Progress
in
Responsible Tourism

Editors: Harold Goodwin and Xavier Font

Progress in Responsible Tourism

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Editorial

As this edition goes to press, the South African Parliament has before it a Tourism Bill which commits the country to pursue Responsible Tourism and which enshrines in law the Cape Town Declaration definition of Responsible Tourism. Ten years on from the Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations it seemed appropriate to include in this edition a review of ten years of progress. There has been some, but not enough; we know more and more about what needs to be done. It needs to be done and we need to make progress faster.

We are for the second time carrying the judges' account of why they made the particular decisions they did this year in awarding the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards. The Awards were first launched in 2004, and it demonstrably takes a great deal more to be recognised in 2012 than it did at the beginning – another marker of progress. Stephen Farrant, Director of the International Tourism Partnership (ITP) and Director of the International Business Leaders Forum, has written a reflective, retrospective piece about what the hotels have been able to achieve, by working together in the ITP, over the last twenty years since Rio.

Andreas Walmsley presents comparative data on tourist employment and argues that the Decent Work Agenda cannot be ignored if tourism is to become more responsible. Rachel Kennedy has contributed a paper which considers the various ways in which Responsible Tourism companies are currently using social media and concludes that it provides excellent material for creating conversation and dialogue, critical to using social media well; and building trust between the travellers and the business. Aimee Epp has submitted a work in progress piece on the impact of stakeholder engagement on perceptions of DMO performance, we plan to carry a paper next year.

Ten years on from Cape Town, 20 years on from Rio in 1992, there remains a great deal to be done. If you want to contribute to *Progress in Responsible Tourism* please send in your contributions. This journal is open to academics and practitioners engaged with Responsible Tourism.

Harold Goodwin and Xavier Font

December 2012

Ten Years of Responsible Tourism: an assessment

Dr Harold Goodwin, Professor of Responsible Tourism Management at Leeds Metropolitan University

In August 2002 alongside the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) taking place in Johannesburg, ten years on from the 1992 Rio conference on environment and development, the Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations was held to bring together those working in destinations with those working in originating markets to discuss Responsible Tourism. The Cape Town conference was attended by 280 delegates from 20 countries to discuss how the ambition of Responsible Tourism could be defined and realised.

There were many antecedents for the idea of Responsible Tourism, for example the Manila Conference on World Tourism was convened in 1980 to 'consider the responsibility of States for the development and enhancement of tourism'.[1] The United Nations World Tourism Organization's Global Code of Ethics in 2001 asserted their 'wish to promote an equitable, responsible and sustainable world tourism order, whose benefits will be shared by all sectors of society in the context of an open and liberalized international economy.' [2] However, it was Jost Krippendorf who articulated the most powerful case for Responsible Tourism in *The Holiday Makers*, published in German in 1984 and in English in 1987. The Cape Town Conference brought together inbound and outbound tour operators, emerging entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, national parks, provincial conservation authorities, all spheres of government, tourism professionals, tourism authorities, NGOs, hotel groups and other tourism stakeholders, from Africa, North and South America, Europe and Asia, to consider what Responsible Tourism might have to offer.[3]

Ten years on it is appropriate to look back, to sketch out the origins, and some of the more significant initiatives in what is a broad movement; to make a preliminary assessment of what has been achieved; and to suggest some priorities for the next ten years.

A social movement

Responsible Tourism has many of the characteristics of a social movement. This for three reasons: first because at the heart of Responsible Tourism is the insistence that 'tourism is what we make of it – individually and collectively, as businesses and as

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1   The WTO and representatives of 107 states met, and endorsed the Manila declaration on world tourism. *World Travel* 1980 No. 156/157 pp. 19-32

2   http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/full-text-global-code-ethics-tourism

3   Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, 2002, Cape Town http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html

tourists.'[4] It is a social phenomenon and the way we understand tourism and behave can, and will, change it.

Second, Responsible Tourism is a diverse movement composed of, amongst others, consumers and producers, holiday makers and locals, hosts and guests, local government planners and businesses. Many people can change the way tourism works, the impacts it has and who benefits from it. People are concerned about a wide range of different economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. The range of issues is large and people focus on what matters most to them, in their place. The Responsible Tourism agenda is broad and there is an acceptance within it that people will, and should, define their own priorities. Tourism has to be managed in the destinations where it occurs, and those destinations are diverse. Different issues matter in different places. Responsible Tourism is defined by the willingness to take responsibility to make tourism better, to use tourism to 'create better places for people to live in and for people to visit.' [5]

Third, Responsible Tourism was broadly and permissively defined; there is no prescriptive list of issues – the concept has not been copyrighted. People, locals and visitors, determine the issues which matter in their destination, where tourism can be managed. Inevitably there is conflict and debate about what matters, and about what can be done about it. In Cape Town, the focus was on Responsible Tourism in Destinations because it is in destinations that tourism has to be managed, although people in originating, or source, markets can contribute too. The Cape Town Declaration placed the emphasis on what can be done to make better forms of tourism; asserted that all forms of tourism can be more responsible; and defined Responsible Tourism as having a number of characteristics: minimising negative economic, environmental, and social impacts; generating greater economic benefits for local people, enhancing the well-being of host communities and improving working conditions; involving local people in decision making about tourism; contributing to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and to the maintenance of the world's diversity; providing access for all; being culturally sensitive, engendering respect between tourists and hosts, building local pride and confidence; and providing more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people.[6]

From the beginning, those promoting Responsible Tourism recognised that there was synergy between the quest for authenticity and the growth of the experience economy[7]; and acknowledged the willingness of consumers to accept responsibility for the impacts

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4   Goodwin (2011):1

5   http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html

6   http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html

7   Goodwin (2011):71-78

of their tourism activities.[8] Krippendorf identified the trend towards adventure and experiential tourism and saw the opportunity which it presented. He argued in *The Holiday Makers* that tourists are becoming more demanding and foresaw the 'birth of a new travel culture', one in which tourists seek 'the satisfaction of social needs: contact with other people and self-realization through creative activities, knowledge and exploration.' He argued that tourists were becoming increasingly critical consumers, 'informed and experienced', and moving towards being 'emancipated and independent' – though he accepted that 'passive and uncritical tourists' still outnumbered 'active and enlightened ones'.[9] The growth of the experience economy, and of ethical consumerism, in some originating markets has created fertile ground for Responsible Tourism.[10]

As with any social movement there are band waggon jumpers, laggards and leaders and there are debates amongst those taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable. There is no need to define a core list of issues. Responsible Tourism has not been prescribed, nor should it be. The challenge is rather to define what matters in particular places, what are the local issues which need to be addressed; and for governments, local communities, businesses and travellers to determine what they will do, how they will respond and take responsibility for making tourism more sustainable, severally and with others. There is a long list of positive and negative tourism impacts, and tourism involves both locals and outsiders. Which issues get addressed in a particular place is necessarily determined by the hosts and guests and the businesses which facilitate and benefit from tourism. For example, reflecting national pre-occupations, British tourists, amongst others, and some locals, have expressed concern about animal welfare in the traditional animal market on Las Ramblas, in Barcelona, and the character of that market has consequently changed.[11]

Origins

From the mid-nineteen nineties two UK NGOs, Voluntary Service Overseas and Tearfund, campaigned for ethical tourism, raising consumer awareness and challenging tour operators about their practices. [12]   By 2002 the industry's own consumer research was confirming that consumers cared about the impacts of their holidays in destinations and they were demanding information about their impacts.[13] In 2000 the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), around 150 predominantly owner-managed specialist companies, adopted a Responsible Tourism policy. Responsible Tourism was

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8   Goodwin (2011):58-70

9   Krippendorf (1987): 38, 74; Krippendorf develops his argument in Chapter 11 Changing values: opportunities for a new society.

10   Goodwin (2011)|: 58-81

11   Goodwin (2011):168

12   Goodwin (2011): 49-62

13   Goodwin (2011):62

preferred over ethical tourism: 'the advantage of the concept of responsibility [over ethical tourism] is that it suggests that members need to respond, to act, rather than standing, or sitting, on their principles and their ethics. Responsibility implies and requires action.'[14] AIT0 recognised in 2000 that

'… in carrying out our work as Tour Operators we have a responsibility to respect other people's places and ways of life. We acknowledge that wherever a Tour Operator does business or sends clients it has a potential to do both good and harm, and we are aware that all too often in the past the harm has outweighed the good.'[15]

The Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations brought together the two groups which have subsequently pursued Responsible Tourism: originating market outbound operators and the tourism sector and governments in destinations, along with intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, academics and consultants.

The post-apartheid South African government had been the first country to explicitly commit to Responsible Tourism in its more conventionally titled *White Paper on The Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* published in 1996.[16] The tourism sector was identified as a missed opportunity – there had been 'limited integration of local communities and neglected groups into tourism'.[17] Responsible Tourism was defined in the White Paper as

'tourism that promotes responsibility to the environment through its sustainable use; responsibility to involve local communities in the tourism industry; responsibility for the safety and security of visitors and responsible government, employees, employers, unions and local communities.'[18]

The South African government had identified the value of Responsible Tourism as the 'key guiding principle for tourism development' and pointed out that the principle of responsibility 'implies a proactive approach by tourism industry partners to develop, market and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner, so as to create a competitive advantage.'[19] In 2002 the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism produced *Guidelines for Responsible Tourism* which informed the development of the agenda for the conference and the Declaration. Empowerment of 'previously neglected communities … and the empowerment of women in such communities'[20] were guiding principles for the South African government; principles which led to the inclusion of empowerment in the definition of Responsible Tourism.

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14   Goodwin (2011):87
15   Goodwin (2011):88
16   Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism DEAT (1996)
17   DEAT (1996): 4, 5
18   DEAT (1996): vi
19   DEAT (1996): 19
20   DEAT (1996): 23

The Cape Town Declaration recognised that, for sustainable tourism to be achieved, responsibility would need to be exercised by governments, communities, businesses and consumers and that it would be 'necessary to use a portfolio of tools, .. includ[ing] regulations, incentives, and multi-stakeholder participatory strategies. Changes in the market encouraged by consumer campaigns and new marketing initiatives also contribute to market driven change.' The Declaration identified local authorities as playing a 'central role' in achieving sustainable development through tourism as they represent local communities and manage destinations.[21]

Responsible Tourism and Sustainable Tourism are distinct

Increasingly the words 'responsible' and 'sustainable' are used together as though they describe the same thing. They are related but they do not carry the same meaning. Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility for achieving sustainable development through tourism. Responsible Tourism is not about creating long checklists; it is about identifying the economic, social and environmental issues which matter locally and tackling them. The only global issue is climate change.

The challenge of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism to achieve sustainable development; the aspiration of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism rather than to be used by it. It is not possible to define with any precision what is meant by sustainable tourism. It describes an aspiration – one which echoes sustainable development with its oxymoronic overtones.[22]

Responsible Tourism demands that those with the opportunity, the capability and capacity to make tourism more sustainable respond to the challenge, that they take responsibility, that they act. It 'arises both from accountability, through legislation, regulation and contracts of supply and employment and from the willingness of individuals and organisations to respond.'[23] Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility: about each stakeholder doing what they can, severally and in partnership with others, to make tourism better. It is about making clear what you are taking responsibility for, what you can (and can't) do, doing it, and reporting progress.

Ecotourism and community-based tourism may be responsible, they may also be irresponsible.[24] The test is not the branding but rather the impact of the business and the clients. All forms of tourism can be more or less responsible – ecotourism, community-based tourism, mass tourism and all-inclusives.[25] The ambition of Responsible Tourism is to change the sector.

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21   http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html
22   Goodwin(2011): 11-17
23   Goodwin (2011):33
24   Goodwin (2011): 227-231; 205-7.
25   Goodwin (2011): 202-205

Myths

Two of the persistent misunderstandings of Responsible Tourism are the assumptions that it applies only in developing countries and that tourists will pay a premium for the responsible practices of suppliers. Krippendorf was engaged in Responsible Tourism by the negative cultural and environmental damage that the post-war tourism boom had inflicted on his native Switzerland in the 1950s and 1960s. The principles of Responsible Tourism can be applied to all forms of tourism, everywhere. Responsible Tourism is neither a niche nor a product. All forms of tourism can be more or less responsible.

The notion that tourists would pay more for a sustainable product was promulgated through ecotourism. Given the lack of evidence for this myth, it has been remarkably persistent, although in the UK, and elsewhere, the industry has understood that the consumer expects the supplier to take responsibility and to create and sell products which are increasingly sustainable. Jane Ashton, head of corporate social responsibility at the major UK holiday company First Choice, said in 2006: 'We're not experiencing a huge demand from the average consumer, but we do believe that awareness is increasing, and in a few years' time we will have needed to have integrated these principles into our supply chain.'[26] Consumers expect that suppliers will provide holidays and travel opportunities which offer authentic and inspiring experiences, of good quality, which are affordable and sustainable.

Responsible Tourism's ambition is mainstream

There is a third myth which Responsible Tourism challenges. For too long the mainstream industry was able to argue that sustainability was an issue for ecotourism businesses and for government. The assertion that Responsible Tourism applies to all forms of tourism is critical. The ambition of Responsible Tourism is not to create a sustainable niche, but rather to change the way that the mainstream industry operates across the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Since 2008, the World Travel Market, with the support of the UNWTO, has run a programme of events and panel discussions on Responsible Tourism. It has established World Responsible Tourism Day adopting the criteria of the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations.[27] The World Travel Market seeks to 'drive change by educating more responsible behaviour with the travel and tourism industry and travelling public', and to 'encourage the industry to drive the responsible tourism agenda forward.'[28]

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26   Goodwin (2011): 62

27   www.wtmwrtd.com

28   http://www.wtmwrtd.com/page.cfm/Link=184/t=m/goSection=1_11 accessed 25 November 2012.

In opening World Responsible Tourism Day in 2012, Fiona Jeffery, Chair of World Travel Market, explained that with UNWTO they wanted to 'change the way that the industry did business, to promote the business case for responsible tourism, driving prosperity for all the stakeholders and ensuring that as an industry, we ultimately hand over our world to the next generation with our heads held high.'[29] The growth of World Responsible Tourism Day and its success in encouraging local action around the world have played an important part in spreading the concept and encouraging people to respond to the challenge of making tourism better, and using it to make better places for people to live in.

