

Dear Liz and Industry Reference Panel,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Discussion Paper "Designing our Tourism Future". I have provided below a response to what EarthCheck believe needs to be taken forward to drive and deliver sustainable growth in the Queensland visitor economy. In your message to industry you have noted that "it is time to think out of the box". We agree. EarthCheck is a Brisbane based company who operates and serves destinations and hospitality clients in over 70 countries across the world each day. We have prepared strategic plans for some of the world's leading operators and destinations and this gives us a good feel and understanding for what best practice looks like. I have included above an overview of who EarthCheck is and what we do. Our response addresses sustainability, safety and resilience in the first instance and then provides some comments on how to build competitive advantage through funding.

1.0 Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy and Destination Stewardship- (Resilience, sustainability and social license)

Queensland tourism has an opportunity to take the lead and build the industry back in a safe, sustainable and climate friendly manner. This needs to underpin our brand and positioning in market. Sustainability (low carbon, circular principles, social inclusion and regeneration) needs to be a core value for everything that the sector stands for. In other words it is not an add-on marketing strategy, and it is not experience development, it must sit central to our brand and business values. It also needs to be underpinned by scientific metrics and agreed performance indicators that are transparent to market and consumers. These indicators (CO2 emissions, water, waste, consumer and community sentiment and energy etc.) need to sit beside supply and demand trends and performance tracking.

While the Travel for Good brand that has been released by TEQ has substantial promise it cannot hope to have cut through and credibility if it is not underpinned by good scientific reporting and credible benchmarking and certification. Leading destinations across the world have recognised the substantial switch and reset to embracing the green tourism economy. We have included above the discussion paper we prepared for Failte Ireland which speaks to many of these issues.

It is important to understand that sustainability, regenerative tourism practices and decarbonisation are outcomes...ecotourism is a product. Sustainability needs to be taken up across the visitor economy supply chain from airports and trains through to convention centres, resorts and tour operators. It becomes a point of difference and a holistic way of doing business.

EarthCheck has recently prepared a number of strategic tourism plans for leading economies in Europe and the Middle East. Outlined below are the lessons from each economy which are relevant to answering the key questions that have been put forward.

1.2 TOURISM POLICY CONTEXT

Definition of Sustainable Tourism

The definition of sustainable tourism is well established, but full understanding remains limited. The UNWTO define sustainable tourism as: "tourism that 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"[1].

The UNWTO also makes a clear distinction between the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism: the term ecotourism itself refers to a segment of the tourism industry, while the sustainability principles should apply to all types of tourism activities, operations, establishments and projects, including conventional and alternative forms[2].

Global Policy Context for Sustainable Development

The United Nation's (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the UNWTO is pushing forward these Goals and is supporting the tourism industry to align with the UN's 2030 Agenda. Goals 8, 12 and 14 are identified as priorities for the tourism industry.

As part of its efforts, the UNWTO has published a platform that aims to help policy makers, international organizations and other stakeholders of the tourism industry get involved in promoting SDG implementation strategies. The platform is available here. Queensland tourism needs to be aligned to and be seen to be reporting to the SDGs.

Policy Context for Sustainable Development and Climate Change in Australia

Any discussion on sustainable tourism, resilience, climate change and decarbonisation needs to speak to and compliment the policy environment that has been established by the Commonwealth and the State Government. In other words it needs to be complementary to the targets and policy commitments that have already been made by Government. EarthCheck's own experience is that Local Government is well advanced in a wide variety of policy initiatives from risk and resilience strategies to climate change emergency declarations. TEQ together with each of the State and Territory Tourism agencies have remained demand driven in this discussion and have no strategies in place to guide supply, investment and social license. Tourism and Events Queensland has adopted a range of Sustainable Marketing Principles that sit beside the current brand.

1.3 Implications for the Visitor Economy

The following commentary provides a brief assessment of implications regarding the development of a potential sustainable tourism policy framework for Queensland.

Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework

While current policy and strategy widely references sustainability, and a wide range of current marketing and development programmes activity contribute to a sustainable tourism management agenda, formal KPIs and policy objectives are not in place to drive activity and implementation. At present, there is not a formal policy platform on which to measure and celebrate success.

State and National policy commitments on contributing to sustainable development goals and climate change commitments are evolving rapidly – tourism needs a proactive approach to ensure it is well-placed to contribute to national commitments.

The Queensland Government need to:

- ❑ Establish an explicit sustainable tourism policy statement (vision and mission) that provides direction on how we wish to drive and manage demand and supply based outcomes.

☐ Provide a carbon calculator which can be used by tourism operators (we have included above an overview of the calculator which we provide to our operators across the world. We would be prepared to open this up for Queensland operators to use.)

☐ Alongside policy objectives, develop a suite of measurable environmental and community KPIs (including agreed scientific metrics) which can underpin reporting and economic goals. Reporting can be as part of overall annual tourism performance reporting or in the form of an annual sustainability report, which aligns with national reporting on SDGs and climate change/ environmental issues.

☐ Actively lead the policy agenda and be advocates for delivery of sustainable tourism outcomes for regional destinations and operators.

☐ Help build awareness and expertise in sustainable tourism through training and online case studies and templates

☐ Ensure the tourism sector is engaged as a part of a whole of government approach to meeting climate change obligations and sustainable development goals.

☐ Adopt procedures (regulations and incentives) which ensure that all tourism infrastructure is designed and operated to deliver sustainable performance outcomes.

VICE MODEL Considerations

The VICE model provides a simple way to explain how sustainability needs to be taken forward across the visitor economy. The model recognises that successful tourism is the result of the positive interaction between visitors, industry operators, community and environment

Visitor Considerations

We need to:

☐ Actively engage with the visitor market and make them part of the solution. This can be done through visitor pledges, fees into sensitive environments including national parks, voluntourism etc. and through communication, interpretation and experience development and delivery.

☐ Carry out research which builds understanding of consumer activity and market sentiment towards sustainable products and experiences, as a means of informing execution of visitor management, marketing and experience development programs.

☐ Identify and execute management and marketing techniques which mitigate visitor management challenges and help build visitor satisfaction. A focus on yield and not volume alone will help with this action.

Industry Considerations

We need to:

- ☐ Investigate opportunities for development of digital and online platforms that enable connections to be made between consumers, trade and businesses in promoting sustainable tourism experiences.
- ☐ Facilitate business support and capacity building programmes which grow awareness and understating of sustainability issues, and support business investment decisions.
- ☐ Consider measures which drive up business participation in recognised sustainable tourism and accreditation schemes as a means of supporting business adaptation actions and providing a means of showcasing sustainable credentials to customers.

Community Considerations

Australian heritage including Indigenous culture forms a key component of the tourism experiences promoted to visitors, and ultimately the economic gain from visitor expenditure and support from employment contributes to overall quality of life – community is an integral part of a sustainable approach.

We need to:

- ☐ Establish a consistent means of measuring community sentiment towards tourism, which informs a KPI.
- ☐ Establish systems and procedures which ensure communities are engaged in destination planning and that community impact and benefit is considered within management plans.
- ☐ Develop a dedicated Indigenous Tourism Strategy for the state.

Environmental Considerations

We need to:

- ☐ Through appropriate research and monitoring, understand the impact of visitor activity on sensitive environments, including risk assessment for key assets.
- ☐ Establish monitoring tools (or access tools already developed via other Government departments and agencies) which provide tourism businesses and destinations with the ability to measure tourism's impact on water, energy, waste and carbon. EarthCheck has recently developed a benchmarking tool for NSW Parks. The Perisher Range Resorts Environmental Management System (PRREMS) allows the park to identify and manage environmental risks, set environmental targets and measure and evaluate environmental performance (120 tourism operators form part of the reporting)

2.0 Risk and Resilience

As a signatory to the G20 Rome Guidelines for the Future of Tourism, Australia has committed to considering crisis management, resilience, inclusiveness and green transformation as part of its

recovery efforts. These, alongside safe mobility, digital transition and investment and infrastructure should play central roles in the Queensland Tourism Strategy.

