Sustainable Model of Arctic Regional Tourism (SMART) Program

The Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism will assist the arctic tourism sector (mainly local small- to medium-sized tourism businesses) to adopt economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable tourism practices. The project’s goal is to create resources, tools, and incentives that can be used directly by tourism SMEs or local players in rural/tourism development as well as professional training to assist the tourism sector in their respective area.

**Vision**
To empower the tourism sector in the Arctic to continually innovate more sustainable business practices which contribute to a wider sustainable development strategy, effective nature conservation and the well-being of local people.

**Mission**
Assist the arctic tourism sector to adopt economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable tourism practices.

**Objective 1** To collect, document and analyse best practices relevant to sustainable arctic tourism.

**Objective 2** To market sustainable tourism practices and benefits in adopting them.

**Objective 3** To assist the arctic tourism sector in learning how to implement sustainable tourism practices.

**Objective 4** To define sustainable tourism practices and to award businesses for achieving them.

**Objective 5** To create incentives for the tourism sector to adopt sustainable tourism practices and join the recognition scheme, and lay the ground work to brand sustainable arctic tourism.
**OBJECTIVE 1**

To collect, document and analyse best practices relevant to sustainable arctic tourism.

**Proposed Project**
- A framework for sustainable arctic tourism, defined by a set of common principles and supported by a set of best practices and resulting benefits.

**Project Description**

This project will define sustainable arctic tourism as tourism that minimises the harmful effects and maximises socio-cultural, environmental and economic benefits for residents of the Arctic. The project recognises that sustainability is an on-going learning process rather than a final outcome. Recognizing the need to engage all stakeholders in creating sustainable tourism, the most efficient first step is to target businesses.

The first outcome of this project will be a set of principles that provides a common frame of reference to guide the projects necessary to achieve Objectives 2-5. Based on existing and commonly accepted guidelines, the project principles will define sustainable tourism for the Arctic. The second outcome of the project will be a set of best practices or methods that businesses can incorporate and implement in their daily operations. The best practices or methods will be illustrated by a set of proven examples. This information will be accessible across the Arctic through an interactive database via a new web site. The web site will be multi-lingual and eventually house important information and tools generated by Objectives 2-5.

The final outcome of this project will be to utilise the web site as the first step in building an arctic tourism network. The network, being an interactive communication system, will enhance the efficiency of development and implementation of project Objectives 2-5.

**Primary Audience**

Any organisation or entity within the Arctic tourism sector interested in making tourism more sustainable.
Development Approach

**Form Steering Committee (in person meeting)**

(1\textsuperscript{st} month)

**Determine framework for Sustainable Tourism**
- principles,
- practices,
- case studies,
- benefits,
- market perceptions

(1\textsuperscript{st} month)

**Determine web site database structure:**
- database (abstracts)
- full translation of priority material
- presentation of secondary material in existing form (PDF)

(1\textsuperscript{st} month)

Collect existing arctic relevant information

(2\textsuperscript{nd} – 4\textsuperscript{th} month)

SC meeting via telecom

Gap analysis
Applicability analysis

(5\textsuperscript{th} month)

SC meeting in person to authorize research

Commission research for priority gaps

(5\textsuperscript{th} - 6\textsuperscript{th} month)

Translation into relevant languages

Compile the package into accessible format
- web based

(3\textsuperscript{rd} - 10\textsuperscript{th} month)

SC meeting provide feedback, in person or via telecom

(month 8)

Other objectives use package

(11\textsuperscript{th} – 13\textsuperscript{th} month)
OBJECTIVE 2

To market sustainable tourism practices and benefits in adopting them.

Proposed Project
• An awareness campaign promoting sustainable tourism practices in the Arctic.

Project Description
The campaign will focus on why sustainable tourism practices are worth integrating into business operations and, in particular, how these practices provide a competitive edge in the marketplace and reduce operating expenses.

The project will collect testimonials and generate fact sheets and information kits for posting on the proposed web site described in Objective 1. Regional contacts and interested parties will then use the web site to distribute campaign materials via their own regional networks. The regional networks will use existing distribution methods such as trade association events, meetings, local trade fairs, publications and other media.