It is clear that with growing prosperity in the BRIC countries, Brazil, Russia, India and China, and in other resource-rich and emerging economies, newly wealthy consumers will choose to travel. Domestic and international tourism are going to continue to grow rapidly, although that growth will be constrained by austerity in Europe, and to a lesser extent the USA and Japan, and by the increasing cost of travel as the cost of fuel continues to rise. Mass tourism will continue to grow, whether through individuals travelling with their families and friends independently or through package tours. The effect is the same – mass tourism.

In the UK and Europe, outbound tour operators have begun to address their impacts. In destinations as diverse as Cape Town in South Africa and the New Forest in England, local government is taking responsibility for managing tourism. All forms of tourism need to be managed so that they become more sustainable. Changes in consumer preferences and rising costs will achieve some degree of change, but it will not be sufficient. Adjustments in regulatory frameworks, incentives and deterrents will also be required.

Business cases

There is not one business case for Responsible Tourism, there are many – a number of different, but interrelated reasons why it makes sense for businesses to take responsibility for sustainability; the business case is plural.[30] Of course businesses do not make decisions – individuals and groups of individuals within companies do. The individuals responsible for marketing, product development, resource management, financial performance and human resources are likely to see the business case differently depending upon their personal ethics and their business function. Individuals need to be persuaded that they can make a difference and that they should respond and take responsibility. The success of the green teams in hotels in taking responsibility to green procurement and operations, reduce costs and communicate the company's ethos has

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29   http://www.wtmlondon.com/page.cfm/Action=library/libID=1/libEntryID=303 accessed 25 November 2012

30   The business case is discussed in considerably more detail in Goodwin (2011): 96-110

been linked by Gallup Consulting with increased productivity and profitability.[31] The success of these teams demonstrates what individuals can achieve if enabled to join with others to make change.[32]

The distinct elements of the business case include building trust, reputation and consumer loyalty; creating added product value; ensuring that the business has good neighbours and maintains its license to operate; market advantage and PR opportunities; increasing shareholder and investor value; the management of risk and the pre-empting of government regulation by demonstrating voluntary action; cost savings, improved margins and competitiveness; and staff morale and retention. Different parts of this web of business reasons for taking responsibility for sustainability appeal to different decision makers, each of whom has a distinct set of personal and business drivers.

In the UK over the last 15 years there has been considerable engagement with business about taking increasing responsibility for sustainability in conducting business. The drivers of change are as diverse as the business cases for Responsible Tourism. In Europe operators in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Germany are addressing the issues; the differences of approach are significant reflecting different national predispositions and traditions. The argument for taking responsibility needs to be tailored to the particular originating markets and destinations – if there is no generic business case to be made nationally, this is even more the case internationally.

With close to 2,000 participants in the panels and events at World Travel Market in London each November, World Responsible Tourism Day is the world's biggest annual Responsible Tourism event. In 2012 the programme pushed at the boundaries of the social responsibility agenda, addressing child protection, social inclusion, responsible volunteering and access to travel and tourism for people with disabilities. There were sessions on responsible activities, maximising local economic development and visitor payback. The debate between industry and academics was about whether the industry is doing enough to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and there was a session discussing progress since 2002.[33] WTM World Responsible Tourism Day now attracts industry heavy weights like Jane Ashton, Head of Sustainable Development TUI Travel plc; Martin Brackenbury; Stephen Farrant, Director, International Tourism Partnership and Youth Career Initiative; Joss Kent, Chief Executive Officer &Beyond; Hugh Riley, Director General Caribbean Tourism Organisation; Philippe Rossiter, CEO Institute of Hospitality; Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive ABTA; Shaun Vorster, Special Adviser to the Minister of Tourism South Africa; and Garry Wilson, Product & Purchasing Director TUI. Since WTM developed World Responsible Tourism Day with UNWTO there has

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31 www.holidaysforever.co.uk

32 http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/community-communication-engagement/engaging-employees/

33 See http://www.artyforum.info/wtmwrtd2012.html for the programme and presentations, 2010 and 2011 are available on the same website.

been greater engagement with the mainstream industry and more debate about what the industry is doing, and is able to do, to make better, more sustainable, tourism. The Hot Seat where an industry leader is questioned by Stephen Sackur of BBC World's Hard Talk has featured Ed Fuller, president and managing director of Marriott International Lodging; Peter Long, chief executive of TUI Travel, Adam Stewart, CEO of Sandals Resorts International, Wolfgang M. Neumann, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating officer of The Rezidor Hotel Group.

World Travel Market Latin America launches in Sao Paulo in April 2013. Responsible Tourism will be on the agenda with a series of panels from the first show. At ITB in Berlin there is a CSR day and a programme of talks each year. There has been an *International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations* each year since 2008, building on the success of the Cape Town Conference in 2002. They have been held in Kerala (2008), Belize (2009), Oman (2010), Alberta (2011) and Sao Paulo and London (2012) attracting between 200 and 500 participants. Each has looked at particular, locally relevant, aspects of Responsible Tourism. The conferences have brought together tour operators and accommodation providers along with national and local government, consultants and NGOs. Each has reflected the destination where it has been held, underlining the point that Responsible Tourism has different agendas in different places and that solutions are always local, although learning from the experience of others helps.

The outcomes of each of the conferences have reflected local and international interests. RTD2 in Kerala reported on the roles of different stakeholders[34], and resulted in a series of pioneering Responsible Tourism initiatives across the state.[35] RTD3 in Belize resulted in a declaration dealing with local issues and the development of a Responsible Tourism policy.[36] RTD4 in Oman resulted in a declaration of intent on Responsible Tourism by the Ministry.[37] RTD5 in Alberta produced a Conference Declaration on access for all, polar tourism, local economic development, indigenous tourism and governance.[38] Bill Werry, the Deputy Minister, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation responded to the conference, acknowledging the importance of partnerships and governance, and the value of 'the learnings and leading practices exchanged' at the conference.[39] RTD6 was held in Sao Paulo and London to coincide with Rio+20. The Sao Paulo conference put Responsible Tourism on the agenda in Brazil and there will be an annual symposium for tourism academics running alongside WTM Latin America

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34 http://www.artyforum.info/documents/KeralaDeclaration.pdf

35 https://www.keralatourism.org/rt-index.php & www.facebook.com/groups/rtkerala/

36 http://www.artyforum.info/rtd3.html

37 http://www.artyforum.info/rtd4.html

38 http://rtd5.icrtcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/RTD5-Declaration.pdf

39 http://rtd5.icrtcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Bill-Werry-Responsible-Tourism-Statement.pdf

each year.[40] The London part of RTD6 was held at South Africa House, in recognition of the contribution which South Africa made to launching Responsible Tourism internationally. The conference brought together senior figures from the UK and European outbound industry with leaders from South Africa, The Gambia and Kerala to share experience and to discuss progress.[41]

Progress in Originating Markets

In the UK, AITO adopted Responsible Tourism in 2000 and in 2001 Justin Francis and I co-founded ResponsibleTravel.com.[42] We launched with just 15 holidays from four tour operators, the first travel business to make the claim and offer 'responsible travel'. In the first year we sold eight holidays. Ten years on ResponsibleTravel.com has sold $100m worth of holidays and it now offers 4,000 holidays from 1,000 holiday suppliers. The site carries over 4,500 tourist reviews assisting those looking for a great travel experience, with a more responsible organiser, to make a more informed choice.[43] In 2010 ResponsibleTravel.com launched a sister site in the US.[44] ResponsibleTravel.com has successfully combined the experiential and responsibility agendas using the strapline 'travel like a local' and launching 'Our Land: Everything listed on Our Land is here because it promises to indulge you with local knowledge of the landscapes' distinctive tastes, smells, sounds, sights and stories.'[45] For ResponsibleTravel.com the focus has always been on the quality of the experience. Responsible Tourism is an important part of that value proposition; every business listed on the site has to publish details of how it takes responsibility, and this is a part of the contract between the purchaser and the company and enforceable by the client if the promise is not fulfilled.[46]

In 2001 The UK government initiated the Sustainable Tourism Initiative (STI), a multi-stakeholder process engaging NGOs and the industry, in order to prepare an initiative to announce at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.[47] The STI resulted in the creation of the Travel Foundation in 2003, a registered UK charity[48] and the Responsible Tourism Unit in the Federation of Tour Operators, which is now part of ABTA. ABTA's work on Responsible Tourism is funded by the industry; the work of the Travel Foundation is funded by donations from member companies and from individual

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40 http://www.artyforum.info/rtd6_SaoPaulo.html

41 http://www.artyforum.info/rtd6_SouthAfricaHouse.html

42 www.responsibletravel.com I subsequently sold my shares and ceased to be involved.

43 www.responsibletravel.com/copy/10th-birthday accessed 25 November 2012

44 www.responsiblevacation.com

45 www.our-land.co.uk

46 See for examples www.responsibletravel.com/member/list.asp?range=ae

47 Goodwin (2011):57-8

48 www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

holidaymakers. The Travel Foundation currently spends about £1.3m per annum.[49] Over the last nine years it has developed over 40 industry and consumer resources including practical toolkits, consumer tips, a sustainability awareness quiz, training materials and awareness films, and has worked on 35 projects in 16 destinations.[50]

With the establishment of the Responsible Tourism Unit the industry recognised that acting responsibly made long-term business sense because environmental and social issues were becoming more important to holidaymakers' decisions. Their guidelines recognised that to

> '… deliver the right balance we must work together. Suppliers are at the sharp end of the holiday experience. What happens in the destination matters most; from the warm welcome and the quality of the local environment to the services available. In other words, the balance between the local economy, nature and the community.' [51]

In 2004 the members of the Federation of Tour Operators signed a declaration of commitment to sustainable development and management of tourism which began

> 'We commit to work towards developing, operating and marketing tourism in a sustainable manner; ie. tourism which makes a positive contribution to the natural and cultural environment, which generate benefits for the host communities, and which do not put at risk the future livelihood of local people.'[52]

They recognised that 'tourism can have negative impacts on the economy, environment, nature, social structures and local cultures.' The ABTA operators who signed the declaration – and all the large ones did – committed to 'prevent or minimise' these negative impacts: they accepted their responsibility.

In 2010 the larger tour-operator ABTA members, using the language of the Cape Town Declaration, recommitted to tourism that 'creates better places for people to live in and better places to visit'.[53] They affirmed that as 'responsible tourism operators we are committed to the development, operation and marketing of sustainable tourism'.[54] The ABTA 2010 *Travel Matters* manifesto identified contributing to 'thriving destinations' as one of its objectives; recognised the importance of its role in encouraging the 'travel and tourism sector to become more accountable and responsible for the impacts of

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49 Travel Foundation Annual Review 2011-2012 www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/images/media/ANNUAL_REVIEW_2011_2012.pdf

50 http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/projects/

51 Emphasis in the original http://www.fto.co.uk/responsible-tourism/sustainability-guidelines/#c2868 accessed 25 November 2012

52 Available at www.fto.co.uk//assets/documents/fto_responsible_tourism.pdf

53 They recognised that whilst the 'industry can be a powerful force for positive change' it also has 'the potential to cause negative impacts on host-destination environments, economies and communities'.

54 FT0/ABTA Responsible Tourism Committee – Tour Operator Statement of Commitment 2010. The FTO merged with ABTA in July 2008

UK operations, and the welfare of destinations'; and accepted its responsibility to lead efforts to ensure that tourism develops in a sustainable way in a finite world and that 'real benefits' accrue to the destinations that UK travellers visit.[55] ABTA has developed the Travelife international certification scheme[56] designed as an affordable and fair system that helps hotels and accommodations to improve the way they manage their social and environmental impacts. Working with its member companies, ABTA's Destinations and Sustainability department works to develop achieve ABTA's objective of exercising leadership in sustainability.

The mergers which resulted in the Thomas Cook Group[57] and TUI Travel[58] in 2007 accelerated the development of Responsible Tourism in the UK and, since both are multinationals the mergers created favourable conditions to extend the ideas across European outbound travel. Both companies are stock-market listed and now produce CSR reports. By 2009 Thomas Cook was recognising that sustainability was a key challenge. In the Annual Report & Accounts for 2009, Manny Fontenla-Novoa, the Group Chief Executive Officer of Thomas Cook, wrote

> 'We aim to have sustainability at the core of our business and feature it as
> an integral part of our strategy, particularly when it comes to the environment.
> These responsibilities no longer sit on the periphery; their importance represents
> a genuine business risk. Society, customers, investors, governments and
> communities no longer look for, but demand that both time and money be
> invested in the preservation and protection of the incredible people and places we
> come into contact with.'[59]

Sustainability had become core business. In 2010 Thomas Cook's UK airline became the first to receive accreditation to the ISO 14001 international standard for environmental management and they produced a set of targets for sustainability gains in their supply chain, customer relations, airlines, offices and retail, to improve their child protection policy, to measure and improve the contribution their holidays make to communities and the local economy by 2020 and for sustainability/environment to be a measurable objective of segment boards and above by 2013.[60]

By 2011 Thomas Cook was experiencing financial difficulties, and it had a new Group CEO, Sam Weihagen, and new management teams in place in its UK and French markets. He reported that the 'Group Working Party on Sustainability, launched in 2010, had 'already achieved great success. It ha[d] instigated a cultural change across our

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55 ABTA (2010): 4

56 http://www.travelife.org

57 My Travel Group and Thomas Cook merged to form the Thomas Cook Group

58 TUI, which owned Thomson, merged with First Choice to form TUI Travel

59 http://ara2009.thomascookgroup.com/business_review/sustainability.html

60 http://www.thomascookgroup.com/sustainability accessed 25 November 2012

business – not only are our people even more committed to making a positive change.'[61] Thomas Cook's vision for 2020 was detailed with many specific targets on Travelife, carbon reduction, customer communications, waste and a host of other issues,[62] and it was reporting against clear sustainability targets. For example in 2009/10 Thomas Cook achieved a 2.25% reduction in emissions per passenger km but not an absolute reduction; it was also reporting when it failed to meet its targets.[63] In March 2012 Ruth Holroyd, for five years Group Head of Sustainability at Thomas Cook, was made redundant as Thomas Cook's trading problems forced a reduction in staffing. Thomas Cook remains committed to sustainability by delivering 'sustainable and profitable growth', integrating 'sustainability into everything' they do. They have recognised and endorsed the link between sustainability and quality:

> 'Sustainability can help us to differentiate our business and products, by giving customers a more authentic and higher quality experience. It also offers us opportunities to reduce costs and manage risk, driving value for our business and our shareholders.'[64]

It remains to be seen whether the progress made across the group can be sustained, sustainability requires a thriving business.