Tourism is inherently reliant on its natural environment, to either deliver the experiences or provide unforgettable backdrops. Given its exposure to the environment, the industry is at risk from the changing climatic conditions and increasing ferocity of severe weather events. Furthermore, the industry is exposed to numerous other risks, including pandemics and epidemics, cyber security, political insecurity and market changes. It is not a case of IF a crisis will occur for the industry, rather of WHEN, as such resilience and risk mitigation should be embedded in all tourism (and related) policies and strategies.

ACTION – Apply a practical risk and resilience lens to all future policies and strategies that relate to planning for tourism in the state. This should be included in all future destination management plans. The industry is uninsurable in many locations and this needs some serious government support including the option of the development of a state based subsidy to underwrite insurance.

EarthCheck has worked directly with the tourism industry to build resilience in response to crisis over the past eight years. Through this, we know and understand that despite the exposure to risk, the tourism industry often lacks time and willingness to engage in risk management practices. In part this is due to a lack of knowledge and skills – these gaps need to be addressed in the strategy. Most operators know and understand that they could do a better job at preparing for and responding to crisis, but the commitment of time combined with the Australian “she’ll be right attitude” hinder action. Building resilience among tourism operators requires first the acknowledgement of vulnerability. To then build resilience there needs to be concerted effort to build knowledge and strengthening business practices – risk management and resilience must become business as usual, not an add on.

The Don’t Risk It manual, developed by EarthCheck in 2013, through Federal Government Funding, is a starting point for industry to build knowledge, capacity and resilience. This document requires an update to reflect current risks and best practice preparedness, preparation, response and recovery. But a resource is not enough to build a resilient tourism industry. Engagement, training and regular support will build resilience. With the delivery of the updated resource, regular capacity building opportunities are required. These should offer both dedicated face-to-face training and utilizing digital options to engage a broad range of stakeholders.

ACTION – Update Don’t Risk It to align with global best practice in crisis management. This document should provide support to operators in crisis prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The launch of the material should be supported by dedicated, regularly delivered capacity programs.

Whilst the tourism industry is particularly vulnerable to risks, it is also an industry that can be critical to support response and recovery in communities. Yet, there is a lack of consistency in the role that tourism plays in local disaster management response, often we have found the industry is left out of the conversation altogether. Tourism needs to be integrated into the disaster management of communities as the industry can provide resources to support response and a communication

channel to reach business owners and visitors. With millions of people out of their normal residence, the needs of tourists cannot be forgotten during a crisis. Closer collaboration between the tourism industry, disaster management coordinators and local response teams is required to support visitors and residence in response and recovery. Through the integration of tourism in planning and response efforts, the needs of tourists affected by crisis situations can be considered alongside the needs of residents.

ACTION – Work with partners across State and Local Government to develop a consistent approach that enables a practical and efficient integration of tourism into disaster management and response plans, with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities before, during and after crisis.

3.0 Enabling the Industry to Fulfil its Potential Through Industry Led Structural and Funding Transformation

Regional Tourism Organisations continue to struggle financially and are not operating in the most efficient way to deliver services to visitors, members and the industry generally. A new structure is needed that can support the diverse and dispersed industry in an inclusive and efficient way.

Funding for coordinated activities, particularly destination marketing, is not assured for the future, with government investment not meeting levels to ensure Queensland's competitive position. The need for a more adequate and sustainable source of funding is necessary to combat Qld's declining market share.

Action is needed to:

- Establish an industry structure to maximise efficiencies across the state, rejuvenate the competitiveness of the tourism industry and maximise the return on marketing investment; and
- Deliver sustainable funding that helps Queensland to shine brighter on a domestic and international stage.

A visitor levy is the most effective and efficient mechanism to generate sustainable funding for the tourism industry

Please let me know if you need clarification on any aspect of this submission.

Regards Stewart

Stewart Moore

CEO and Founder



EARTHCHECK

EarthCheck

Who is EarthCheck?

EarthCheck is an Australian business advisory group which specialises in destination management and sustainable tourism, it is also the name of a benchmarking and certification program. EarthCheck Certified is the world's leading environmental benchmarking and certification program designed specifically for the travel and tourism industry. The EarthCheck program was developed by the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism in 2000. Our not-for-profit research centre maintains the science for the program and provides a delivery mechanism to market. The program is built on Agenda 21 principles, speaks directly to the Sustainable Development Goals and is currently used by over 1,500 companies, in 6 languages, across 32 sectors in more than 70 countries across the globe.

It is built on deep evidence-based data. Data is delivered via our online platform to provide annual, year to date and monthly reports. On average a single participant enters 750 individual data points into the programme per year. These data points range across the following areas:

- Member contact and Corporate Governance Details
- Activities, Services and Facilities
- Sustainability Criteria
- Benchmarking data inclusive of: Activity Measures, Energy Consumption (Grid Electricity, Stationary Fuels, Mobile fuels (Air, Road and Water), Onsite Waste Water Treatment, Water Consumption (Potable, Recycled, Water Saving Devices), Waste Production, Waste Incinerated, Waste Recycled, Chemical Usage, Pesticide Usage, Community Contributions, CO₂e Emissions, Corporate Social Responsibility, Energy per source and total costs, water per unit and total costs, waste per unit and total cost

Benchmarking software collects on average 462 data points per client per year. The approximate cumulative total of all these data inputs over the past 20 years of EarthCheck's operation is 6,000,000. Over 4,000,000 of these are used to calculate the annually reviewed baseline and best practice figures which show a client how they are performing against their peers within sector, country and region.

What is the opportunity? To create a strategic alliance with the Commonwealth Government and the tourism Industry to support the launch and delivery of a market driven policy platform to address climate change, decarbonisation and sustainable tourism. The program reports to the Sustainable Development Goals, meets the reporting needs of the new carbon economy and is underpinned by cutting edge science and benchmarking.

We see an opportunity to work together to support operators across the supply chain to reduce overheads, become more operationally efficient and meet the new challenges of climate change and de-carbonisation.

EarthCheck Software

MyEarthCheck is a complete enterprise-wide sustainability performance management solution for the whole value chain, which can cover all sustainability applications, as needed, including carbon, energy, environment health and safety (EH&S), procurement, risk and design.

MyEarthCheck provides a secure and integrated cloud application solution (SaaS). Clients have an ability to securely access vital information across a broad range of performance metrics anytime, anywhere and from any device.

Security and Verification

- Security penetration tested;
- Hosted in highly secure datacentres – market leading cloud provider;
- Software development security best practices applied;
- Data is audited and verified using third party auditors. It is evidence based.

Credibility and Methodology

The development of the My EarthCheck energy and carbon calculator is based on internationally accepted methodologies outlined in the: Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) 14064 range of standards for greenhouse gas accounting .The methodology is CDP approved.

Green House Gas (GHG Data updating)

The MyEarthCheck carbon database is updated annually to: a) capture changes in emission factors for each country, b) identify updates of international emission factors, c) incorporate new methodologies for estimating emissions.

Corporate Reporting. EarthCheck software allows clients to:

- Report to global platforms including the Global Reporting Initiative
- Collect information to inform sustainability and CSR reports
- Inform reporting requirements for the Carbon Disclosure Project and ESG reporting in certain securities or stock exchanges.
- Provide benchmarking reports which allow the operational performance of all hotels in a portfolio to be compared.

