First make sure to choose collaborators that have a environmental certification or a clear environmental policy.
- Choose the car rental with electric or hybrid options.
- Find a bus operator with electric or hybrid options and vehicle of the right size for your group.
- Visit or promote to your guests the store owners with more local items and the restaurants with bigger selection of local and vegetarian options on the menu.



An example tour



Step 2 - Create the tour (2/4)

- Choose accommodations that operate in a sustainable way, for example does not change and wash towels and bed linen every day.
- Try to choose small business operator that are locally owned so the money spent on the tour supports the local community.

Next take a look at how to implement the tour in the most sustainable way. There are many thing to look at in this aspect.

- Can you start and end the tour close to a public transport station or stop.
- Can you carry out the tour using public transport, bike, electric scooter or by walking?
- On what time is best to do the tour? When it is colder, warmer, less people and also what time of the year to prevent damage or disturbance to nature and animals.



An example tour

Step 2 - Create the tour (3/4)

- Be mindful of helping guest to behave correctly in delicate areas, for example stay on the path, not make loud noises close to the wild life, use garbage bins or take the garbage back with them if there are not separated bins for plastic, paper etc.
- Make sure to explain the tour well online to the people interested in it so they know what to expect and are well prepared. For example bring water in a reusable bottle, the right clothes, etc. Having a FAQ on your website that is updating in accordance with guests feedbacks and reports from the staff.
- If serving food is a part of the tour, make sure to have the right quantity and measure the amount of leftover food and encourage your staff to minimize that amount.
- Have a plan what to do with leftover food. Can you give it to your staff, donate it to a “soup kitchen” or to a local farmer using it to feed animals.



An example tour

Step 2 - Create the tour (4/4)

- If your tour is requires some type of transportation that leaves a carbon footprint, make sure to calculate it and have a clear plan (visible to potential guests) how to minimize it and/or have a carbon offset plan.



An example tour

Step 3 - Testing the tour (1/2)

When the tour is planned and created, the next thing is to test it. Even with a very well-planned tour it is always very likely that you will come across something unforeseen when you start the tours.

- Encourage everyone connected to your tour to send you feedback with both positive and negative aspects of your tour.
- Have an end of tour quiz for your guest and/or send them a quiz by e-mail and ask for rating and feedback. Maybe add a small reward for those who complete it.
- Collect this feedback from your staff, collaborators and guest after the first few tour.
- Go over this feedback and adjust the tour accordingly to make it a enjoyable experience for everyone connected to it.



An example tour

Step 3 - Testing the tour (2/2)

- After making adjustments to the tour according to this first feedback continue to encourage stakeholders to send feedback so you can continue to finetune your tour and to make sure to keep it up to date and current.
- Have regular meeting with your staff and collaborators.



An example case study tour - Seal Center Iceland

Description

The Icelandic Seal Center (ISC) is located in the small village of Hvammstangi, in the northwest part of Iceland, ca. 200 km from the capital (Reykjavík).

Even with only about 600 inhabitants the area is very popular, with over 25 ths. tourist visiting the Information Center operated by ISC, every year. The main attraction is the seal that can be seen little bit further north on the Vatnsnes peninsula.

Is it a agriculture area with many farms but also small fishing industry. There are also few locations with warm water coming from the ground that make it an ideal place for growing vegetables.

This tour will be 3-4 hours long and using the strengths of the area to make it as sustainable as possible.



An example case study tour - Seal Center Iceland

The Icelandic Seal Center tour

- The tour starts at the ISC where, after a short visit to the museum, everyone gets a bike with an electric helping motor. That will make the group go faster and help the one's that are not as used to riding bikes.
- We will ride up north on the Vatnsnes peninsula. The road on the peninsula is fairly flat making it suitable for bike rides. We make two short stops at Skarð - lighthouse and Hamarsrétt (sheep roundup) where the guide talks about the location and surroundings.
- We stop at Illugastaðir seal watching spot (ca 25 km from Hvammstangi). The guide goes through the code of conduct regarding seal watching. We walk along the beach observe the seal from a safe distance and without disturbance and get to know the unique history of the place.



An example case study tour - Seal Center Iceland

The Icelandic Seal Center tour

- After stopping there for ca. 30 min it is time to ride back to Hvammstangi and when we get there we stop at Kidka, the local wool knitting and sewing factory sell products made of Icelandic wool.
- Next stop is Galleryý Bardúsa that sells locally crafted and handmade items from people in the area.
- Then we ride our bikes back to the ISC, return them there and end the tour at Sjárvarborg Restaurant that is in the same building. There they have prepared a special fixed menu for us highlighting food from the area. Meat from the local farmer, shrimp from the local shrimp factory, vegetables grown in the area and beer brewed in a village close by.



An example tour - statements



"A QR code really helped us minimise paper in our tours and also to collect valuable feedback"

"Pictures say more than a thousand words! Use them to inform you clients"

"For our food tour, we inform our clients before hand not to have eaten as we offer lots of food on the tour. We found out that we minimise waste in this way!"

"Even though they are there (waste bins), we always inform our guests that they should categorise their waste and recycle. We also put up signs everywhere on our boat for this"

"Before our tour, we go over all rules i.e, do not stray from the path, please collect all waste in this bag, we appoint a designated person to control the area after our visit etc. This gives our guests a sense of responsibility and pride"





Access our Facebook

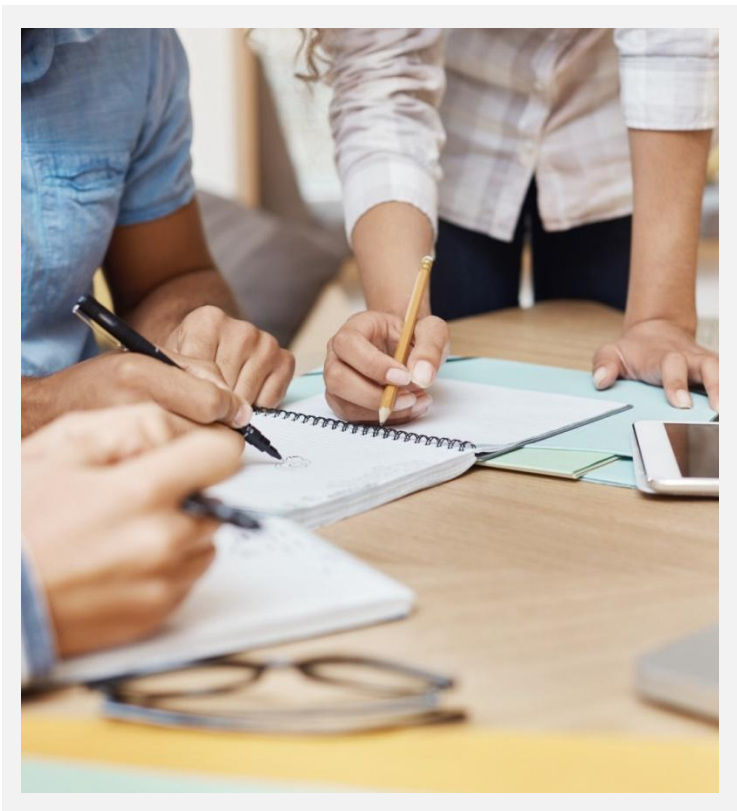


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