When the TUI merger took place, the sustainability programmes developed at First Choice were rolled out across the group, and the purchase of many of the leading adventure and activity specialists meant that TUI had within it some of the world's leading Responsible Tourism outbound businesses.[65] In June 2010 Thomson and First Choice, both part of TUI, launched their Holidays Forever campaign, encompassing 20, targeted and time-lined, sustainable tourism pledges, from reducing carbon emissions to having all of their suppliers Travelife-awarded within five years. In August 2012 TUI Travel plc launched their Sustainable Holidays Plan 2012-2014 which linked to its 'Making travel experiences special' consumer proposition. The TUI plan envisages that by 2015, 10 million of their customers will be staying at hotels with credible sustainability certifications.[66] For TUI's differentiated hotels the target is an average 24kWh of energy and 400 litres of water consumed per person per night. If this is achieved it will reduce relative energy consumption by 10% and relative water consumption by 20%.[67] TUI has achieved a 2.6% reduction in emissions per passenger since 2008, and 82% of their aircraft are now fitted with fuel saving winglets, reducing

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61   http://sustainability2011.thomascookgroup.com/our-approach/group-ceo-statement.html accessed 25 November 2012

62   http://sustainability2011.thomascookgroup.com/our-approach/our-sustainability-strategy.html

63   http://sustainability2011.thomascookgroup.com/our-performance/targets-and-performance.html

64   http://www.thomascookgroup.com/sustainability accessed 25 November 2012

65   For more of the background see Goodwin (2011): 93-95

66   TUI plc (2012) Sustainable Holidays Plan 2012-2014 TUI, Crawley: 4 available on line www.tuitravelplc.com/assets/lib/documents/TUITravelSustainableHolidaysPlan2012-2014.pdf

67   TUI plc (2012) Sustainable Holidays Plan 2012-2014:7

fuel burn by up to 5%.[68] TUI is taking the message to its customers; it plans by 2015 to be regarded by its consumers 'as a leader in delivering more sustainable holidays'.[69] TUI has benchmarked its sustainability reporting against the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standard. [70] TUI is using certification to drive sustainability performance in its supply chain and beginning to use more transparent forms of reporting, benchmarked against the GRI standard at the group level.

Kuoni established an Environmental Affairs unit in 1999 for its Swiss business. In 2006 this was developed into a Corporate Responsibility unit for the group, and since 2008 corporate responsibility has been enshrined and explained in the Kuoni Code of Conduct which guides the ethical behaviour of both the company and its employees.[71] In an anonymous survey, conducted in 2010, 65% of respondents expressed the view that 'Kuoni is strongly involved in Corporate Responsibility'. The Supplier Code of Conduct had by 2011 been incorporated into over 90% of the hotel contracts of Kuoni's Outbound Europe division, 'the company's suppliers to observe human and labour rights, comply with local law and environmental standards, refrain from discrimination or corruption, ensure workplace safety and hygiene and protect children.'[72] Kuoni have also developed the first Fair Trade Travel certified package along South Africa's Garden Route offering overnight stays at fair trade-certified lodges, and the tour operator, transport and activities and all the contractual relations in the value chain have been audited using Fair Trade standards.[73] Kuoni is an example of a company which is seeking to mainstream responsibility across its business and which is developing some new ground breaking initiatives. Transferring responsibility for developing and applying its responsibility agenda is a key challenge. Doing so it seen as a 'prerequisite for ensuring that due regard is paid to CR concerns in all strategic business decisions group-wide.' And they recognise that evolving solutions to responsibility issues is 'likely to be particularly difficult to find if the objectives of corporate responsibility cannot be adequately reconciled with the company's financial and operational goals.' As Loetscher-Ehrler & Leisinger acknowledge this is made harder by the structural changes affecting the tourism sector.[74]

Virgin Holidays have pursued the responsibility agenda within the framework of the Virgin Group's People and Planet approach. Virgin Holidays has a Human Nature Promise, ensuring that its presence doesn't lead to degradation of local environments or cultures by working with hoteliers to improve their sustainability performance.

68   TUI plc (2012) Sustainable Holidays Plan 2012-2014:11

69   TUI plc (2012) Sustainable Holidays Plan 2012-2014:14

70   TUI Travel plc (2012) Sustainable Development Report 2011 TUI, Crawley available on line http://www.tuitravelplc.com/assets/lib/documents/TUITravelSustainableDevelopmentReport2011.pdf

71   Loetscher-Ehrler A & Leisinger M (2011)

72   Loetscher-Ehrler A & Leisinger M (2011):80-81

73   Loetscher-Ehrler A & Leisinger M (2011):84

74   Loetscher-Ehrler A & Leisinger (2011):86-87

43% of Virgin Holiday customers stay at an audited hotel. 160 audits have so far been completed worldwide with 44 Travelife Bronze, Silver and Gold winners, and sustainable excursions have helped six communities in Kenya increase earnings up to 800% and are now being extended to 27 more villages within the Maasai Mara.[75] In 2011,with the support of clients, they opened the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship in the Caribbean. The first wave of entrepreneurs included a boutique guest house owner, a coral reef restoration project, housing construction and cake baking. They have helped create life-changing opportunities for young people in the Caribbean, Kenya, South Africa and Sri Lanka.[76] And through their sponsorship of the annual Responsible Tourism Awards they have supported the recognition and awarding of those who achieved in Responsible Tourism.

Hundreds of smaller businesses have been taking responsibility and making their businesses more sustainable with very significant benefits for local communities and their, and our, environment. The evidence for this can be found on the websites of ResponsibleTravel.com[77] and the Responsible Tourism Awards.[78] There is not space here to undertake a detailed review of what has been achieved in the UK outbound industry and around the world but clearly progress has been made and sustainability is firmly on the agenda of the major outbound UK tour operators, although their ability to deliver it clearly rests on their own commercial performance and financial resources.

In a service sector which has seen the rapid growth of travel distribution networks like Travel Republic,a travel agency which books 2 million holidaymakers each year, and On the Beach , which sells 750,000 holidays, the role of the traditional operator is declining. The traditional tour operators, selling packages which they assemble, have a sense of ownership for the holidays they sell. With that ownership comes the sense of responsibility which results in TUI, Thomas Cook and others committing to ensuring that their hotels become part of Travelife. Disintermediation means that more and more travellers are making their own choices and booking the elements of their trip directly with the suppliers.[79] The influence of UK outbound tour operators is reducing because of two long-term trends – disintermediation and the declining significance of UK outbound tourism in increasing numbers of destinations. For example, there are increasing numbers of Russian tourists in Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada . Europe is still the world's largest source region for international tourists generating just over half of all international arrivals. The UK remains 4th, behind Germany, the United States and China, the Russians have moved up to 7th place, Brazil has moved to 12th place and India

75 http://www.virgin.com/people-and-planet/were-all-going-on-a-summer-holiday accessed 25 November 2012

76 http://www.virginholidays.co.uk/info/about/who_are_we/responsible_tourism/responsible_tourism.aspx

77 http://www.responsibletravel.com

78 http://www.responsibletourismawards.com/

79   Hitwise US reports that Trip Advisor had 37.7m visitors in October 2012 and Expedia 34.8m http://www.experian.com/hitwise/online-trends-industry.html accessed 25 November 2012

was the fastest growing source market among the top 50 spenders with a 33% increase moving up two places to 22nd in the ranking.[80]

Research conducted by the Canadian Tourism Commission asked for the first time in 2009 a standard question in large surveys of its 10 major source markets. They asked whether or not the interviewee agreed with the statement 'I always take environmentally friendly tourism considerations into account when making a decision about where to travel to.' Accepting that this only records self-ascribed aspiration, there are significant differences between representative samples in the Canadian source markets – 88% of Mexicans, 68% of Chinese, 60% of Koreans and 56% of the French subscribe to this view of their decision making about holidays, compared with 33% of the Germans and Japanese, 31% of Americans, 30% of Canadians and 28% of Australians. The British came bottom, only 23% responded that they always take environmentally friendly characteristics into account when making destination choices.[81]

Accepting that there are many difficulties in conducting international surveys of this kind, and in interpreting the results, it remains the case that the UK was, of the eight countries surveyed, the country in which it was likely that the idea of Responsible Tourism would take root. The approach taken in the UK has not been tried in other originating markets and it is not unreasonable to ask whether similar, appropriately tailored approaches, may have been successful in other originating markets.

Progress in Destinations

Tourism takes places in destinations; it is in destinations that most of the impacts of tourism occur, and where tourists and hosts come into contact and issues arise as tourists and day visitors impact on the local socio-cultural and natural environment. It is in destinations that tourism has to be managed. Transport from home, the originating or source market, to the destination is a major cause of carbon pollution, a challenge to which we return below,

The widespread usage of the acronym DMO contributes to, and disguises the confusion which exists in most destinations about the difference between the functions of a Destination Management Organisation and a Destination Marketing Organisation. Most, nearly all, destinations are managed by a local government or a national park authority – a diminishing part of the earth's surface is ungoverned and tourists rarely go to war zone or others areas where there is not a functioning government. It is a local authority which takes responsibility for public transport, planning, sewage and waste treatment, roads and parking. Tourists are visitors in someone else's place and they are managed in the same way that residents are, although they rarely contribute

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80   UNWTO (2012) UNWTO Tourism Highlights UNWTO Madrid:12-13
81   Canadian Tourism Commission (2009): 23

to the costs of managing the destination.[82] Destination Management is seen by tourism professionals as shaping the destination to make it more attractive for tourists, with the DMO functioning in parallel with the local authority. Although in some destinations, for example the New Forest, local government and the local tourism businesses have developed a strong partnership approach to managing tourism development in a way which balances the interests of local people, their environment and tourism business so as to contribute to the sustainable development of the area.

The concept of Responsible Tourism is not central to the progress which has been made in the New Forest in harnessing tourism for sustainable development. They are singled out here because of the success the New Forest District Council has had in working with tourism businesses to use tourism for sustainable development locally, rather than the New Forest merely being exploited by tourism. It is not the use of the concept of Responsible Tourism that matters, so much as the demonstrable ability to use tourism for the sustainable development of the destination, securing net benefits for the community and their place. New Zealand with its experiential brand proposition, often misinterpreted as an environmental brand, has carefully taken control of its marketing to ensure that it attracts the right kind of tourism to build a resilient destination, using tourism for sustainable development rather than being used by it.[83]

A number of countries now have national policies which explicitly use the ideas of Responsible Tourism, placing the emphasis on stakeholders taking responsibility to do what they can to use tourism for the sustainable development of their community and the conservation of the local natural and socio-cultural environment. The Gambia adopted an explicit Responsible Tourism approach in 2005, addressing the triple bottom line but placing particular emphasis on marketing; recognising that it needs to exert more influence over the way the country is marketed and the kind of tourists it attracts.[84] Kerala, in India, has become something of a laboratory for Responsible Tourism initiatives and the policy has survived a change of government.[85] Belize,[86] Oman[87] and Myanmar[88] are all developing national Responsible Tourism policies.

South Africa was the first country to adopt Responsible Tourism in its 1996 White Paper. National Responsible Tourism Guidelines followed in 2001. [89] South Africa has adopted a National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism which will is enforced

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82   Goodwin (2011): 130-133 & 142-146

83   Goodwin (2011):149-50

84   The policy can be downloaded at http://www.artyforum.info/documents/gambia.pdf

85   www.keralatourism.org/responsible-tourism.php and www.facebook.com/groups/rtkerala/?ref=ts&fref=ts

86   http://ht.ly/fywzr

87   http://www.haroldgoodwin.info/uploads/RTD4/RTD4OmanConfStatement.pdf

88   http://haroldgoodwin.info/blog/?p=2332 and Draft Policy sent to Cabinet in October 2012 www.haroldgoodwin.info/121015_Myanmar_Tourism_English.pdf

89   Goodwin (2011) 138-142

by the South African Bureau of Standards.[90] Responsible Tourism remains a national priority in South Africa and the policy first outlined back in 1996 remains current, it is being pushed forward by a dynamic Minister of Tourism.

At Indaba in May 2012 Minister Van Schalkwyk made a strong connection 'between our people, destination and our consumer heartland', referring to the 'breathtakingly enriching memories and life-changing experiences' which were possible because of 'the diversity, possibility and Ubuntu of our people, place and culture.' He went on to challenge the industry:

> 'I want to highlight one specific challenge between now and 2020. We must decide now where we want to be in 2020 in terms of sustainable tourism. Do we want to be a sector that exemplifies the green economic revolution that is under way, or do we want to be known as the grim reaper, raiding our natural resources for short-term profit? Therefore, my challenge to industry is: Walk with us to transform the sector, to reduce its carbon and water footprint, to improve sustainability practices and scale up sustainable tourism certification, and to create green jobs. We have only one chance. The release of the minimum standards for responsible tourism is but the beginning. We now need the sector to invest much more seriously in energy-efficiency retrofitting, green building design, the roll-out of renewable-energy technologies, and consumer education.'[91]

Minister Van Schalkwyk, speaking at Fort Hare in September 2012, acknowledged the national standard as ground-breaking and went on to say that 'a combination of carrots and sticks to address current market failures' and concluded by emphasising the role of local government: this 'transition is all about 'glocalisation': in other words, turning global principles into essentially local action plans. Travel and tourism happens in local communities and local economies. The role and capacity of local governments at the implementation level, therefore, cannot be overemphasised.'[92]

The national policies offer a great deal. The challenge now is for local government and the industry to realise the vision of the 1996 White Paper. In Cape Town the City Council adopted a Responsible Tourism Policy in 2009 which pursues a 'whole of government approach' linked with an effective strategy for engaging the whole industry. The policy has clear objectives – policy, implementation, monitoring and transparent reporting and a timetable. The focus is on seven local priorities; waste, water and energy reduction; local procurement and enterprise development; skills development and contributions to local job creation, training, health, conservation and

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90 www.tourism.gov.za/CurrentProjects/ResponsibleTourism/Pages/Information.aspx

91 www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Publications/Speech%20by%20Minister%20Marthinus%20van%20 Schalkwyk%20at%20the%202012%20Tourism%20Indaba.pdf

92 www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Publications/University%20public%20lecture_Greening%20tourism_low%20 carbon%20tourism.pdf

community initiatives. There is as yet no report on progress in Cape Town, although reporting metrics have been agreed. [93] In November 2012 a new Tourism Bill[94] is before Parliament. The Bill places the Cape Town Declaration on Tourism at the heart of South Africa's national approach to tourism. [95]

Considerable progress has been made in the accommodation sector although the focus has been largely on environmental sustainability, in part because of the cost savings which can be made as the price of environmental services rises. The International Tourism Partnership brings together many of the world's leading hotel groups to work on environmental and social responsibility.[96] The ITO published *Green Hotelier*, which documents the advances that are being made.[97] There are too many to report them all here, but of particular note are the Youth Career Initiative, which provides disadvantaged young people with life and work skills[98], and the Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative, which for the first time provides a unified methodology to communicate the carbon footprint of hotel stays and meetings in a consistent and transparent way.[99] In the hotel sector considerable progress has been made in monitoring resource consumption in order to drive resource use efficiency and to reward those staff making most progress. The green teams in hotels have demonstrated the contribution that all staff can make if they are engaged and given responsibility.[100] In smaller and non-chain hotels considerable progress has been made across the social, economic and environmental agendas. There are plenty of exemplary models.[101] The challenge now is replication to achieve impact at the destination level and across destinations.