Infrastructure / Hosting

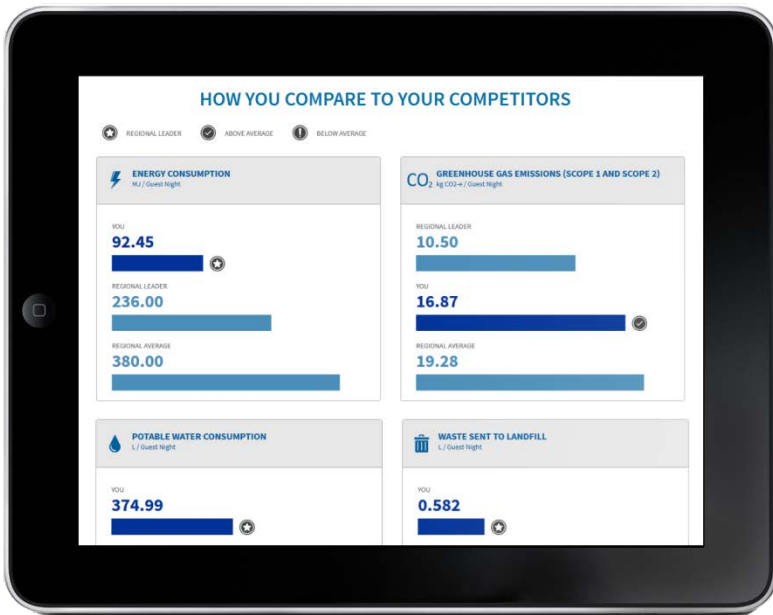
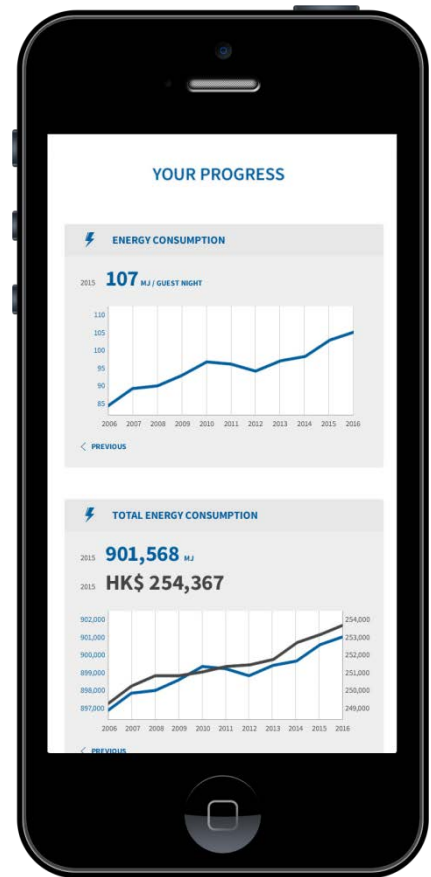
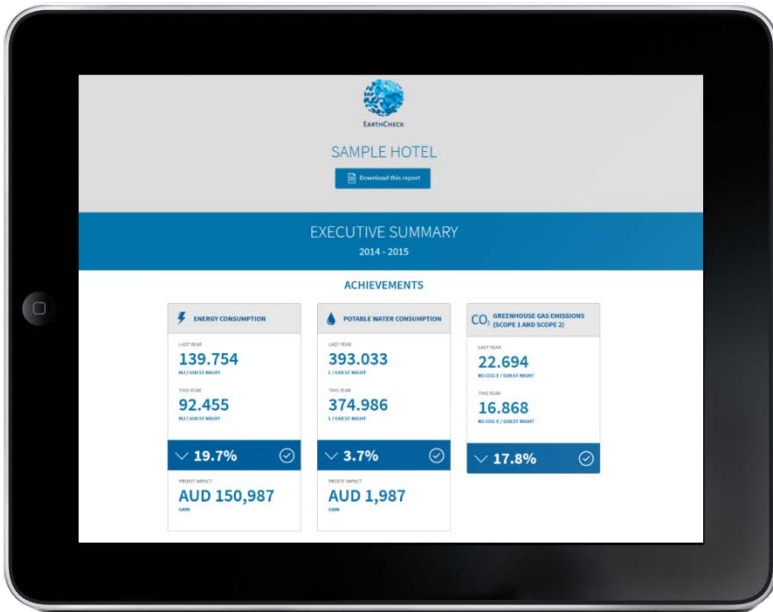
- EarthCheck is built on the market-leading Amazon Web Services cloud hosting platform - providing flexible, highly scalable, and cost-effective infrastructure.
- The My EarthCheck Platform is hosted in the Singapore AWS region optimizing latency to global clients.
- CDN, minification and compression technology further improves performance.
- Horizontally and vertically scalable, load-balanced, redundant across two availability zones.
- Database has active-passive failover.

What does My EarthCheck provide for our clients?

- Easy capture of both qualitative and quantitative information;
- Visually compelling graphs of quantitative data;
- Calculation of performance metrics and indicators
- Client financial reporting (energy, water, waste);
- Benchmarking of business operation's quantitative results against their peers;
- Benchmarking report generation capability;
- Group administration console for business clusters/large groups

- Administration consoles for user management and data submission management

Appendix A: My EarthCheck Reporting

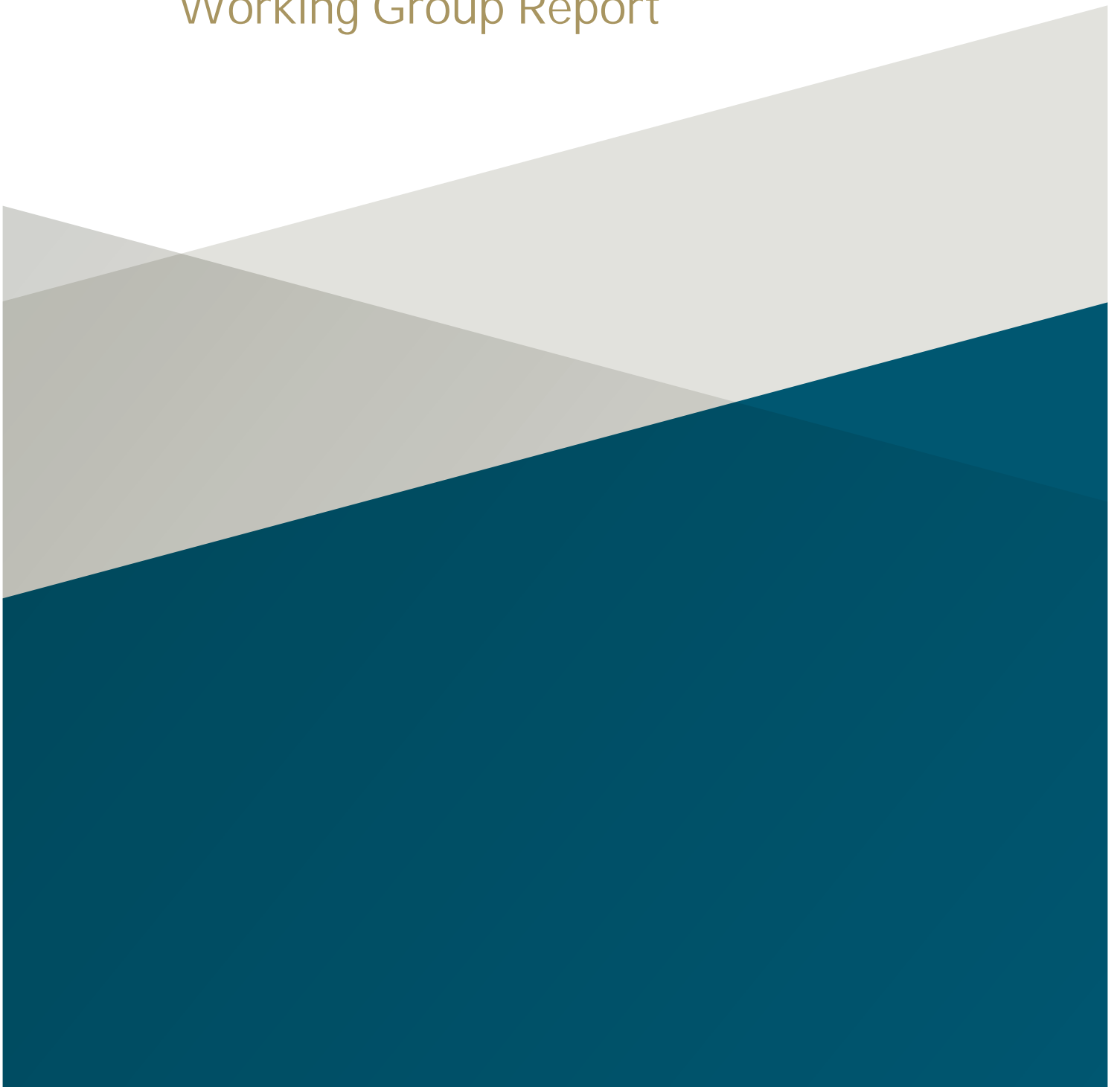




An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021

Sustainable Tourism Working Group Report



Introduction

Tourism is becoming one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world economy and it is estimated that export earnings generated by tourism grew to USD 1.7 trillion and international tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2018.¹ At home, the Irish tourism sector has experienced steady growth for the past 8 years, culminating in overseas visitor spend of over €5 billion with almost 10 million tourist visits in 2018. Overall the sector was worth almost €9.4 billion (including domestic tourism receipts and carrier fare receipts) to the economy that year.²