Primary Audience
Small and medium-sized tourism businesses within the arctic tourism sector that have a latent interest in making their tourism business more sustainable.
Development Approach

Gather testimonials from potential ST businesses and others from around the Arctic (2nd – 4th months)

Develop fact sheets and information kit contents, style (5th-8th months)

SC mtg. in person or teleconference (6th month)

Internal campaign to potential businesses and perspective partners (10th-36th months)

Fact sheets and information kit accessible via hard copies and Internet (10th month)

External campaign to potential Arctic travelers and media (10th-36th months)

Translation of fact sheets and information kit (10th -13th month)

Develop country-specific and media/marketing campaigns. Qtrly. program newsletter distribution (14-36th months)

Delivery by existing country organizations (13th month)

Targeted press and media opportunities (14-36th months)

Continual refinement and update of materials (14th-36th months)

Announcement and promotion of business incentives as development under Objective 5 (14-36th months)
OBJECTIVE 3

To assist the arctic tourism sector to learn how to implement sustainable tourism practices.

Proposed project
- A training course in sustainable tourism that advances skills and practices and prepares graduates for participation in the proposed market recognition scheme.

Project Description
Utilising the framework on sustainable tourism, described in Objective 1, this project will develop and deliver a short training course focused on the core skills identified by an arctic-wide needs assessment. The first project outcome will be a list of existing courses offered by Arctic training and tourism organisations, posted on the web site proposed in Objective 1. The second outcome will be a gap analysis of skills missing from existing training programs, country-by-country. The third outcome will be a new training short course, delivered through existing regional and national educational organisations and on-line via the web site. The purpose of this course is to ensure graduates have comparable knowledge and skills regarding sustainability and tourism-related issues in the Arctic.

Primary Audience
Personnel of small and medium-scale tourism businesses that are likely to be interested in joining the proposed market recognition scheme.
Development Approach

Training Analysis of existing programs available
SUPPLY [2\textsuperscript{nd} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} month]

Country by country Analysis of supply + demand to ID gaps NEEDING assistance/training to focus

Gap Analysis of training needs (country by country)
DEMAND [2\textsuperscript{nd} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} month]

Develop educational framework for training curricula + target market
[5\textsuperscript{th} month]

Gap Analysis of training needs (country by country)
DEMAND [2\textsuperscript{nd} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} month]

Develop training course – new product – sustainable arctic tourism [6\textsuperscript{th} – 8\textsuperscript{th} month]

Unload web based on-line version of course onto Arctic Tourism web site [9\textsuperscript{th} month]

Post existing country-specific courses onto Arctic tourism web site [5\textsuperscript{th} month]

Launch on-line training course on Arctic Tourism web site [10\textsuperscript{th} month]

Existing training organizations refine programs to integrate Arctic Tourism Course (+ translated) [9-12]

Existing country training organizations begin delivering SA training course [13-]

International workshop as incentive/reward for grads [24 & 36]

Country workshops w/country trainers & paid staff as general program marketing

Graduates apply for market recognition scheme [24-36]

Steering committee mtg. in person [13\textsuperscript{th} month]
OBJECTIVE 4
To define sustainable tourism practices and to award businesses for achieving them.

Proposed Project
- An arctic-wide market recognition scheme for sustainable tourism businesses.

Project Description
The project outcome will be a unified arctic-based market recognition scheme, e.g. a certification program or logo, that reflects arctic conditions, recognising existing market recognition schemes and international efforts to align those schemes. The new scheme will define criteria for sustainable tourism and possess sufficient flexibility to acknowledge the diverse range of businesses, market conditions and operating environments across all eight arctic countries.

The first outcome will be an indication of what the market desires from arctic tourism products and are therefore necessary components of a market recognition scheme. The second outcome is an evaluation of existing schemes, in terms of their effectiveness and applicability to the whole of the Arctic. The third outcome is the creation of a pilot scheme tested and refined in a representative sample of arctic tourism businesses and locations. The final outcome will be an arctic-wide recognition scheme supported by the training program described in Objective 3 and the incentives proposed in Objective 5.

Primary Audience
Tourism businesses within the Arctic committed to improving the sustainability of their business and being recognised for this achievement. In addition, the scheme needs to target consumers to influence their decision-making towards sustainable choices.
Development Approach

1. Decide and develop approximate framework for product definition. Sustainable vs Eco vs Mass tourism (1st month)

2. Identify initial best guess target market/ consumer (1st month)

3. Identify existing arctic relevant schemes (2nd month)

4. Refine target market. Refine framework to ensure applicability across varying arctic conditions/countries/markets/standards (4th month)