The Responsible Tourism Awards

In 2004 ResponsibleTravel.com launched the First Choice Responsible Tourism Awards, since 2007 the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards. They were designed to engage the public by encouraging them to nominate. The judges include academics, the media and PR professionals, NGOs and representatives of industry. The judging process has a robust six stage process: public nominations, long-listing, questionnaires, short-listing, judging and references. It is tough to win and we do not

93   Cape Town City Council (2009) **Responsible Tourism Policy for the City of Cape Town** available on line at http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Cape%20Town%20Responsible%20 Tourism%20Policy%20and%20Action%20Plan.pdf

94   Tourism Bill [B44-2012]

95   Clause 2(2) A copy can be downloaded at http://www.pmg.org.za/bill/20121204-tourism-bill-b44-2012

96   www.tourismpartnership.org

97   www.greenhotelier.org

98   www.youthcareerinitiative.org/

99   The methodology has been adopted by 23 global hospitality companies, http://www.tourismpartnership.org/ media-centre/131-majorhotelsstandardisecarbonmeasurement accessed 3 December 2012

100 For examples see www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/community-communication-engagement/engaging-employees/

101 See the winners and highly commended in the annual Responsible Tourism Awards www. responsibletourismawards.com

always have a full complement of winner and highly commended in each category. The Awards seek out responsible tourism ventures that deserve to be celebrated. By encouraging public recognition and replication, the Responsible Tourism Awards contribute to making the change they reward.

Over the nine years that the Responsible Tourism Awards have been organised we[102] have attracted over 10,000 nominations and made awards to 201 unique organisations or individuals from 51 countries. The Responsible Tourism Awards website[103] carries details of the winners and highly commendeds over the last nine years and since 2011 we have published a detailed explanation of the judges' decisions.[104] It has become markedly more difficult to win each year; there has been a quite remarkable growth in the number and range of businesses which are taking sufficient responsibility to be considered for an award. There is no shortage of inspirational examples and we see replication occur.

Rio+20

At the United Nations, progress towards achieving sustainability is very slow. It has perhaps been a mistake to place so much emphasis on UN declarations and big global meetings. At the heart of Responsible Tourism is the recognition that most sustainability challenges are local and that they need to be tackled by local government within legal frameworks which encourage and empower local government and industry to deliver sustainability locally.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) adopted the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) building on the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which called upon all stakeholders to

> 'Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes (10YFP) in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems...'.[105]

In 1992 the original Rio Earth Summit established Agenda 21 a comprehensive plan of action on every area where human activity impacts on the environment. [106] We hear little of it now. It has taken 10 years to get the 10YFP agreed and to secure some, limited, financing for it.

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102 I chair the panel of judges.

103 www.responsibletourismawards.com

104 Goodwin H (2011) *The 2011 Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards* Progress in Responsible Tourism 1(1) Oxford, Goodfellow *The 2012 Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards* are reported in this edition of Progress in Responsible Tourism.

105 http://www.unep.fr/scp/ accessed 03 December 2012

106 http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/ accessed 03 December 2012

The future we want, [107]the main outcome document from Rio +20, has two paragraphs[108] on tourism: one calling for 'enhanced support for sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building in developing countries in order to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'; the other calling for increased investment and 'appropriate guidelines and regulations in accordance with national priorities and legislation for promoting and supporting sustainable tourism.'[109] Sustainable tourism is identified as a good thing and placed on the wish list after energy and before sustainable transport.

More promising is the reference, building on the Marrakech Process, to 'sustainable tourism, including ecotourism' as one of the five activity areas in the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.[110] This will enable funding to be secured to support the work of the Global Sustainable Tourism Partnership[111] with its focus on 'policy, projects, tools, and networks for all tourism stakeholders' working on policy frameworks, climate change, environment & biodiversity, poverty alleviation, cultural and natural heritage, private sector sustainable practices, and finance & investment.'[112]

As Nevill's review of the progress made on the commitments made by governments on sustainable tourism at Johannesburg in 2002 demonstrated, relatively little has been achieved. 190 governments signed up to five tourism specific commitments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.[113] Nevill concluded that

> 'There is a general lack of progress in improving the social, cultural and environmental performance of the sector – to the extent that conditions for a large proportion of the sampled countries were in fact better ten years ago than they are today.'[114]

Nevill's paper make grim reading, as she makes clear one of the problems is that the commitments made by governments were vague, the commitments did 'not specify targets and only use[d] the general terms 'improve', enhance' or 'facilitate' – making it difficult to measure progress towards a goal, and easier for governments to report

107 Rio+20(2012) *The future we want* United Nations A/CONF.216/L.1 www.unep.fr/scp/pdf/Rio_The_Future_We_Want.pdf

108 188 words

109 Rio+20(2012) paras 130 & 131 accessed 03 December 2012

110 Rio+20 (2012) A 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, United Nations A/CONF.216/5 Not the persistence of ecotourism , why such a small segment should be singled out is inexplicable,

111 http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/partnership/

112 http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/partnership/ accessed 03 December 2012

113 Nevill H (2012) Promises and Progress: International Benchmarking on Sustainable Tourism, in *Progress in Responsible Tourism 1(2)* Oxford, Goodfellow:20-34

114 Nevill H (2012):34

success.'[115] More transparent auditable targets are required if governments are to move beyond resolutionary posturing and if there is to be any imperative for action, and implementation commitments need to be specific enough for progress to be audited and reported. Rio+20 also launched Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are intended to build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. Amongst other objectives it is expected that the SDGs will 'address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages' and be 'useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development.'[116] Regrettably there is as yet no commitment to ensure that the SDGs are auditable.

Paragraph 47 of *The future we want* provides some grounds for optimism. It acknowledged 'the importance of corporate sustainability reporting' and encourages 'companies, where appropriate, especially publicly listed and large companies, to consider integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle.' [117] The governments of Brazil, Denmark, France and South Africa are pushing this approach they have launched a Charter of the *Group of Friends of Paragraph 47* asserting that the 'inclusion of corporate sustainability reporting in Paragraph 47' is 'a step forward in the advancement of an international culture of corporate transparency and accountability.' They argue that: 'Governments play an essential role in ensuring the effective application of laws and regulations, as well as creating a culture of corporate transparency.' [118]

One of the reasons that we have seen significant progress on sustainable tourism by the larger companies has been the application of their management systems to sustainability objectives. By setting targets, reporting against those targets and rewarding employees with bonuses based on achieving these sustainability objectives progress is both assured and reported.

Reporting and Certification

Responsible Tourism recognises, encourages and celebrates diversity. The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations recognised that 'the transparent and auditable reporting of progress towards achieving responsible tourism targets and benchmarking is essential to the integrity and credibility of our work, to the ability of all stakeholders to assess progress and to enable consumers to exercise effective choice.'[119] Ten years on Responsible Tourism is increasingly being used as green wash, as Fiona

115 Nevill H (2012):22

116 http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1300 accessed 03 December 2012

117 Rio+20(2012) para. 47 accessed 03 December 2012

118 www.unep.fr/scp/communications/pdf/Final_Group_of_Friends_Charter.pdf

119 http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html

Jeffery, Chair of World Travel Market, pointed out in November 2012, increasing numbers of people are using the language, but they are not all being responsible.

> 'Every year, more people jump aboard the responsible tourism 'wagon', but the challenge for the industry is to ensure that those companies and destinations who claim to be responsible - are just that. … As an industry, we need honest, transparent information about what they're doing and what they've achieved – and so do customers.'[120]

It is clear that if progress is to be made it is necessary to know what works and what doesn't, and we need to be able to reliably ascertain how much progress is being made. Businesses want to know how well they and their staff are doing in delivering against the company's targets, to be able to report to the board and to their shareholders; and to be able to reward those staff delivering on their sustainability targets. Businesses also want to know how well other businesses are doing, in part to benchmark their own performance, but also to inform their purchasing decisions in their supply chain. Consumers may want to know how well a particular business is doing to inform their purchasing decisions. Councillors, local government officers, national park managers and donors want to know what progress has been made in reducing carbon pollution, water consumption, the reduction and management of waste, increasing local procurement and managing congestion – amongst a host of other things, at least to determine whether or not to fund such initiatives.

These different stakeholder groups are likely to want different information – although they will all want it to be reliable. There are broadly two complementary or competing responses to the need to monitor and report progress: certification and sustainability reporting, although as we shall see these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Certification has been championed internationally by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, who have developed criteria which are the 'guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business or destination should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources'[121]; although the minimum requirements are not clear. The GSTC has had significant funding, for the two calendar years 2009-2010 its income was USD 986,000 and it spent USD 823,000 , USD 591,000 on management, the website, marketing and PR and travel expenses.[122] This level of funding is unlikely to be sustained and the profile of the GSTC is therefore likely to be lower in future. One of the world's most successful tourism certification programmes, Green Tourism Business Scheme, is not a member of the GSTC. The GTBS has 2,352 members[123]

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120 Unpublished text

121 www.gstcouncil.org/

122 GSTC (2011) The Global Sustainable Tourism Council Annual Report – 2010 GSTC, Washington

123 As at 04 December 2012 , www.green-business.co.uk/index.asp

and is planning to begin to report on the success of its work with individual businesses in reducing negative environmental impacts by providing some of the metrics on for example, water, energy, waste and local sourcing.[124] Travelife[125] is an international certification scheme developed by the industry and with the advantages of being used by the operators to inform purchasing and recognised and promoted to consumers through the tour operators. It now has 700+ hotels engaged, 450+ having achieved an award.

Certification has been influential in some industries in driving sustainability, particularly where there are clear deliverables, for example Blue Flag beaches, or strong consumer resonance, as there is with fair trade labelling. Kuoni has applied the principles of fair trade labelling to holidays in South Africa. Tourism presents some particular challenges. First, a holiday is a complex product and it is a service industry, when I buy a fair trade coffee on the high street it is only the beans which are certified, not the coffee shop or the transport. Second, tourism takes place in diverse destinations in many different natural and cultural environments; the issues which arise vary considerably from one destination to another. Unlike coffee, timber or chocolate tourism is not a commodity. Third, tourism is consumed at the point of production in the destination; the consumers themselves have a significant impact on the sustainability of the activity depending on what they do and how they behave in the destination. In these significant ways tourism differs from other certified products.

There are a number of criticisms of certification as applied to tourism

- The sustainability issues which matter vary from place to place, reflecting the diversity of the world geographically and culturally, and different issues have prominence in different consuming cultures.[126] Most of the sustainability impacts of tourism are local – only carbon pollution has a global impact; even water is not an issue everywhere. As we have seen, South Africa has defined its own Responsible Tourism Standard and Brazil has a Sustainable Tourism Standard.[127]

- The range of criteria which can be applied in assessing the sustainability of tourism is large. The challenge is to determine which criteria are most important in a particular places, as they are not all equally important everywhere. With a large number of criteria it may be possible for a business to do a good many things and be graded highly, without addressing the most important local sustainability issues. There is also an issue about who defines locally significant issues, should it be the industry, NGOs or local government on behalf of communities?

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124 Personal communication.

125 www.travelife.org It is owned by ABTA The Travel Association.

126 Goodwin (2011): 46-49

127 http://destinet.eu/who-who/market-solutions/certificates/fol442810/brazilian-sustainable-tourism-standard-standard-nbr-abnt-15.401 accessed 01 December 2012

- Certification is generally opaque because the consumer does not know what the business is doing to address any particular issue or what the level of achievement is on water conservation, water re-use, animal welfare or local sourcing. The guest experience cannot be enhanced by certification in the same way that eating a New Forest breakfast[128] enhances the holiday experience, creates a memory and a reason to return or encourage a friend to stay there.

- Anything which is advertised by the business, any sustainability claim which encourages someone to visit a particular business forms part of the contract and can be enforced. The client can seek compensation if the claim is false or the expected service is not delivered. The purchaser has no contract with the certifier and no remedy can be sought if a business does not live up to the way it is presented by the certifier. Certifiers are not liable to the consumer for the claims they make, and the claims are in any case unclear.

- This gives rise to a second difficulty with certification. Given that neither the end consumer nor the purchasing business has any means of seeking recompense for a wrongly certified business, what mechanism is available to ensure that the certifier does not bend or break the rules? The GTBS only allow employed staff to certify, while most other schemes use self-employed sub-contractors to certify and charge for the training they provide. It is not clear to the purchaser how robust the processes used by the certifying agency are to check the work of these independent certifiers. Third party certification is favoured by those who may secure the work, but it leaves open the question of how the work of those certifiers is supervised and how standards are enforced. Some third party certification processes are overseen by professional bodies, with disciplinary processes in place, where the loss of membership is itself a significant penalty and one which secures compliance with professional standards most of the time. There are, as yet, no such professional licensing schemes in place for tourism certifiers.

- Concern is sometimes expressed about the churn – the number of businesses which do not remain with the schemes – and initial membership has often been subsidised. Businesses essentially get two related but very distinct benefits from the certification schemes: environmental management advice and marketing based on the certification. The quality of both services varies from one scheme to another. The businesses receive advice about how to reduce the negative environmental impacts of their activities and to reduce costs, and about how they might improve their economic and social impacts. Certification and grading is often claimed to have marketing value. At renewal those businesses which have found market advantage are more likely to renew, those who have received good advice may have a programme of change which is on-going and for which they need no more

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128 http://www.thenewforest.co.uk/activities/breakfast.aspx accessed 01 December 2012

advice. They are likely to leave the scheme creating the churn; the churn may not be a bad thing as it may represent no more than a judgment on the marketing value of the label. Those businesses which leave may well continue to implement the advice provided by the certification scheme, having not need of further advice until the first programme of work has been completed.