The rise of globalisation and technological advances in recent years has led to increased air connectivity, cheaper airfares and larger air traffic volumes. Although this has led to economic benefit, the social and environmental impacts of this growth are being felt at all tourist destinations. There is increasing recognition that tourism growth must be sustainable, environmentally as well as commercially and socially. In 2015, the United Nations published 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which address the global challenges we face, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ireland's National Implementation Plan sets out how we intend to implement these goals through the development of actions and targets around each goal.

The definition of sustainable tourism is well established, but full understanding remains limited. The UNWTO define sustainable tourism as: *"tourism that 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"*.

The Government's Tourism Policy Statement *"People, Place, and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025"* affirms and has agreed that it will place tourism as a key element of its economic strategy, with development in the tourism sector reflecting the highest standards of environmental and economic sustainability.

The policy goals and objectives contained in the policy statement are delivered through a series of Action Plans. One of the first actions identified within the Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 commits to a review of sustainable tourism development in Ireland:

- *A working group has been established to review international policy and best practice in sustainable tourism and propose guiding principles for sustainable*

¹ Source: World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) International Tourism Highlights 2019

² Source: Fáilte Ireland Key Tourism Facts 2018

tourism development in Ireland. The Group will report to the Tourism Leadership Group with their recommendations.

The action was agreed by the Tourism Leadership Group in April 2018 and a working group was formed (Appendix I) in August 2018 to carry out this action. The working group was chaired by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) and included senior representatives of Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation.

Scope

At the first meeting of the group it was agreed that an important and significant piece of work is required to support the future growth and management of tourism in Ireland i.e. to develop guiding principles for sustainable tourism development and recommendations on implementation. The group discussed the scope of the work involved and agreed the following should form key elements of this work:

- Sustainable tourism needs to look at a wide definition and include all pillars of sustainable development; environmental, social and economic.
- Metrics and Indicators will be key for setting targets, and measuring and monitoring progress. This could include everything from carbon/ aviation emissions from the sector, and any international and national environmental/ climate change indicators that may be relevant.
- Sustainable tourism principles should look to short term and long term goals.
- There are different layers of responsibility, intervention required e.g. National (set policy context and support with investment), Regional/ Local/destination level (Regional Assemblies, Local Authorities), Community, and Business - and every layer has a role in delivering on any principles developed.
- The overarching principles will set a framework which all stakeholders can align their work in sustainability to deliver - it will not be as effective if stakeholders are working to different agendas.

- It was also recognised that each member of the working group is doing work in the area of sustainability and that it would be useful to compile this as a starting point.
- Also some benchmarking of sustainable tourism policy internationally could be undertaken and this could also feed in to the development of an Irish policy.
- Any recommendations made by the group will be informed by the overarching policy and strategy identified in the Government framework for sustainable development for Ireland, *Our Sustainable Future*, and the *Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018-2020*, as well as the Government's *2019 Climate Action Plan*.

Consultancy

Fáilte Ireland drew up a request for tender, in consultation with DTTAS and Tourism Ireland, based on the key deliverables agreed by the group. The following terms of reference for the consultancy were established:

- Conduct a robust review of international policy and best practice in sustainable tourism
- Propose guiding principles for sustainable tourism development in Ireland
- Provide recommendations on successful implementation

Following Fáilte Ireland's procurement process, Earthcheck Pty Ltd was successful in the tendering process and appointed as the workings groups' consultant.

The key outputs from the consultant's report include;

Review of International best practice –

Countries selected for review included those acknowledged as being leaders in the field; a selection of neighbouring European countries; and a selection of smaller island states. Scandinavian nations are leaders in the field, driven in part by deeply embedded commitments to sustainable development principles. It is apparent however that most countries reviewed during this study, have prepared

their approach to sustainable tourism policy within a broader tourism strategy or as part of overall sustainability policies where these are in place.

Where Ireland Currently Sits Against Sustainable Development Goals and Sustainable Tourism Criteria –

While there are gaps in Ireland’s policy approach when considered against the full suite of assessment criteria, there are a wide range of underpinning and tourism-specific programmes which deliver against sustainable development objectives. Therefore, Ireland is not starting from a base level; our situation echoes that of many other nations.

Stakeholder Consultation –

Consultation with the tourism trade and key stakeholders regarding sustainable tourism development in Ireland was undertaken as a key element of the consultancy. Over 60 key stakeholders (Government Departments, State Agencies, and Industry Bodies) were consulted during the summer period in 2019. There was a clear consensus from the industry that Irish Tourism needed to make progress in relation to achieving UNWTO’s definition of sustainable tourism. It was considered that it is now timely for the tourism industry as a whole to embrace sustainability. There was a strong consensus from consultees that the highest level of priority was required in order to develop and deliver a sustainable tourism policy.

A full report, including an appraisal of where Ireland currently stands (using a variation on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s destination criteria), a report on the stakeholder consultation phase, a summary of international sustainable tourism policy approaches, and recommendations for implementation, is available separate to this report.

Guiding Principles

At its meeting on 14 November the group discussed and subsequently agreed the following ambition and principles for sustainable tourism development in Ireland:

Ambition

Ireland will seek to be amongst the world-leaders in sustainable tourism practices.

The vital role of a current and future sustainable tourism sector to the Irish economy and its citizens is recognised. Therefore, by taking steps now, Ireland will seek to be amongst the world-leaders in the delivery of qualitative and quantifiable sustainable tourism practices by 2030 in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. DTTAS, in association with the tourism agencies and industry, will develop a policy with strategic goals for sustainable tourism development and report on these regularly. These goals should include the sector's climate impacts, its broader environmental impacts, economic impacts, community satisfaction with tourism and customer satisfaction. Ireland has a reputation as the 'Emerald Isle' internationally and sustaining and nurturing this green image through the adoption of sustainable tourism practices is an important underpinning for future tourism growth. Achieving a credible and proven sustainable tourism reputation could also be a differentiator and therefore a competitive advantage for Irish tourism going forward.

1. All of government will work together with industry towards achieving a sustainable tourism sector.

DTTAS recognises the importance of a whole of government approach in concert with the tourism agencies and the Irish tourism industry as critical to achieving successful sustainable tourism outcomes. DTTAS will take a leadership role in driving forward Ireland's sustainable tourism sector development, in the first instance through policy development and in policy activation through and together with its agencies and industry partners. The tourism industry will be encouraged to drive up business participation in recognised sustainable tourism accreditation schemes and promoting sustainable tourism experiences.

Possible Areas of focus

-DTTAS to provide leadership, resources, funding and work with industry on the development and implementation of sustainable tourism policy

-All government decisions and actions take full account of the impact on tourism

2. Sustainable tourism growth will be achieved in a manner that focuses on overall economic benefit ahead of the number of tourists.