5. Test market with focus group vs existing schemes and decision points for purchasing tourism products (2nd month)

6. Assess scheme options vs framework and evaluate (4th month)

7. Consult with existing organizations of schemes (2nd - 4th month)

8. Decision Point (5th month) - choose scheme to test - choose test groups or businesses

9. Develop standards (5th – 8th month)

10. Develop business model (5th – 8th month)

11. Trigger start of objective #5 “benefits” (5th – 8th month)

12. SC mtg. in person (5th month)

13. SC mtg. in person or via telecom (8th month)

14. SC telecom mtg. (4th month)
Test with focus groups
- consumers/ tourists -> use web to book?
- business -> incentives worthwhile?
  (9th – 10th month)

Finalize program
  (10th – 12th month)

Test pilot program(s) with representative countries and companies
- add companies and expand
- add benefits/ refine
  (13th month)

- regional training workshops and consultation
- demo of websites and benefits
- tap into existing gathering/ promotional options
  (14th – 23rd month)

Continual assessment and dialog with pilot testers
  (14th – 23rd month)

Evaluate pilot scheme vs original framework (22nd month)
Plan launch
  (22nd – 23rd month)

Recommend fine tune changes to transform pilot into final
  (23rd month)

Launch and Run Scheme across Arctic
- tap into existing opportunities for exposure
- combine with training seminars
- onsite with pilot testers for max media exposure
- combine with reward meeting for training grads
  (24th month)
**OBJECTIVE 5**

To create incentives for the tourism sector to adopt sustainable tourism practices and join the recognition scheme, and lay the groundwork to brand sustainable arctic tourism.

**Proposed Projects**

- Establish a website that markets products and businesses that have joined the proposed recognition scheme;
- Establish an arctic-wide trade association of sustainable tourism businesses that brands sustainable arctic tourism, promotes it, and carries outputs of projects 1-4 into the future.

**Project Descriptions**

The proposed website would list and describe the products and businesses that have joined the recognition scheme. This will provide a clear marketing incentive for new businesses to join, and an on-going benefit to retain and build business membership. The website will link to other industry and association websites and in turn, direct interested customers to participating member businesses websites. This website is one component of the overall program (SMART) IT network.

The sustainable arctic tourism brand or image will enhance the visibility of businesses that provide quality sustainable experiences. The individual business owner/operator, therefore, will have greater capacity to attract repeat customers who are seeking similar quality experiences throughout the Arctic. The arctic tourism industry will be more able to package and promote their products at a regional, national, and international scale, ensuring more profitable and sustainable stays throughout the Arctic.

**Primary Audience**

Tourism businesses within the Arctic, requiring tangible business-oriented incentives and interested in joining and maintaining membership in the market recognition scheme proposed in Objective 4. These businesses operate at a basic level of sustainability and are committed to continual improvement.
Development Approach

Gather, collect and evaluate relevant web sites (5th-6th months)

Design marketing/incentives web site structure (e.g. on-line information exchange; e-newsletter) (7th month)

Review draft layout and basic site structure with committee (8th month)

Add content to approved layout and basic site structure (9th month)

SC mtg. in person or via teleconference (8th month)

Linkage to Arctic Tourism Database (10th month)

Establish links from important web sites (10th month)

Linkage to Arctic Tourism Database (10th month)

Test site/programming features with focus groups (consumers and potential businesses) (11th-12th month)

First distribution of program electronic newsletter (12th month)

Public launch of web site (14th month)

Launch business to business networking features (14th month)

Web site as information hub for program. Continual negotiation and development of business-based incentives and regional, national, international levels for participating businesses (e.g. transportation discounts and co-operative marketing opportunities) (14th-36th months)

Test idea at first international workshop of trade association to offering training and market-based recognition scheme following year 3 (24th month)

Develop draft association structure and business plan in consultation with recognised businesses and regional network project participants (25th-36 months)
**Organisation Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Office</th>
<th>Main competence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Objective #1: Develop IT network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective #3: Coordinator of E-learning training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective #5: Web site to be promoted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Objective #2: Selling the Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective #4: Marketing recognition scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective #5: Collecting and negotiating benefits, developing brand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Year 4) Trade Association that offers training and marketing recognition scheme

**Staffing Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1:</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3:</td>
<td>1 + part-time IT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

(Year 4) Arctic Sustainable Tourism Trade Association composed of trained and recognized companies delivers training and market recognition scheme.
Program Budget

**Budget = 2 000 000 €**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective #1: 300,000</th>
<th>x20 percent administration</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective #2: 200,000</td>
<td>x20 percent administration</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #3: 700,000</td>
<td>x20 percent administration</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #4: 600,000</td>
<td>x20 percent administration</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #5: 200,000</td>
<td>x20 percent administration</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total = | 2 000 000 € | (400 000 €) | 100% |