The certification process is distinct for the sustainability management advice. There are two elements to certification – the selection of issues which are monitored and the integrity of the grading or reporting. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)[129], the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and other international and national bodies are developing processes which more or less robustly enforce professional standards on the certifiers and the way that the grading procedures are applied. Some certifiers will be members of professional bodies able effectively to police the standards and performance of their members, but few of those engaged in certifying tourism businesses are supervised in this way. Some schemes use employed staff whose work is supervised; others carefully assess the certifiers' written reports and oversee the decision on grading. However there is a wide range of practice in the supervision and quality control of the work undertaken by certifiers, in my view too much variation to permit one scheme safely to recognise the certificates issued by another.

Reporting is more transparent in that the consumer is able to see what the business claims to be doing on particular issues, judge for themselves how much progress they are making and compare one business with another on those issues which particularly matter to the purchaser. These claims are the responsibility of the business which reports its approach to sustainability and its achievements, and the purchaser can potentially demand recompense if false claims are made. Sustainability reporting is becoming increasingly common with businesses being required to report on carbon emissions, and consumers are becoming increasingly familiar with energy labelling. The Global Reporting Initiative, the Carbon Disclosure Project[130] and international standards like ISO 14001 are establishing reporting standards which offer an addition or alternative to certification, and they are pressing for external assurance and/or verification to increase the reliability of the data. There is no incompatibility between the two approaches – companies like TUI use certification, GRI based reporting and ISO 14001. It may be that, as with GTBS, the next stage is for certification to go beyond grading and add verified reporting of progress towards particular sustainability targets.

Because tourists travel to the destination to consume the product, the impacts of the consumers need to be managed, and sustainable tourism cannot at the destination level be reduced to the certification of businesses. At the destination level the council

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129 Particularly relevant here is the development of external assurance criteria and processes see www.globalreporting.org/reporting/report-services/external-assurance/Pages/default.aspx

130 www.cdproject.net

will want to manage congestion, parking and litter, as will the national park manager. Both will also want, in a water scarce area, to reduce water consumption; and waste and carbon emissions at the destination level. Those who provide certification schemes are likely to come under increasing pressure from donors and policy makers to report the impact of their work on water and energy consumption per bed night or on local sourcing, rather than the number of businesses being graded. Responsible Tourism Reporting is building on the success which the Responsible Tourism Awards have been having in securing data from those in the running for an award. Large and small businesses are now demonstrating that they are able to collect and report data on their impacts and verification systems are being developed.[131]

Carbon Pollution

It is clear that too little progress in being made in cutting carbon pollution. Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) produce an annual Low Carbon Index. PwC estimates that in 2011 the

> 'rate of improvement in carbon intensity was 0.8%. Even doubling our rate of decarbonisation, would still lead to emissions consistent with six degrees of warming. To give ourselves a more than 50% chance of avoiding two degrees will require a six-fold improvement in our rate of decarbonisation.'[132]

As we have seen, Thomas Cook and TUI, along with many other businesses including some airlines, are addressing carbon and setting targets. The European Union extended the Emissions Trading Scheme to cover aviation and sought to apply it to all flights landing in the European Union. The European Union is stopping the clock[133] on applying the legislation to flight outside of Europe as ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organisation, has finally agreed

> 'to form a special High-level Group to provide near-term recommendations on a series of policy issues which have arisen in the course of ICAO's ongoing research into the feasibility of a global market-based measure (MBM) scheme appropriate to international aviation, as well as its development of a policy Framework to guide the general application of any proposed MBM measures to international air transport activity.'[134]

It was in 2010 that the ICAO Assembly instructed the Council 'to prepare and deliver both the MBM Framework and Feasibility Report for consideration by its next triennial Assembly in October 2013.' It has taken two years to agree to begin work on formulating a proposal.

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131 See for example *RTreporting* www.rtreporting.org/

132 Price Waterhouse Coopers (2012) *Too late for two degrees? Low carbon economy index 2012* PwC, London

133 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-854_en.htm?locale=en

134 The Council of ICAO 15th November 2012

The decarbonisation of travel and tourism is an urgent priority, and not only an issue for the airlines. Airports, accommodation, buses, cars and coaches, cruising, trains, offices and the supply chain all cause carbon pollution with serious consequences for us and our environment. This agenda is global and urgent, the longer we delay decarbonisation the more we will need to cut it in the future. PwC points out that

> The pace of reducing global carbon intensity has been slow, despite the growing international focus on climate change. The financial crisis, which started in 2008, has dampened progress even further – carbon intensity has fallen less than 1% in these four years. Continued slow progress in 2011 means that our estimate of the required annual rate of decarbonisation to 2050 has increased to 5.1%, from 4.8% in last year's [Low Carbon Economy Index.][135]

Current Priorities

There has been some progress – but we need to do more in originating markets and destinations. Tourism is what we make it, we can change it. Businesses, consumers, local communities and their governments can, if they take responsibility, use tourism to make better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.

What follows is a list of what I think are the priorities for the next ten years. It is not intended to be prescriptive. It is for the stakeholders involved in the places where tourism takes place to identify the local sustainability issues, to determine their priorities and who can and should do what to address them, working together, to ensure that tourism contributes to sustainable development. Obviously larger businesses in originating markets and in destinations have a greater opportunity to make a difference; they need to be challenged to do so. It is important to be clear about who can do what about the important local issues and then to press them to respond and to exercise their responsibility. Irresponsibility needs to be exposed.

- The most urgent environmental issue is carbon pollution; climate change as a consequence of carbon pollution is making our world less hospitable for many of us. Carbon pollution through tourism is the only global tourism issue, and it is urgent. There are many other environmental issues which occur globally, for example water, waste and biodiversity loss, but these are not issues everywhere and where they do arise they vary in importance.

- It is important that we set locally relevant sustainability targets, which focus effort on the issues which matter in particular places to local people and their environment and which enable progress to be measured. We need to be able to see what contribution the different stakeholders are making.

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135 PwC (2012):4

■ Responsible Tourism has become a movement in some countries, important because it places the emphasis on what people do to achieve sustainable development through tourism. We need to grow and extend the movement to many more originating markets and destinations.

■ We need to encourage tourists to demand better holidays[136] and to encourage them to question and hold to account those businesses and governments which use Responsible Tourism as greenwashing, paying merely lip service to the idea. We need transparent reporting and 'rebellious tourists and rebellious locals' [137]

■ Donors too need to demand more evidence that the interventions they fund deliver sustainable development.

■ It is in the management of tourism in destinations that the largest sustainability gains will be made. Governments need to consider whether they can do more to regulate the industry and protect and enhance the public realm.

■ In originating markets effort needs to be made to engage consumers and to raise their expectations about what constitutes a better holiday. They need to be encouraged to demand more and to expect more of tour operators and hoteliers. The Canadian research, referenced earlier, suggests that other markets may be more responsive to the responsibility message than the UK. The argument for responding will need to be articulated differently in other cultures and languages recognising that tourism is not a commodity and that there is no global market.

■ European markets will become less dominant in destinations as the BRIC[138] countries become more significant originating markets. The case for taking responsibility for sustainability needs to be made there too.

■ Much of the focus in the last ten years has been on tour operators and accommodation providers, and this needs to continue. But the spotlight needs also to be shone on aviation, river and sea cruising and those particular activities which have sustainability impacts, for example, skiing, snorkelling & diving, mountaineering and wildlife viewing.

■ More attention needs to be paid to social sustainability, and efforts to prevent human trafficking and child abuse need to be stepped up. There needs to be more effort to address human rights and to make tourism socially inclusive for the economically poor and those with limited financial resources, enabling a larger proportion of the world's population to have a holiday.

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136 www.artyforum.info/advances.html

137 Krippendorf (1987): 107

138 Brazil, Russia, India and China

- ■ The economic agenda needs to focus more on enhancing local economic development, improving employment conditions, employing and promoting local people and working to benefit excluded groups and the economically poor.

All forms of tourism can be more responsible, and we need to work to ensure that tourism is used to make better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit, using tourism, rather than being used by it. A start has been made but there is a lot more to do.

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Responsible Tourism and Social Media Marketing

Rachel Kennedy, International Centre for Responsible Tourism

Social media are changing the way people communicate, and their relationship with businesses. Krippendorf recognised that Responsible Tourism should be infectious[1], and the researcher wanted to examine whether social media offers opportunities to 'infect' potential travellers by sharing RT stories in new ways. Travel businesses large and small are rushing into the social space, and travellers can follow destinations, hotels, b&b's and airlines on Twitter and Facebook, communicating with them in real time. Facebook users ask friends where to go on holiday, and what to do when they get there. Businesses are now ever-present in peoples' social media life, presenting an opportunity to build a 'trusted relationship' which could encourage repeat business and recommendation. At the same time, the economic crisis has highlighted the importance of differentiated products and trusted brands, while consumers are increasingly looking for the sort of different and authentic experiences that RT businesses can provide.

The Rise and Rise of Social Media

The emergence of the social web has been described as the point when the internet morphed from being a medium communicating a one-way message passively received by users, to one where people actively began to participate in two-way conversations online2. The development of new technologies and platforms allowed people to generate their own content - user-generated content (UGC) - and these video, blogs and social networking created what we now know as social media. In practice it meant a revolution in the way people spend their time on the internet; from how they communicate with each other, play games and watch videos, to how they choose a new washing machine or a hotel in Spain. This shift from passive to active effectively ushered in the era of the networked consumer3. Where companies, from corporate giants like Microsoft and Coca-Cola down to the smallest bed and breakfast, once controlled their online content and marketing messages, social media allows consumers to respond to them, and talk about them online, whether they like it or not.

Social media is the fastest-growing online sector, in 2011 overtaking entertainment as the biggest single activity on the web in the UK[4]. Facebook is the global behemoth, with more than one billion users worldwide[5,] half of them logging on every day. Behind it comes microblogging site Twitter, with over 500 million users, 140 million of them active[6]. Rapid growth isn't confined to the developed world, with 20 per cent of the developing world's population now online. Making UGC and using social networks are among the main online activities, particularly among young people, who are the majority population in developing countries[7.]

The Travel Industry and Social Media

The transformation of tourism by technology isn't new, but the industry has taken time to work out what social media means for marketing. Some of the biggest American companies, particularly airlines, were early adopters; but others held back because they couldn't see how it would deliver the all-important return on investment (ROI). Recently there's been a shift in perception. The 2011 World Travel Market (WTM) survey found, for the first time, that social media was seen as the most important marketing channel for the industry, overtaking search and pay-per-click advertising, and 85% of businesses felt that it would continue to grow in importance[8]. The cost of paid search has also risen substantially, making social media a more attractive proposition as sites become

increasingly important in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and big drivers of traffic. Facebook is now responsible for more than a quarter of web referral traffic[9].

The WTM survey found 40% of holidaymakers use social media to help them research their holiday, a third of them changing hotel and one in ten switching resort after doing so. It reports this as *only* 40 per cent, but it is significant that, in a short period of time, approaching half of all travellers are now using social media as one of their travel planning tools. For younger people, who do everything digitally, it's likely to be a natural progression. Travellers using social media have tended to focus on the *before* - checking TripAdvisor, consulting with friends and other travellers pre-trip, and *after* - posting photos, videos, blogs and reviews; but the growth of mobile internet and smartphones is opening up opportunities for people to check and post content on the move - increasingly becoming "social travellers"[10]. Prohibitive data roaming charges currently restrict mobile internet use, but EU capping legislation and increasing availability of wi-fi worldwide will see rapid growth in social-media access 'on the road'.

Key Social Media in Travel

Facebook is by far the biggest network with the most ways of showcasing content, including photos, videos, YouTube content, and an ever-growing number of apps. It uses location-based services and is linked with TripAdvisor through the 'Cities I've Visited' app, connecting users with friends who've been to a destination. Its sheer scale is why so many travel companies have Facebook pages and integrate the 'Like us on Facebook' link into their websites. Once a company is 'liked' by a user, then its content is pushed into their personal Facebook profile, becoming part of their social space - potentially a very powerful place to be. Facebook has also enabled what it calls 'frictionless sharing' through its Open Graph, so as users 'do' something, like listen to music, read a newspaper article or engage in activity with a travel company; that information is automatically shared with their friends, without the individual actually having to do anything. Frictionless sharing is in its infancy, and the privacy implications and sheer volume of what is being shared might put people off, driving them away

from Facebook; while too much product-pushing can feel like spam and result in users 'unliking' companies.

Companies can also do many of the things they do on their websites on Facebook, from live booking, travel updates, customer service management, to links to blogs and e-newsletters. For many it's a much cheaper alternative to a traditional marketing campaign. Discover Dominica, promoting the Caribbean Island as a responsible destination, says it can't compete with global advertising campaigns, so Facebook offers an ideal platform to reach potential travellers. With more than 5,000 likes, its wall promotes a variety of aspects of the destination, and encourages locals and visitors to post content and ask/answer questions about the island. Director of Tourism, Colin Piper, says: "Most importantly, we are developing a dialogue between those who know the island and those who may not - this word of mouth has incredible impact.[11]" In addition to companies' own Facebook pages, the volume of traffic to businesses through individuals' pages can now be substantial:

> **Justin Francis** @justinmfrancis   10 Jan
> 50% of @r_travel Facebook traffic (growing fast) comes from our customers Facebook pages not our FB page..

Twitter is also used by many travel brands, small and large, for different reasons to Facebook. As well as 140 character posts, users can link to other content, like weblinks, photographs or videos. Twitter is less reciprocal than Facebook, followers aren't necessarily followed back, and its strength lies in its ability to connect networks of people, and in it's powerful role as an information distribution network. New or interesting information has a more than 50-50 chance of being retweeted within an hour and, once it has, "...any retweeted tweet is to reach an average of 1,000 users no matter what the number of followers is of the original tweet. Once retweeted, a tweet gets retweeted almost instantly on next hops, signifying fast diffusion of information after the 1st retweet"12.