Tourism is a key economic driver for the Irish economy and continuing to grow its contribution is important for Ireland to realise its economic

development ambitions. Policy will focus on the growth in the value of tourism as opposed to growth in the volume of tourism in line with the revised Government performance targets for tourism in Ireland to 2025.

Possible Areas of focus

- Marketing which focuses on building tourism value from target international and domestic markets, factoring in the needs to support regional and seasonal dispersal
- Improved tourism productivity aligned with industry needs on productivity measures (profitability/margins, staffing, aligning experiences with target audiences, marketing ROI etc.)

3. *Tourism will support economic growth in communities throughout the country and with a greater spread of demand across the year.*

Tourism is an indigenous economic sector which generates employment and incomes in communities throughout Ireland. An increased focus will be put on regional growth and season extension to deliver greater visitor dispersal throughout the country with a more even spread of demand across the year.

Possible Areas of focus

- Tourism growth and activity which is supported by communities and contributes to improving quality of life.
- A greater proportion of visitor spend and supply chain benefits are retained locally

4. *In delivering high quality tourism experiences that exceed our visitors' expectations, we will do so in a manner that minimises any negative environmental or community impacts.*

DTTAS, Ireland's tourism agencies and the Irish tourism industry will cooperate closely in the management and future development of tourism products based on the sustainable management of attractions and visitor experiences. The tourism agencies will only support development of visitor experiences that sustain Ireland's environmental and cultural capital while ensuring a safe, satisfying, accessible and fulfilling experience for visitors. Tourism has positive social and economic impacts on communities and the development of tourism products and experiences will aim to sustain and deepen these impacts.

Possible Areas of focus

- *Focus on delivering compelling great value for money experiences which build visitor satisfaction*
- *A standard set of metrics will be established to enable national and local measures*
- *Informed by consumer research, strengthen the focus of tourism marketing on authentic Irish culture, heritage people and landscapes*

5. *As custodians of our natural landscape and of our historic and cultural assets, we will protect them for the next generation.*

Ireland's tourism sector derives a unique advantage from the nation's natural beauty. Sustaining and nurturing the nation's natural assets (including coasts, mountains, rivers and lakes) through the adoption of sustainable tourism practices is recognized as a fundamental underpinning for Ireland's future sustainable tourism growth. Ireland's tourism sector acknowledges it has a role as a custodian of Ireland's natural and built heritage, environment, and historical and cultural assets.

Possible Areas of focus

- *Tourism activity that contributes to the preservation and enhancement of Ireland's environment, culture and heritage*
- *Tourism businesses identify and support initiatives where tourism activity can support ecological restoration*

6. *Responsible behaviour by our visitors will be encouraged to maximise the mutual benefit of tourism to Ireland's people and place.*

The role of domestic and overseas visitors as active participants and key stakeholders in a sustainable tourism sector is recognized. DTTAS will work through agencies and the tourism industry to promote Ireland as a tourism destination where the role of the visitor in sustaining the natural environment and supporting sustainable tourism job creation is key, and where possible to seek to influence the actions of visitors who plan to visit.

Possible Areas of focus

- *Educate visitors about Ireland's cultural and behavioural expectations and influence visitor behaviour*
- *Invite visitors to make a commitment to behave responsibly through a dedicated mechanism e.g. pledge, off-setting scheme*

7. The tourism sector will support and promote efforts to move to more sustainable forms of transport to, and around Ireland

Tourism and transport go hand-in-hand and tourism displays a very high dependency on transport for its successful operation. Shifting our visitors onto sustainable modes of transport is a priority and public transport providers and private transport operators will be actively encouraged in this regard. As an island nation, Ireland relies heavily on air transportation for tourism purposes and to a lesser degree sea access. Maintaining and growing direct, competitive and convenient access to the island of Ireland is of critical importance to our tourism sector. Having regard to the vital role that tourism plays in supporting sustainable livelihoods and economic development throughout Ireland, we will work with and support the aviation and ferry sector to seek more fuel-efficient sustainable solutions to travel to the Island of Ireland and to encourage off-setting of carbon emissions.

Possible Areas of focus

- *Integration of sustainable transport options into tourism trails and itineraries*
- *Work with transport providers to identify opportunities for increased visitor uptake of sustainable transport options*
- *Work with and support the aviation and ferry sector to seek more fuel-efficient sustainable solutions to air and sea travel to the Island of Ireland and identify the opportunities available to visitors for carbon off-setting and minimising the impact of air travel*

8. The tourism sector must play its part to help deliver Ireland's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

DTTAS recognises the collective ambition of Irish government agencies to support the government's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Economic growth must be linked to reductions in carbon emissions and the tourism sector must play its part in achieving those reductions. The tourism sector will make an active contribution to Ireland's commitments in reducing its carbon emissions.

Possible Areas of focus

- *Tourism businesses establish environmental management plans which guide investment on building business sustainability, including measures and actions to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards carbon neutrality*

Next Steps

The Sustainable Tourism Working Group recommends the following Implementation Framework on foot of its work:

Implementation Framework	
1	<p>Policy Commitment</p> <p>DTTAS to develop a sustainable tourism policy statement, setting out the rationale and benefits of a sustainable approach together with the guiding principles and implementing actions to deliver on the ambition, taking account of the possible areas of focus identified</p>
2	<p>Initial Actions</p> <p>In advance of the completion of the policy statement, the Sustainable Tourism Working Group will draw up an Interim Action Plan which will identify initial actions for implementation, to include some or all of the actions set out below.</p>
3	<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Establish a cross-agency and industry leadership team to drive implementation of the Interim Action Plan and, subsequently, the sustainable tourism policy including relevant government departments, tourism agencies and industry representation.</p>

Some potential initial actions which could be considered for the interim action plan include the following:

a.	<p>Evidence Base</p> <p>Prioritise establishing new research measures which fill gaps in the current evidence base, providing for informed management decisions. These would potentially include:</p> <p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instigate a community sentiment survey/ methodology that enables collection of resident sentiment at local level <p><u>Industry</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review visitor surveys to ensure that samples are
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sufficient to measure seasonality and regional dispersal

- Investigate methods such as the use of big data/telco data to improve understanding of visitor flows

Environment

- Establish carrying capacity/impact assessment mechanisms at key tourism destinations
- Work with relevant government Departments and utility providers to ensure mechanisms are in place for businesses to measure water, energy, waste usage
- Make a carbon calculator available to tourism businesses

Visitor

Integrate questions on visitor sentiment and expectation towards sustainable management and visitor experiences into existing consumer research program

b Leadership

Identify a director-level post within Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to provide strategic direction and leadership, ensuring raised profile for sustainability.

c Building Understanding

Build awareness and understanding of sustainability within key tourism agencies and industry, potentially including

- Integration of sustainability training as part of new staff induction/ continuing professional development
- Integration of sustainability training across Fáilte Ireland's business support programmes
- Programme of study visits to build understanding of sustainable tourism policy and practice
- Training and capacity building for policy makers and key stakeholders regarding sustainability and green procurement

d Communication

Establish a clear narrative in communicating about the sustainability policy framework and its implementation, which reflects community and business understanding and attitudes towards sustainability.

Appendix I

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Bernard O'Shea/Colm O'Connor (Chair)	-	DTTAS
Darragh Morgan (Secretary)	-	DTTAS
Orla Carroll	-	Fáilte Ireland
Shane Dineen	-	Fáilte Ireland
Maeve Walsh	-	Fáilte Ireland
Mark Henry	-	Tourism Ireland
Fiona Dunne	-	Tourism Ireland
Eoghan O'Mara Walsh	-	ITIC



An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Teton County

Wyoming, USA

An EarthCheck Certified Story



August 2020



Lifetime Experiences.

Walking the Talk

Destination Performance.



Energy

52.52 GJ / Person Year,
which is 22.7% better
than the Baseline level*.



GHG Emissions

5.2 t CO₂-e / Person Year,
which is 39.4% better than
the Baseline level.



Water

62.21 kL / Person Year,
which is 35.4% better than
the Best Practice level.



Waste

0.685 m³ / Person Year,
which is 35.4% better than
the Baseline level.

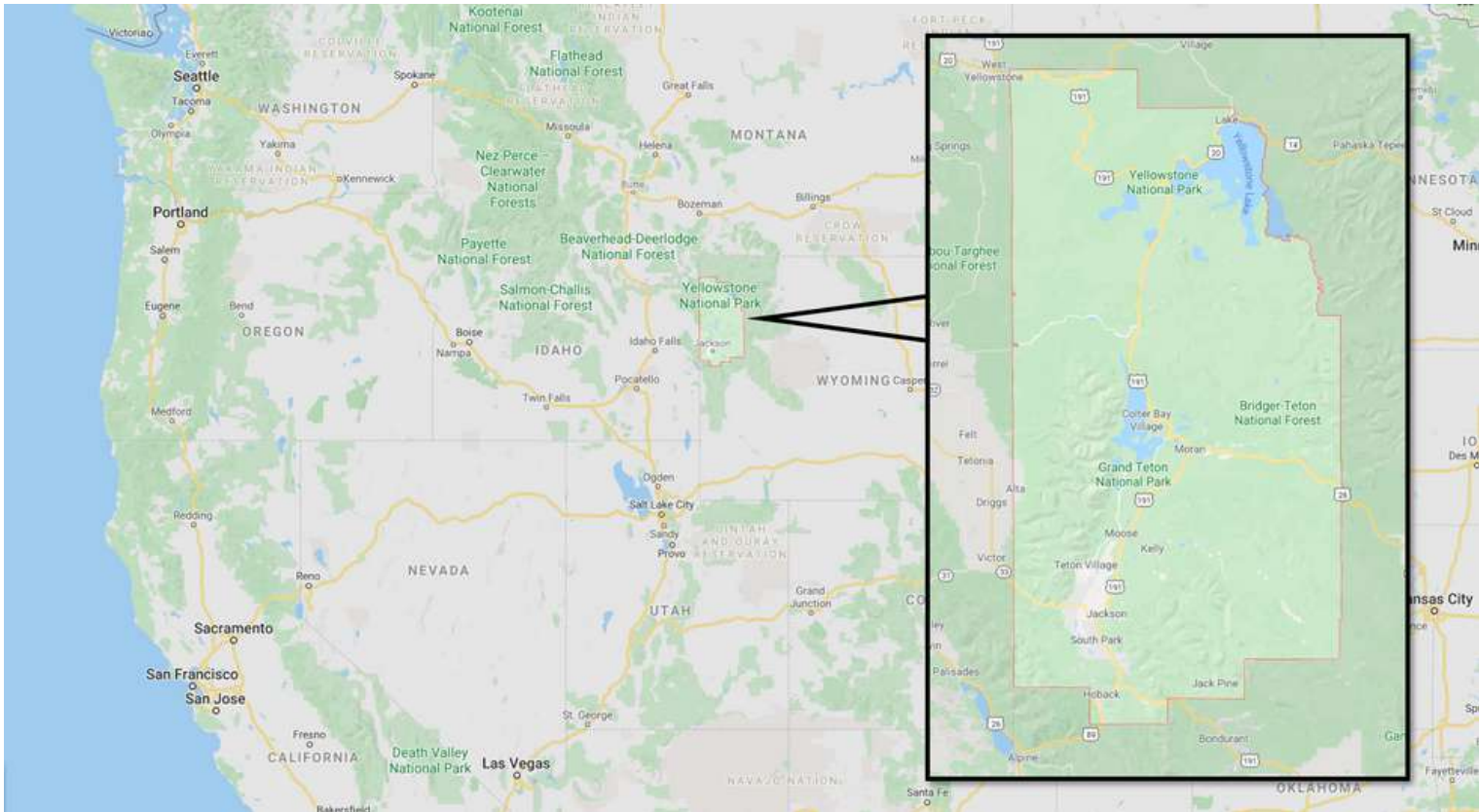
More good news:

- Particulate Matter Produced: 0.0001 kg / Person Year / Hectare. Which is 98.82% better than Best Practice level.
- Water Samples Passed: 25.1% better than the Baseline level.
- Habitat Conservation Area: 72% better than the Best Practice level.
- Restaurants Sourcing Local Food: 40
- Destination Safety – Theft Rate: 56.1% better than the Best Practice level.

*A Person Year is equivalent to 365 full person days. This activity measure incorporates both resident and guest populations, where guests who visit the Destination are classified as either "Guest Nights" or "Day Guests" (i.e. a person who arrives and departs on the same day). Each "Guest Night" is counted as one person day and each "Day Guest" is counted as one-third of a person day.

EarthCheck

the planet deserves more than half measures



Teton County, located in the state of Wyoming in northwest of the United States of America (U.S), is also known as the tourism destination Jackson Hole. The region encompasses 10,919 square kilometers including all of Grand Teton National Park, 40.4% of Yellowstone National Park's total area and three ski resorts. These parks are part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) one of the last remaining large, nearly intact ecosystems in the northern temperate zone of the earth.

Yellowstone National Park was the first national park in the U.S. and is also the first national park in the world. It spans an area of 8,983 square kilometers and is in three states - Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. It comprises lakes, canyons, rivers and mountain ranges, including Yellowstone Lake, one of the largest high-elevation lakes in North America. The park was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. It is known for its abundant wildlife or megafauna - moose, grizzly and black bears, wolves, bison and elk live in this park - and its many geothermal features (half of the world's geysers and hydrothermal features are in Yellowstone).

Only 16 kilometers south of Yellowstone is Grand Teton National Park, named after Grand Teton, the tallest mountain in the Teton Range. The park includes the major peaks of the 64 kilometers long, Teton Range and most of valley known as Jackson Hole. Grand Teton National Park is connected to Yellowstone National Park via the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, a scenic road owned and managed by the National Park Service. Grand Teton National Park is an almost pristine ecosystem and the same species of flora and fauna that have existed since prehistoric times can still be found there.

The year-round population of Teton County is approximately 23,500 and during the summer peak months the population grows to almost 68,000. Annual visitation to Teton County is over 4 million domestic and international overnight visitors and generates US\$1.23 billion in annual revenue.

As a popular tourism destination, Teton County features over 11,000 beds of diverse accommodations, restaurants, retailers, and tours and activities such as hiking, fishing, mountaineering, camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, kayaking, rafting, and skiing at any of the three ski areas: Snow King, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and Grand Targhee.

Timothy O'Donoghue,
Executive Director, Riverwind
Foundation
EarthCheck Destination Coordinator

"We selected EarthCheck's Sustainable Destinations program due to it being the longest running and most rigorous certification process we could find."



Community Stories

Jackson Hole & Yellowstone Sustainable Destination Program

The Riverwind Foundation is coordinating a program to strengthen and unify the programs, policies, and practices for environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic vitality in Teton County, Wyoming. The program has provided sustainability training, technical assistance, and certification services to over 300 local businesses and organizations. The Riverwind Foundation and Jackson Hole were selected by the World Travel & Tourism Council as a Destination Finalist in the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, National Geographic as a Destination Leadership Finalist in the World Legacy Awards, and by Green Destinations as a Top 100 Sustainable Destination.



Pathway to Sustainability

In 2012, Teton County participated in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Early Adopters Program for Sustainable Destinations. The GSTC's concluding remarks were that "Teton County more than any other place in the world had the potential to become a leader as a sustainable destination".

One of the most important findings of the Early Adopters assessment was that, despite a plethora of stakeholders working with the best intentions to increase the sustainability of the County, there was no coordination or unified approach towards shared goals and international standards for sustainability. Therefore, in 2014 the Jackson Hole & Yellowstone Sustainable Destination Program (the Program) was established by the Riverwind Foundation. One of the primary objectives of the Program was to achieve third-party certification within five years.

The purpose of seeking certification was to guide and drive sustainability innovation and improvement with Teton County's business, government, and nonprofit stakeholders and the overall community.