Since the first photograph of the New York Hudson River crash appeared on Twitter in 2009, it's become a principal source of 'breaking news'. For travel companies this means 'real time' information on potential problems for customers as a result of bad weather, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters, and equally a 'real-time' a means of managing them. When the Icelandic volcano erupted causing travel chaos, Twitter came into its own. While airlines' websites couldn't keep up with travel updates, the #ashcloud hashtag allowed them to update flight information for the media and the maximum number of customers, reducing pressure on call centres. Soon the 'social' side of Twitter kicked in, the #getmehome hashtag linking stranded travellers with each other, and with advice to help them get home[13]. During the UK 'snow chaos' in 2010,

British Airways and the airports used Twitter to keep customers informed of developments. Managing this sort of crisis well on social media is critical to brand reputation, as bad customer experiences travel quickly on the social web. BA's social media monitoring tools showed positive sentiment towards the airline tripled in the period, and it attributed a 12% increase in website visitors the following month in large part to the fact that customers appreciated their efforts to help them at a time of crisis[14].
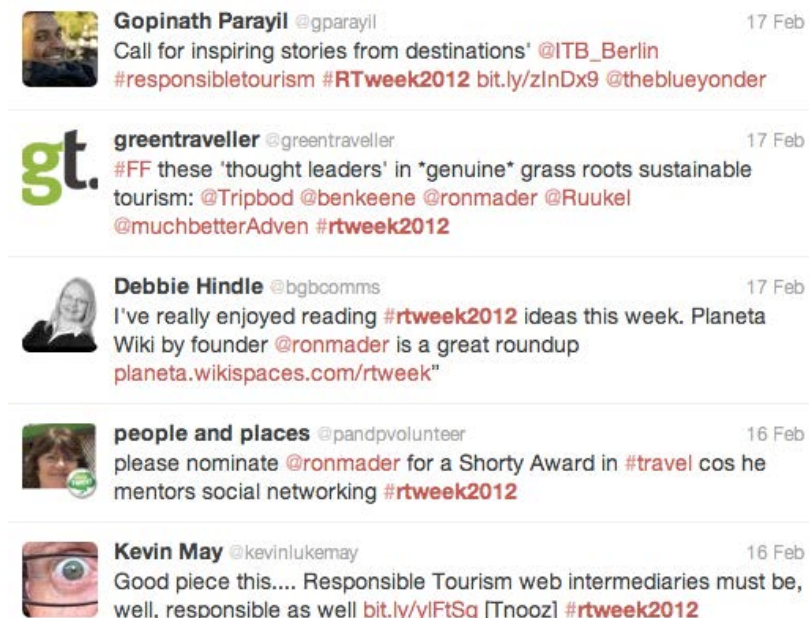

Twitter also helps travel professionals follow one another, and, through hashtags, enables RT businesses to engage the wider industry in sustainability issues. #RT2012 (Responsible Tourism Week 2012) and #wtmrtd (WTM Responsible Tourism Day) are two of the hashtags used by RT practitioners to discuss conferences, debate issues and share articles and thoughts:

Photosharing sites are a natural match for travel businesses. Everyone takes photographs on holiday and increasingly they share them with friends, family and beyond. They can act as inspiration, prompting someone to investigate a particular destination or accommodation or, if posted directly onto a business' site, act as a form of customer verification; "we like this place, so you will too". Photographs are particularly useful for RT companies who can "tell" customers about a product, but demonstrate it more effectively with a photograph of someone "doing it". The value and enjoyment of village visit as seen through a customer's photo can be far more powerful than telling someone it is a 'responsible' thing to do.

'Longstanding' sites like Flickr are returned in search results when a traveller searches for a destination, accommodation or experience, while Instagram, recently acquired by Facebook, is growingly rapidly in 2012 with more than 100 million users[15]. Pinterest, where users create online scrapbooks or pinboards by 'pinning' images of things or places they like, want or are meaningful to them is also growing fast. It's used

most by women; with travel pinboards among the most popular. As pins link back to the originating website, Pinterest is already driving more referrals than Google+, YouTube, Reddit, and LinkedIn put together[16]. Lonely Planet says photographs are key to their social media strategy, so Pinterest is the obvious next step for them: "Travel is a very visual experience, Pinterest is a very visual experience.. It's a very natural fit"[17]. These pinboards from Responsibletravel.com demonstrate they can be used to showcase RT.
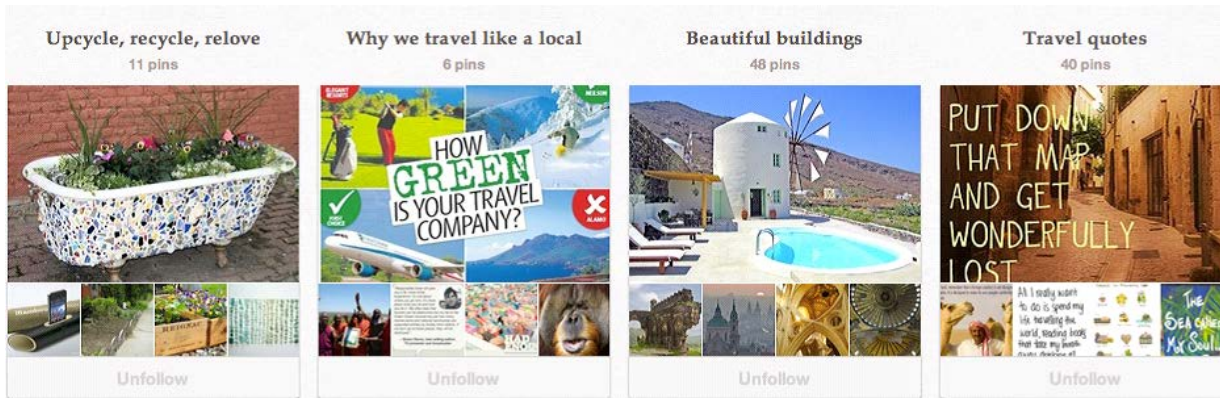
Youtube The amount of video uploaded to YouTube is staggering: 48 hours worth a minute 18. It's even more fully integrated into search since bought by Google, which is now personalising search results to interests people previously expressed. As consumers can't experience a holiday before they buy it, video from guests or the business itself can be the next best thing for anyone seeking inspiration or just wanting to check something. Many companies now have their own YouTube channels, featuring trips, tips, and customer videos. The content can then be shared elsewhere, on websites, Twitter and Facebook. Video can also be an easier way of getting across a potentially "dry" RT message.

Social Media Marketing: Theory and Practice

The growth of social media has had a big impact on marketing theory and practice. On the one hand, businesses can track consumer likes, dislikes, conversations and purchasing behaviour in real time as never before; on the other, consumers can search out reviews by other consumers, recommend, praise, criticise or complain, in real time. Both parties have gained new powers, although it's the consumer as ever who has the ultimate power, to buy, or not to buy. Customers now find themselves at the centre of marketing strategy, which impacts on on different elements in different ways:

- ■ The information available about customers' habits, purchases and desires has been hugely expanded social media and data analytics. Twitter followers or people who comment on your Facebook page constitute a 'real' focus group which already has some interest in what you are offering. You can ask questions and monitor conversations. There can be no excuse that market research is only for big business.

- This "unrivalled intelligence[19] can be used in informing marketing plans and different elements of the marketing mix. Facebook analytics can help you see what demographics are responding to content, and help you target particular or new segments. Comments and responses can inform product development, and your posts appearing in peoples' timelines can strengthen brand image and awareness.

Social media is the quickest way to communicate simultaneously with media and customers, and is critical to brand management when people can criticise accommodation or customer care instantly and openly.

- Expensive differentiated marketing is possible. Emerging markets which are growing in size and importance are big users of Facebook and other platforms, opening new ways of marketing to them.

- Social media can also help co-ordinated marketing and partnerships, as businesses network on Twitter and Linked-In, discussing ways of working and sharing good practice. On a small scale, many bed and breakfasts share tips with each other on Twitter and Facebook, as well as linking to local restaurants, producers and experiences in their communities.

Trust, Word of Mouth and Engagement

Tourism products differ from manufactured ones because people can't look at them or try them out first. Intangibility is the key characteristic of a holiday from which all else flows - the consumer has to try and find evidence that it's worth buying, while the marketer has to try and provide that 'tangibility' and minimise the risk perceived by the consumer. It also influences the stages a person goes through in their journey through the tourism product - mental expectations of where they are going and what they will do, the experiences which constitute the holiday, and the memories afterwards[20]. The RT business needs to look at this process in its entirety, and recognise the role that social networks can play in making the stages more real to customers.

Trust is central to any brand's reputation, but is critical in tourism because of the risk the product won't deliver what it promises. It's even more important now that many consumers aren't buying face-to-face from travel agents, but searching and purchasing online. In the sea of confusing information, increasingly they placing trust in friends and peers rather than businesses, institutions and mass marketing[21]. Marketers have always seen word-of-mouth as one the most influential channels of communication, because it's believed that the information passed on by 'people like me' is more likely to be reliable, honest and trustworthy[22], now social media enables what's been described as 'word of mouse'[23]. In travel, consumers have always relied more on recommendations and other travellers' experiences as way of reducing the uncertainty of purchasing, while travellers are also prolific sharers of good (and bad) holidays, because of the emotional impact of a

travel experience. 'People like me' in social media can be real friends, or 'friends' people come to know and interact with though social networks like Facebook and Twitter, and their friends and 'friends' and so on.

Everyone in social media talks about 'engagement', though it's not always clear what they mean. As the New York Time's Jeffrey Graham says: "Engagement is like love - everyone agrees its a good thing, but everyone has a different definition of what it is[24]." In some respects, it's a natural progression from traditional relationship marketing, with its focus on creating and enhancing strong relationships and delivering long-term value, and there is broad agreement that the key to successful engagement is through creating content that people want to read, look at or listen to, and share with others. Mintel found two thirds of social media users rarely look at paid adverts on social networks, concluding that brands have to go further than than the old 'post an advert' model and invest in engagement[25]. Weber says it's about creating an environment where people want to be, and will attract the type of people who might buy your product because of how they think, feel or act[26], while Qualman notes engagement is the opposite of the old one-way marketing message, and involves an ongoing conversation between business and user[27].

In tourism, engagement is key because of the importance of repeat business and positive word- of-mouth. Fortunately for businesses, the content at their fingertips is more engaging than most, and can feed into all stages of the 'expectations - experiences - memories' narrative of the travel experience. Content can also be created by both company and consumer, the latter having a particular value. The man behind Ramblers Worldwide social media strategy explains:

And this is how they do it on their website:

If content is sufficiently compelling, customers will allow it to remain in their social spaces, where it it may be read, or they will 'like' or share it, effectively becoming brand advocates. Even if it's ignored, it can be mentally noted as the user scrolls down, maintaining a very basic level of engagement. One day, it could prompt either a purchase or a recommendation on or offline to someone else to purchase. It's crucial to remember where content is going: "speaking alongside spouses, friends and colleagues[28]", effectively given the status of a trusted friend.

Responsible Tourism Marketing

The value of, and enjoyment responsible experiences can bring to the consumer, is now at the forefront of RT marketing, rather than the implied self-sacrifice of earlier exhortations to choose 'green' holidays on the basis of things they didn't do. The emphasis is on communicating sustainability in an accessible and engaging manner which helps customers understand *why* things are being done in a certain way, and what the added value can be for them as well as for communities and environments[29]. Debate still rages over the value of certification as a marketing tool, but many many practitioners believe that while it improves sustainability actions, it leaves the

traveller out of the equation and thus is of limited efficacy[30]. As the economic crisis increasingly forces companies to differentiate to succeed, many are using RT to do this, but responsible and sustainable values need to be at the centre of the product and the marketing, as greenwashing will be quickly exposed on social media. Goodwin observed that RT "creates opportunities for holidaymakers to talk about their experiences and tell stories, stimulating referrals and word of mouth viral marketing"[31]. Social media provides opportunities for those stories to find a way to a bigger audience, and the aggregation of niches who are now looking for something different.

The Research

The research explores what the sampled companies were saying on Facebook, to what extent their posts are responsible, and responses to them. The population for analysis is drawn from the winners and highly commended of the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2011; because the researcher wanted to look not just at what *any* tourism companies were saying on

Facebook but specifically at what companies involved in *RT* practices are saying. As the sample is small and the content analysed from a short period of time, the research is exploratory in nature, aiming to draw out broadly applicable themes and ideas. It is not intended that the findings are reported as being representative of the companies' entire social media output, or that of the wider RT business population. Furthermore, there is still little research into how communication is changing through using social

media - what a 'like' means, what prompts people to 'comment', why people 'share', and whether people ever do any of these things in a consistent way. In the same way it is difficult to gauge why someone 'likes' something in 'real life', it is difficult to definitively ascertain why someone 'liked' something on social media after the fact. It should be noted Facebook's Timeline rolled out towards the end of the period, so the screengrabs are a mix of both old and new Facebook.

There were 30 winning and highly commended organisations in 2011, but half were excluded for reasons including: no presence or active presence on Facebook, travel writers, posts/responses in another language. The sample nevertheless represents a wide range of organisations and businesses of different sizes, ages, markets and market segments, and covers five continents.