When it came to selecting a certification program, "We selected EarthCheck's Sustainable Destinations program due to it being the longest running and most rigorous certification process we could find" said Timothy O'Donoghue, Executive Director at the Riverwind Foundation and EarthCheck Destination Coordinator.

Global Sustainable Tourism Council
(GSTC)

"Teton County more than any other place in the world had the potential to become a leader as a sustainable destination."



Community Stories

Community Emergency Response Fund

The fund was created by the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole to address community needs in coordination with local front line agencies. Since launching in mid-March 2020, the Fund has granted over USD\$2 million dollars across 20 local organizations to provide immediate support the community's most vulnerable populations, such as:

- Financial aid to local families, school children, and medically quarantined individuals for food and food delivery, health, and housing security.
- Medical supplies and testing, mail delivery, and follow up to high risk citizens.
- Employing healthcare workers for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing and assisting first responders with child care assistance.



Certification with EarthCheck: Challenges and Results

Teton County's vision was established by the community in 2012 and continues to be embedded today in the Destination's Sustainability Policy: "To preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations."

Given the number of government bodies^[1] and critical stakeholders managing the natural and cultural resources of Teton County, one of the main challenges faced was creating an overarching Destination Sustainability Policy that adequately balanced the complex needs of each authority and stakeholder involved. To achieve this, meetings were held with each of the community's 10 elected officials to engage them with the process, to build understanding of the EarthCheck Sustainable Destination Standard and to foster buy-in and cooperation for the journey ahead.

In addition, key stakeholders were introduced to opportunities for environmental, cultural, social and economic (ECSE) outcomes, while specifically addressing tourism activity and tourism development issues.

EarthCheck's Sustainable Destinations program is designed to empower local communities to take ownership of sustainability goals and build on local initiatives. The program has a strong emphasis placed on culture as an aspect of place management as well as targeting important social concerns such as education, human rights and the contribution of a destination to building social capital and management of community services. Economic concerns addressed in the program include employment conditions, support of local economy, use of fair trade goods and services, and recognition of the seasonality of tourism revenue - all contributing to the alleviation of poverty in the destination.

Teton County's Vision & Policy

"To preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations."

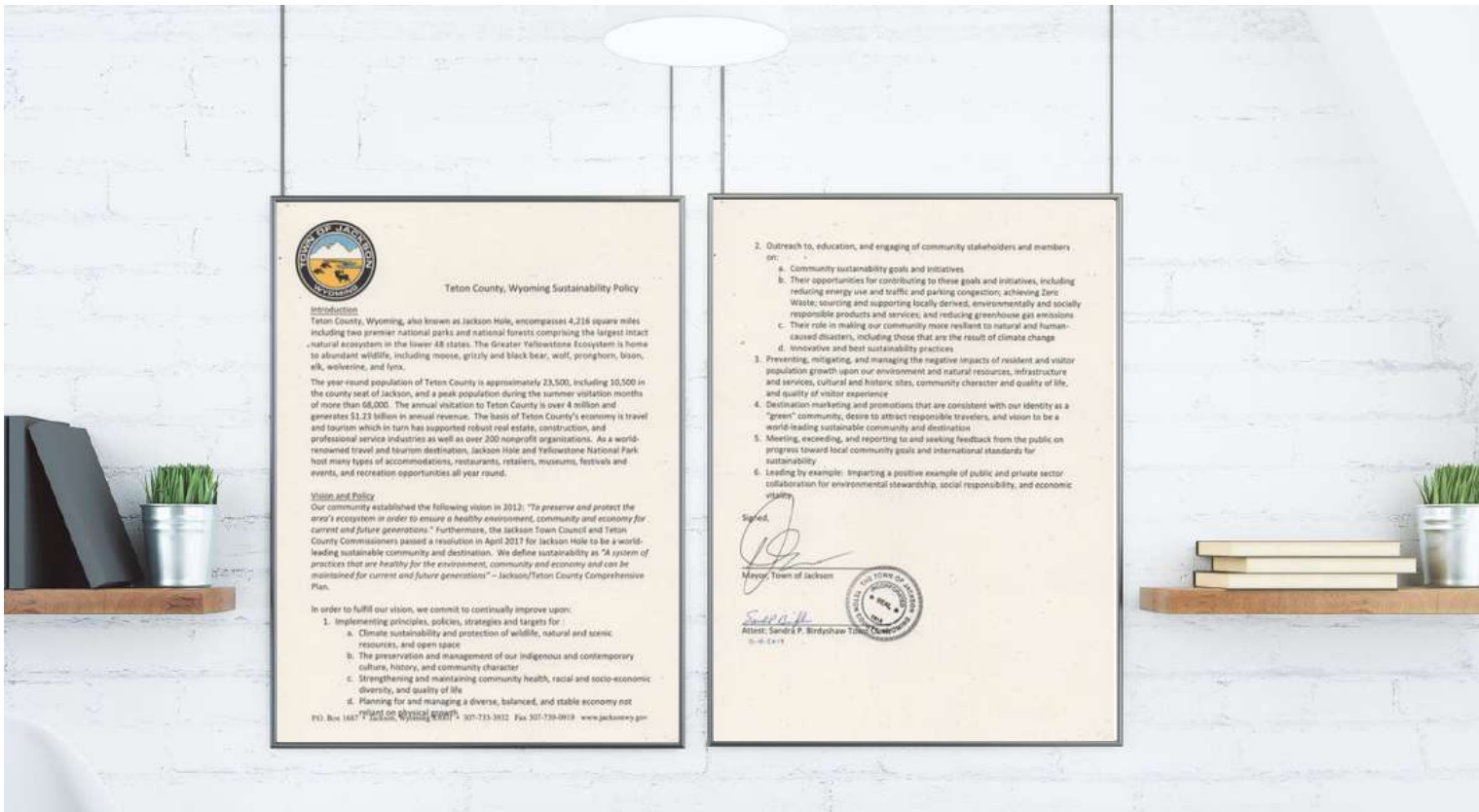
[1] Teton County, Town of Jackson National Park Service (Yellowstone and Grand Teton NPs), National Forest Service (Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee NFs), US Fish & Wildlife Service (National Elk Refuge), Wyoming Game & Fish (elk feeding grounds)



Community Stories

Teton County COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery

Local government, the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, and the Jackson Hole Travel & Tourism Board are coordinating community members to create and implement a recovery plan and outreach initiative, including public health metrics and guidelines, as a promising first step in developing a more comprehensive set of social, environmental, and economic sustainability performance measures and coordinated communications for managing the community as a tourism destination.



Through stakeholder meetings and engagement with EarthCheck’s Destination Coordinator, a policy was developed that effectively balanced the needs of stakeholder groups. This was acknowledged and signed by the Mayor of the Town of Jackson and signaled a milestone in the progress towards certification.

As part of the program, Teton County is required to measure, monitor and make ongoing improvements in the key performance areas outlined below:



Energy efficiency, conservation and management



Management of freshwater resources



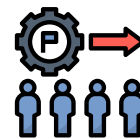
Management of environmentally harmful substances



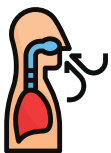
Greenhouse gas emissions



Ecosystem conservation and management



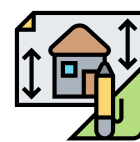
Cultural and social management



Air quality protection, noise control and light pollution



Transport



Land use planning and development



Waste water management, drainage and streams



Solid waste management



Economic management



Community Stories

Green Power and Alternative Fuels

Energy Conservation Works (ECW) and Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities (YTCC) are working with government, businesses and organizations, and residents to use electricity and fuels from renewable and no/low carbon-emitting sources. In addition to its diverse energy conservation and efficiency programs, ECW's Green Power program offers residents and businesses to purchase their energy from certified, renewable sources. YTCC has helped increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations in the Greater Yellowstone region from zero to over 50 through grants and rebates, thereby supporting the growth of electric vehicle ownership by over 4,000% since 2013.