Company	Country	Type of company
Intrepid Travel	UK	Adventure tour operator
Whistler Blackcomb	Canada	Ski resort
Global Vision International GVI	UK/International	Volunteering/gap year
Feynan Ecolodge	Jordan	Ecolodge in Biosphere Reserve
DFDS Seaways	UK	Ferry company
Maple Leaf Adventures	Canada	Schooner cruises
Campi ya Kanzi	Kenya	Luxury safari camp
Coral Cay Conservation	UK/Cambodia	Volunteering/gap year
Mountain Lodges of Peru	Peru	Lodges, trekking & riding
Tiny Island Volunteers	UK/Maldives	Volunteering/gap year
Kasbah du Toukbal	Morocco	Mountain hotel/group acccom
Robin Pope Safaris	Zambia	Safaris
Fauzi Azar Inn	West Bank, Israel	Guesthouse/hostel
Nutti Sami Slida	Swedish Lapland	Ecotourism activities
Battlesteads Hotel	UK	Hotel

Social Media links on Websites

Across all companies, Facebook is the dominant platform, with Twitter then YouTube close behind. The number of platforms used roughly corresponds to the physical size of the company. The biggest, Intrepid and Whistler, are able to resource running a greater number, with a core of Facebook , Twitter, YouTube, then variously Google+ Vimeo, Flickr & blogs. Nutti Sami Slida and the Fauzi Azar Inn though demonstrate that it is also possible for much smaller businesses to keep across a range of platforms, with the

same core platforms as well as a blog and Flickr respectively. Only two of the companies really highlighted social media on their web front pages beyond a list of icons, GVI showing some of its Facebook followers, and Battlesteads a grab from its Twitter feed.
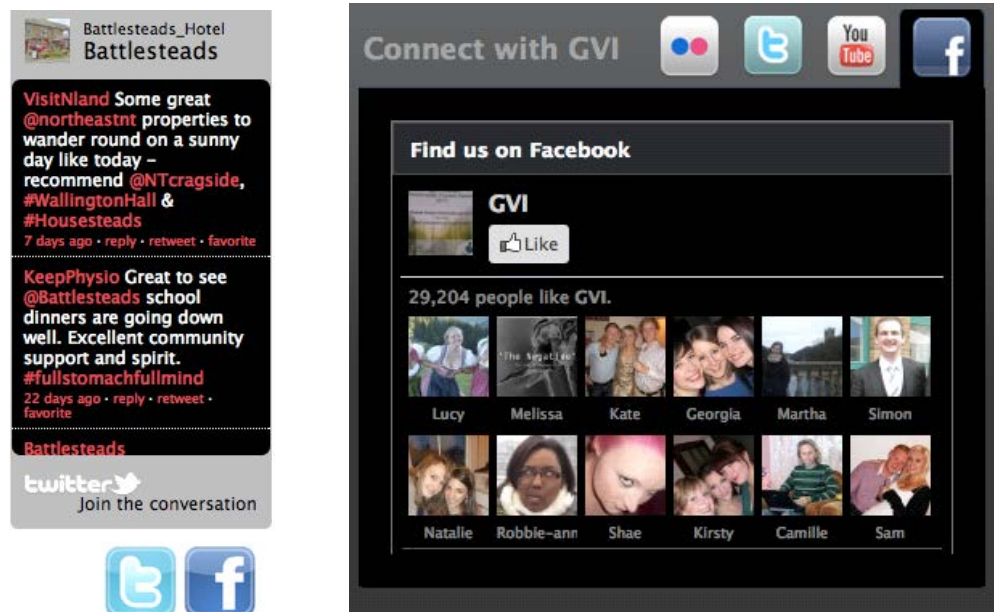
These screengrabs show linking to social media can give a more 'active' dimension to a website front page. Battlesteads Twitter grab showcases the hotel's RT work growing produce and cooking dinners for the local school, and demonstrates local linkages through @visitNland's tweet about places to visit in the area. GVI's Facebook link puts faces to their volunteers, conveying endorsement and trust, and demonstrating active engagement on a platform central to its guests' lives. Both Intrepid Travel and Whistler Blackcomb set up Pinterest pages during the study period, They didn't then link to them on their websites, but it's an indication of where the biggest companies' social media experts see the next social 'place to be' in travel.

Facebook Profiles

Company	Likes	Posts in days	Other Links
Intrepid	101,967 since 2009	20 in 27	Photos, YouTube, Twitter feed, enewsletters, ebrochures, SAMA charity, Tours, Meet others page Delicious discoveries brochure, Adventure girl game
Whistler Blackcomb	100,000 since 2008	20 in 29	Photos, videos, Flickr, Competitions, Offers, Events, Notes, Polls
GVI	30,366 since 2009	20 in 17	Photos, Videos, Ex-volunteers, competitions, blogs, events
Feynan Ecolodge	11,580 since 2009	20 in 43	Photos, Videos, Events, TripAdvisor reviews
DFDS Seaways	6,634 since 2008	20 in 33	Photos, YouTube, Videos, Offers, Events, Blog feed, Notes (Press releases)

Company	Likes	Posts in days	Other Links
Maple Leaf Adventures	2406 since 2011	20 in 46	Photos, Videos, Welcome page (slideshows & video)
Campi Ya Kanzi	2304 since 2010	20 in 30	Photos
Coral Cay Volunteers	1986 since 2010	20 in 80	Photos, Videos, Events, Questions,Twitter feed, Itineraries
Mountain Lodges of Peru	1505 since 2009	20 in 99	Photos & Polls
Tiny Island Volunteers	1378 since 2010	20 in 25	Photos
Kasbah du Toukbal	561 since 2009	20 in 78	Photos & Itineraries
Robin Pope Safaris	461 since 2011	20 in 58	Photos
Fauzi Azar Inn	344 since 2011	20 in 27	Photos, YouTube, Welcome info, Twitterfeed, Offers, Movie night info, Calendar, Reviews (TripAdvisor, Hostelworld)
Nutti Sami Slida	319 since 2009	20 in 23	Photos, Videos, Events
Battlesteads Hotel	234 since 2009	20 in 43	Photos,

The number of 'likes' each company has also roughly corresponds to its size offline, though there are exceptions. Feynan Eco-lodge has a much larger number of followers than some companies of a similar size like Kasbah du Toukbal which joined two years earlier, which could be attributed to content, but also could be because the lodge has cultivated a strong following among Jordanian users, as well as overseas visitors. Robin Pope Safaris has far fewer followers than its safari counterpart, Campi Ya Kanzi,which joined Facebook earlier. Campi Ya Kanzi' posts a wider variety of content, but its its market could also be younger and more socially-media literate. The most frequent posters were the biggest companies which have staff focussing on social media, GVI, Intrepid and Whistler Blackcomb averaged around one post a day. But close behind them were some of the smallest, Nutti Sami Slida and the Fauzi Azar Inn, contradicting the idea held by many businesses not engaged in social media that it is an all-consuming activity tying up large numbers of staff. Companies need to monitor Facebook pages in between posting their own content to check for user posts and for comments and questions, but for smaller companies with fewer followers, checking a couple of times a day and responding if necessary is not an arduous activity. Coral Cay Conservation's lack of posts contrasts with the other two volunteer organisations, and is surprising for a company with a young and social media-literate target market.

There were noteable differences in the way the Facebook profile was used to provide additional information for users. While the wall, info page and friend activity come as standard, photos were the only category added by all the companies, with video next most common. These are sensible priorities, but much more is possible as some of the companies demonstrate:

| Intrepid Travel	Fauzi Azar Inn	GVI International
Adventure Girl	Events	Travel & Volunteer for Fr...
Photos	Recent Reviews	Blogs
Delicious Discoveries	Photos	Ex-Volunteers
Meet Others	Calendar	Photos
Tours	Special Offers!	Poll
SAMA	Movie Night	Videos
Intrepid E-newsletters	Twitter	Events
Intrepid E-brochures	YouTube	Questions
YouTube	Welcome!	
Twitter	Likes	
Welcome!		

Intrepid's profile demonstrates how Facebook can be used like a website landing page, to showcase 'traditional' content like e-newsletters, brochures and itineraries. It also has a 'meet others' page which creates a sense of community and is useful for its many single travellers. GVI similarly links to ex-volunteers' Facebook profiles enabling potential customers to get feedback, and existing ones to stay in touch. Intrepid and Fauzi Azar add links like Intrepid's Sama charity, a calendar for upcoming events, and a place to find information on the Nazareth movie nights. Fauzi Azar Inn also links to reviews on TripAdvisor and Hostelworld. As issues of trust whirl around TripAdvisor, it is good to link their reviews to a page where real people with real names act as verifiers. Both Intrepid and Fauzi Azar link to Twitter, rather than posting feeds through to their Facebook wall. This is sensible as the type and frequency of content is very different and endless tweets cluttering up users' Facebook pages can irritate and be a barrier to engagement. Facebook's profile offers opportunities for RT companies to highlight existing web content, better connect existing and potential customers and give them the inspiration and information they need to book a holiday. How content is organised is also important. Splitting photo albums into themes like village tours, cooking experiences etc. makes them easier to navigate and tells more of a RT story than a jumble of 'holiday snaps'.

Types of Content Posted

320 posts were analysed for type of content and how many related to RT issues. A post can comprise text, photographs, video, links, or a combination of any, and all the constituent parts were counted. Most companies posted a variety of content, the majority with text either as sole post or introduction to a photo, video or link. Links were second most-posted, and these were to a variety of content fulfilling different types of functions. Robin Pope principally featured links to its own e-newsletter and to trip itineraries, linking directly back to its website. Coral Cay Adventures links primarily to its blog, as does Campi Ya Kanzi, updating on wildlife sightings. Press articles or inclusion in features like 'Top 10', 'Top 24 B&B's' or 'most romantic', were also common links, offering external verification of their products, and an opportunity to engender

trust from other users. Others linked to awards pages, either to encourage nominations, voting or celebrate victory. Battlesteads, Feynan eco-lodge and the Fauzi Azar Inn all linked to upcoming events, special dinners or late availability. Photographs were posted less frequently than links. Some companies, notably Coral Cay, DFDS, Battlesteads and Kasbah du Toukbal posted few photos in the posts studied.
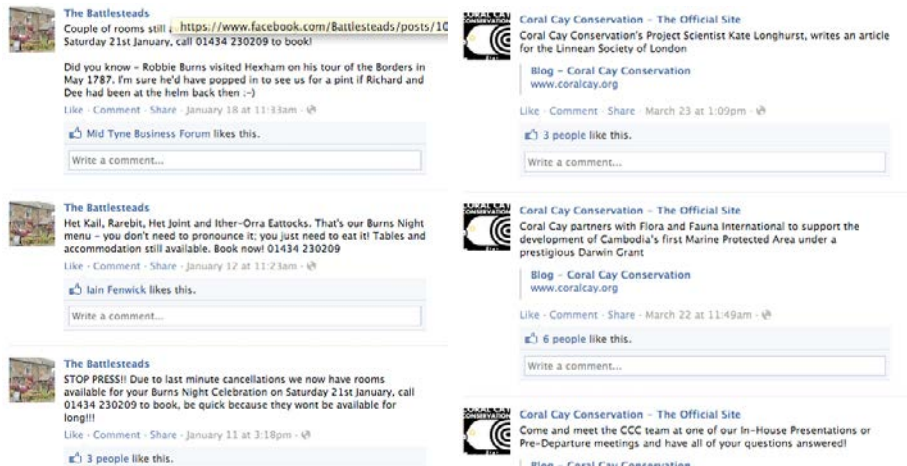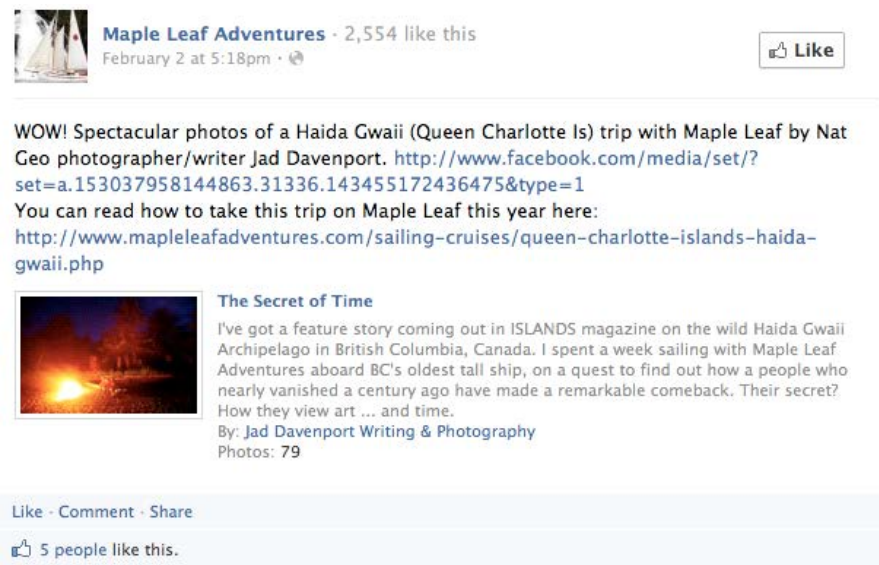

The pages above are visually dull, lacking images which might inspire someone to travel, unlike those of Campi Ya Kanzi, Whistler Blackcomb and Nutti Sami Slida:
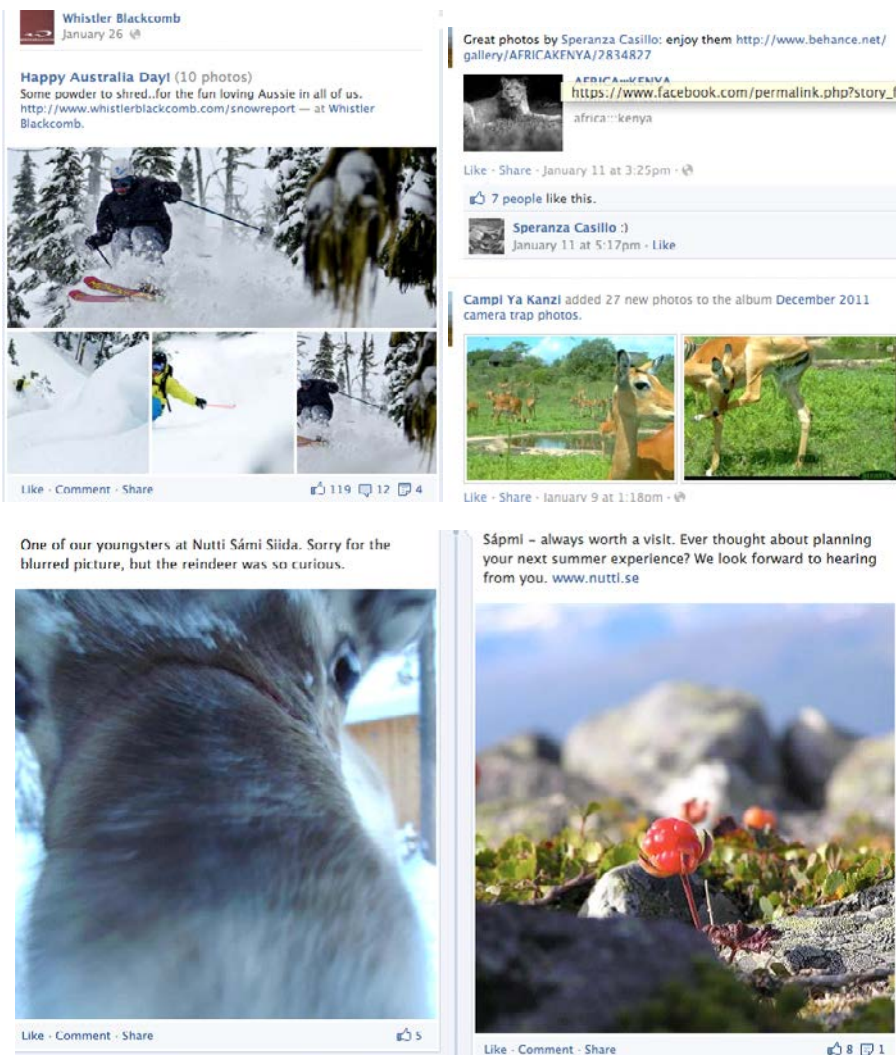
Given how prominently photographs feature traditionally in brochures and travel marketing, and their importance in addressing the 'intangibility' issue discussed earlier, this is surprising. Timeline makes photographs more prominent and integral to a user's online experience, so it might be expected more would appear in companies' social media 'shopfronts'.