The EarthCheck Destination Coordinator organized and coordinated a core team of six volunteers (the Riverwind Foundation's Destination Certification Team) who collected data and supporting documentation from 44 individuals and 16 partnering organizations. The team researched, gathered, and uploaded plans, policies, data, reports and other information related to sustainability into a cloud-based platform with a master index organized according to the EarthCheck Benchmarking Indicators for destinations.

The result: the most comprehensive library and database of sustainability-related information ever created for Teton County. This library and database is now publicly available to any individual or organization that is searching for current and historical sustainability documentation and data.

This database enables the community to share knowledge, resources and enhance capacity based on shared goals.

The accumulated volunteer time totaled 846 hours and the Riverwind Foundation has maintained all original volunteers and even grown its dedicated team! Whilst it was a timely process to gather the relevant documentation, the engagement from the community during this time not only supported the required processes from a certification perspective, but also achieved buy-in to the broader sustainability goals and objectives for the region and created momentum across the region. This was a critical step.

"the EarthCheck process helped to create a greater awareness of and engagement in our community's sustainability issues, activities, and status as an international travel and tourism destination". said O'Donoghue

Timothy O'Donoghue,
Executive Director, Riverwind
Foundation
EarthCheck Destination Coordinator

"The EarthCheck process helped to create a greater awareness of and engagement in our community's sustainability issues, activities, and status as an international travel and tourism destination."



Community Stories

Jackson Hole Climate Action Collective:

Created to assist Teton County in reducing carbon emissions and address local climate change impacts. The Collective is a private-sector initiative working with local government to make climate-positive policy decisions, increase community engagement in climate action, and marshal and coordinate resources to develop and implement a climate action plan. The Collective successfully advocated for the Town of Jackson's adoption of a goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.



Sustainable Initiatives and EarthCheck KPA's

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Teton County's GHG emissions were steadily on the rise since 2009, largely due to increased local and visitor transportation. Nonetheless, the Jackson Town Council approved a resolution to reach net zero emissions by 2030. To achieve this, the destination is planning to move away from single occupancy vehicles and implement an integrated transport system that allows for ridesharing, walking and biking. A local private sector organization called the Jackson Hole Climate Action Collective was established in 2019 to support this goal.

Energy Consumption

Over 90% of electricity to Teton County comes from renewable sources, which includes 10.5% from certified renewable energy. The local energy cooperative, Lower Valley Energy, has joined with local government to establish Energy Conservation Works, a joint powers board that conducts energy efficiency and conservation programs, and promotes the use of green energy to residential and commercial consumers.

Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities is an organization that promotes the use of alternative fuels for vehicles and transportation. Teton County is planning to reduce energy usage by 40% by the end of 2020.

Potable Water Consumption

Although the supply of high-quality freshwater sources is abundant in Teton County, potential climate change impacts require community wide water conservation programs and strategies. A coalition of conservation organizations named Protect Our Waters was created to advocate for clean water policy and programs, including resident education and septic system improvement initiatives. The goal is to reduce energy usage from water use by 20% by 2020. More qualitatively, the goal is to reduce nutrient pollution to improve quality of waterways.

Waste Sent to Landfill

The Jackson Town Council and Teton County Commissioners approved a resolution in 2014 for Teton County to be a Zero Waste Community.

"Over 90% of electricity to Teton County comes from renewable sources, which includes 10.5% from certified renewable energy."



Community Stories

Road to Zero Waste

Teton County Integrated Solid Waste & Recycling (ISWR) is coordinating community strategies for diverting waste from the landfill with a goal of a 60% diversion rate by 2030. These strategies include recycling outreach and education, a community composting facility, and a single-use plastic bag ban in the Town of Jackson. The ISWR is a key coordinating stakeholder in the Subaru Zero Landfill Initiative that is engaging Grand Teton National Park and its concessionaires.



In addition, Grand Teton National Park partnered with Subaru and the National Parks Conservation Association in the Zero Landfill Initiative. Integrated Solid Waste & Recycling coordinates the solid waste management facilities and programs of the destination, including the initial community composting facility. Teton County's goal is 60% diversion from the landfill by 2030.

What's Next for Teton County?

In addition to the goals cited above: the establishment of a destination management organization - Destination Stewardship Council - consisting of representatives from diverse segments of the community. "This organization or council shall oversee the development and implementation of the destination management plan that prioritizes environmental stewardship and social responsibility and responds to the sentiments of residents and visitors", continued O'Donoghue.

Communication of sustainability credentials since tourism operators have a great opportunity to engage with the millions of visitors who pass through the region annually. Ensuring that this story is shared is an important part of the sustainability journey.

Working with our key stakeholders to not only apply a sustainability focus to the County, but also to tourism businesses individually. Utilising the skills and knowledge we have learnt through the certification program to build capacity among our operators, build resilience into the destination, and realize Teton County's vision to be a world-leading sustainable community and destination.

Timothy O'Donoghue,
Executive Director, Riverwind
Foundation
EarthCheck Destination Coordinator

"This organization or council shall oversee the development and implementation of the destination management plan that prioritizes environmental stewardship and social responsibility and responds to the sentiments of residents and visitors."



Community Stories

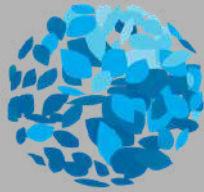
Food Sustainability

Hole Food Rescue and Slow Food in the Tetons are working to reduce food waste, cultivate community food security, and increase the availability of locally sourced, nutritious foods. Hole Food Rescue collects over a quarter million pounds annually of edible but unsold food from local grocers and other retailers and redistributes it in the community. Slow Food in the Tetons provides opportunities for local food producers to sell their products through the weekly People's Market, the seasonal Farm Stand, and an online marketplace; and advocates for local food in local restaurant menus.



REFERENCES

Q&A with Timothy O'Donoghue
Teton County Policy Statement - September 3 2019
Teton County, Wyoming Sustainability Policy
Timeline to Certification: Jackson Hole/Teton County receive EarthCheck
Silver Sustainable Destination Certification



EARTHCHECK

EarthCheck is the world's leading business advisory group specialising in sustainability and destination management for the travel and tourism industry. EarthCheck's holistic approach to responsible tourism and its world leading science enables destinations and operators to benchmark and certify their performance with confidence and surety.

Through its Total Tourism Management™ platform, EarthCheck works in partnership with clients to help plan for the future and guide the design, construction and operation of smart buildings and the responsible management of tourism destinations.



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Measuring and Tracking the Tourism Industry's Carbon Footprint

A standard industry carbon calculator is needed to measure carbon emissions across the tourism supply chain. The calculator must be user friendly and meet international carbon reporting protocols. An overview of the EarthCheck carbon calculator is listed below. Data can be uploaded monthly and quarterly.

Carbon and Net-Zero Reporting

EarthCheck's GHG reporting complies with:

1. IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories,
2. WBCSD Greenhouse Gas Protocol,
3. ISO 14064 range of standards for greenhouse gas accounting and

It is also a verified standard accepted by the CDP. Further details on EarthCheck's GHG methodology is available [here](#).

Outputs include:

An ongoing monthly summary :

1. **Energy consumption (MJ)** – Total; Purchased Electricity; Stationary Fuel Combustion; Mobile Fuel Combustion (road); Mobile Fuel Combustion (air); Mobile Fuel Combustion (rail); Mobile Fuel; Combustion (water).
2. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions (kg CO₂-e)** – Total; Scope 1 – Direct; Scope 2 - Indirect (electricity); Scope 3 - Indirect (other).
3. **Water consumption (litres)** – Total; Potable water; non-potable water; Recycled / captured water.
4. **Waste generated (litres)** – Total; Waste sent to landfill; Waste sent for incineration; Recycled / reused / composted.
5. **Total cost** – Locational currency.
6. **Comparative benchmarking** – this allows operations to review their performance compared to others in their specific sector, country and region.