There were relatively few photos of guests enjoying their holidays, or the communities benefitting from them. Only Whistler, GVI, Tiny Island, Fauzi Azar Inn and Nutti Sami Slida posted many pictures of *people*. This may be a legacy of the old brochure landscape or wildlife shot, but would seem a missed opportunity when marketing RT products. Photos of guests doing different activities and their hosts can 'show' rather than 'tell' the RT story. Maple Leaf Cruises and GVI demonstrate how joining one link to another can draw potential customers towards deeper engagement and booking. Photographs and a feature about a trip on the Maple Leaf are posted along with a link to the itinerary. They deploy the trust factor - 'this writer for an internationally esteemed magazine liked our trip, look at his photographs... Want to do it?, here's how".

Few companies showcased video, which again appears to be a missed opportunity in an industry where videocameras are such an integral part of many people's holiday experience. Only Intrepid, GVI, Maple Leaf and Fauzi Azar posted videos made by or showing customers' travels with them. Whistler, GVI and Maple Leaf Adventures all posted internet meme-type videos which are popular on the social web and are designed to be shared. DFDS posted TV adverts, video of how they were made, and amateur video of a helicopter landing on one of its ferries. Feynan posted a C5 holiday programme in which the lodge featured. Maple Leaf Adventures posted the widest range; viral video, an environmentalist's piece, a guest's video of a Bald Eagle taking a tumble into the water, and another guest singing and playing guitar onboard.

Responsible Tourism Posts

Where RT is explicitly mentioned, it almost entirely relates to the Responsible Tourism Awards. Tiny Island Volunteers and the Fauzi Azar Inn link to articles about their wins, while Fauzi Azar 'likes' the Awards Facebook page on its wall. GVI has a grab of the award as its profile picture.

Robin Pope links to articles which mention the awards, but also vividly describe the positive social, cultural and environmental impacts for the local community, and the difference experienced by a traveller on one of their holidays. Nutti Sami Slida is the only company to directly address the issue of responsibility in a text post, announcing how it has won the right to be labelled part of the 'Sapmi Experience". It also also explains RT on the front page of its website to which it links, featuring an RT Awards logo. Companies links do often take the user back to websites where RT is explained, but these weren't analysed if not on the front page. As mentioned earlier, the marketing shift is towards communicating the difference and experience of an RT holiday for the consumer, rather than emphasising the drier concept of responsibility itself, and this seems to be reflected in what companies post. Marketers apparently don't see Responsible Tourism as a term which connects with potential customers on a medium as informal and conversational as Facebook.

Out of the 320 posts, 117 conveyed RT issues as defined in the coding categories, although the variety of linked content means there were many more mentions *within* individual posts. Six companies conveyed RT issues in more than half their posts, with Kasbah du Toukbal, Robin Pope and the Fauzi Azar Inn managing three quarters. RT-related content within the text, photos, videos which constituted a post was also analysed:

Breakdown of RT issues in posts

Economic	Social	Cultural	Environmental	Giving
87	33	68	53	46

Most companies conveyed a range of RT issues, but some had a stronger emphasis in one direction than another. As with the specific mentions of RT, many of the posts which contained the broadest range of RT themes were contained in links to articles or videos written or produced by *other people*. They included newspaper features on Robin Pope, Campi Ya Kanzi, Tiny Island Volunteers and Feynan; 'best hotel' lists featuring Mountain Lodges of Peru and Kasbah du Toukbal, the Shorty Awards for which Intrepid was nominated and the Business Globe competition won by Feynan's manager. Feynan's link to the 'Holiday Heaven on Earth' programme conveyed the lodge's RT ethos, as did a radio feature on Nutti Sami Slida. These demonstrate how both important traditional newspaper, TV and radio features remain, and how social media enables sharing with audiences who didn't see them originally. It also to an extent, lets *other* people describe the RT actions and the difference which can be experienced, enabling the companies to benefit from external validation and build trust for consumers.

Economic issues predominated, mostly relating to the use of local guides, local food and produce and the use of local materials in buildings:

Located at the base of North Africa's highest peak – Jbel Toubkal – it feels right that our temporary home's mountain surroundings courses through the hotel's veins. Not only do the various terraces and rooms have genuinely awesome views – snow-capped mountains on one side, and the dusty valley and ancient villages on the other – but everything from the intricately carved doors to the vibrant rugs is handmade by local craftsmen, from local materials. Well, most things – the likes of John Lewis might have had a hand in the binoculars and iPod speakers.

Group Ranch, CyK also demonstrates a unique commitment to community development and environmental sustainability through tourism. Employing locally, paying tourism revenues directly to the community and running the most ecologically responsible lodge in all of East Africa,

Battlesteads Hotel, the Fauzi Azar Inn and Kasbah du Toukbal all featured content which highlighted how local groups work together to network and share ideas, and encourage guests to support local businesses, strengthening local economic linkages.

Social issues were conveyed least. This could be because, as defined in the coding categories, many of the issues are hard to convey quickly and accessibly and aren't the sort of 'positive' messages marketers highlight; for example sex tourism, crime and conflict between communities. Conversely, the category contains two themes which might be expected to feature more prominently - positive impacts of tourism on the local infrastructure and positive interaction between locals and guests. The photo on the left below from Feynan, of a guest having kohl applied, was one of a handful of photos posted conveying positive (or any) interaction between a guest and a local. It also shows the sort of authentic experience consumers are increasingly seeking. Fauzi Azar Inn posted a video of a walking tour in Nazareth which conveyed positive interaction, while a Feynan guest also posted a blog in similar vein. These photographs conveying positive impacts of tourism for communities from GVI and Intrepid projects are also the exception.

Thanks to your generous support through the GVI Charitable Trust these students will help our partners reach their goal. They will be the first students to earn the recognised KPCE qualification. THANK YOU! — with Olvin Osorio.

Project SAMA launched
February

SAMA is a three year global gender equality project which aims to improve the lives of communities and help bridge the gender gap through education. To help us achieve this, we are working with Plan, one of the world's oldest and most experienced children's development organisations.

Battlesteads asks users whether they've seen a TV report about them making school dinners for local children, but doesn't illustrate it with a photograph. Kasbah du Toukbal and Robin Pope post photos of accommodation, scenery and wildlife, but none of guests out with local people, or the community projects they are involved in.

There were many references to local cultural experiences as might be expected given these are more commonly part of the holiday experience. These were greater for companies involved with marginalised local communities, as in Maple Leaf's work with the Haida and Nutti Sami Slida's work with the Sami people; and with the Masai communities linked to Campi ya Kanzi and Robin Pope Safaris. Posts emphasised the enjoyment to be found in experiencing local cultures, and the need to protect them. Music, storytelling, cooking and traditional transport were highlighted, though only Nutti Sami Slida, Feynan Ecolodge and the Fauzi Azar Inn illustrated any of these things actually happening.

Tiny Island Volunteers/Maldives Volunteers with Mascha Blome.
January 13

Like · Comment · Share   16   3
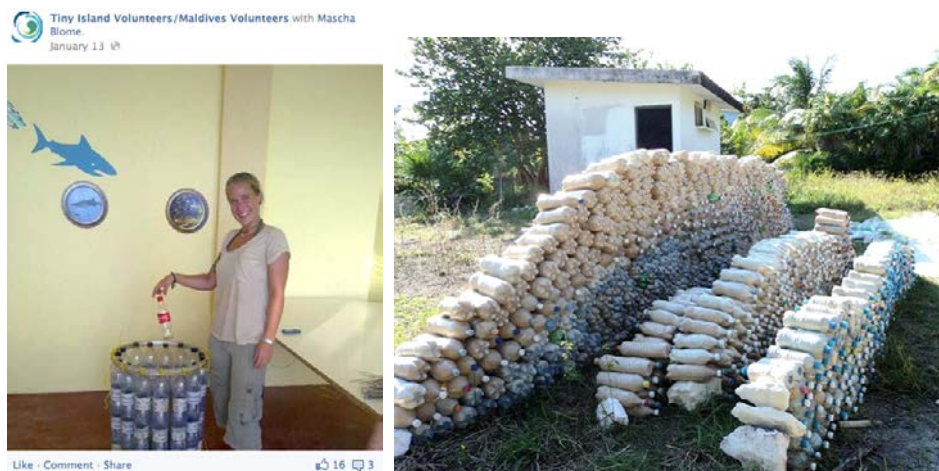
Environmental issues relating to tourism were also addressed by almost all the companies, notably Campi Ya Kanzi, Coray Cay and Kasbah du Toukbal. These included green construction, marine protection, wildlife and environmental awareness education for local communities, cycling, and addressing tourism impacts such as litter. The posts below demonstrate that issues such as recycling which are often perceived as somewhat dry and worthy can often best be conveyed visually.

The 'Giving' category included posts conveying giving something back to host communities through volunteering, non-specific benefits for local people and 'experiencing the difference' of an RT holiday. Volunteer organisations obviously featured strongly, emphasising how their work benefits marine and land environments and contributes to poverty reduction. Campi Ya Kanzi links to its blog with sidebar emphasising the unique Masai experience, while Feynan posted text and photos conveying the difference of an RT holiday for guests:

This sort of product differentiation, like the supermarket 'Taste the Difference', is key in today's holiday market, but was under-utilised by the companies. Again it was largely in links, blogs and videos from people *other people* that 'experiencing the difference' was conveyed, like this review:

> Over a lovely breakfast of fruit, Moroccan bread, jams and juice in bed, I read a booklet about the Kasbah, and slowly our warm, fuzzy love for the place – the sort you don't expect to feel after a day – came into focus. The place is built on very sound principles, and is proving to be a genuinely life-changing collaboration between some great-sounding Brits and the local community. The owners give a portion of profits to local causes, and in its short life, the Kasbah has helped fund schools to educate local girls, a refuse collection service, and a local ambulance service which has dramatically reduced the number of women dying in childbirth.
>
> That the Kasbah is more than simply a business is obvious when you talk to anybody working there, without anyone having to say it. People appear to feel a great sense of ownership and pride, and their love of the place struck us. Actually, no, it did more than that, it completely whumpfed us.

These also constitute endorsement from external trusted sources, which we've seen are important for consumers in the noise of the digital world. Other posts which powerfully conveyed the 'difference' were by guests, a reminder of the importance of WOM.

Maple Leaf Adventures posts variety of guest-generated content including video and blogs. Both owerfully evoke life on board the Maple Leaf, and the the company makes it easy for potential customers to find more information with an itinerary link.

"This summer, I was privileged to spend a week on the B.C. Coast on the *Maple Leaf*, a beautiful 104 year-old wooden sailboat. While playing guitar one day on the boat, Neil Young's song Long *May you Run* became a tribute to the boat - *Long May you Sail*. Many thanks to Living Oceans Society and Maple Leaf Adventures' *The Way I Sea It* contest."
~ Jodi Stark, guest on Whales & Totems trip, 2011

We highly recommend viewing Jodi's **annotated lyrics**! Fun facts and background info. View them here.

To learn more about **trips where you can have this experience**, view:

▪ Inside Passage Whales & Wild Side Cruise, Aug 2-10, 2012

We gained a deep appreciation of the interconnectedness of the entities of that particular ecosystem. Our crew was immensely knowledgeable and shared that knowledge in entertaining and passionate ways.

You cannot help but be transformed by a voyage on the Maple Leaf – she has been transformed herself and touches everyone with her grace.

A trip on the Maple Leaf is truly a trip of a lifetime. Do whatever you have to do to join her, breathe her magic and see how she brings wondrous things out of the mist.

Read about the Whales & Totems trip.

Engaging with Users

The table below sets out the total number of Facebook likes, shares and comments on the *posts* studied; with the number of *company* likes in the first column as an indication of the size of their Facebook profile.

Company	Likes	Post Likes	Shares	Comments
Intrepid	101,967	12,364	641	827
Whistler Blackcomb	100,000	6183	1289	634
GVI	30,366	580	63	169
Feynan Ecolodge	11,580	345	38	59
DFDS Seaways	6634	160	1	134
Maple Leaf Adventures	2406	92	17	28
Campi Ya Kanzi	2304	127	5	24
Coral Cay Volunteers	1986	63	1	24
Mountain Lodges of Peru	1505	117	9	23
Tiny Island Volunteers	1378	178	0	36
Kasbah du Toukbal	561	160	4	16
Robin Pope Safaris	461	92	4	5
Fauzi Azar Inn	344	74	7	5
Nutti Sami Slida	319	142	1	7
Battlesteads Hotel	234	45	0	16

User activity broadly reflects the size of the company Facebook profile, though a few figures stand out. Intrepid, with the biggest profile, has twice the number of post likes as next biggest, Whistler Blackcomb, but the latter has twice the number of shares. This reflects the type of content posted by both companies in the 20 posts studied. Many Intrepid posts specifically asked users to 'like', while 3 of Whistler's were particularly widely shared because of the 'viral' nature of their content. Maple Leaf also posted content which its users wanted to share, as mentioned above, though it has relatively few post 'likes', possibly because of an older customer profile. DFDS Seaways had a large number of comments for its profile size because of a row about transporting live animals, which is further explored below. Nutti Sami Slida has many more 'likes' than similarly-sized Fauzi Azar and Battlesteads, which could be attributable to its generous use of photos and enthusiastic text. Posts mentioning RT or conveying RT themes were not observably more or less liked or commented upon than the others, so it was not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions as to how the issues in particular resonated with users. This does indicate though that RT isn't a barrier to engagement, and some of the liked posts are highlighted later.

The consumer's experience of travel as a process of expectations, experiences, and memories which responsible marketers should harness is writ large in their comments on Facebook. The 'Recent Posts by Others' on screen right is a new Timeline feature which further reinforces the 'just booked', 'can't wait', 'been there its great' posts, right at the top of the company's page.
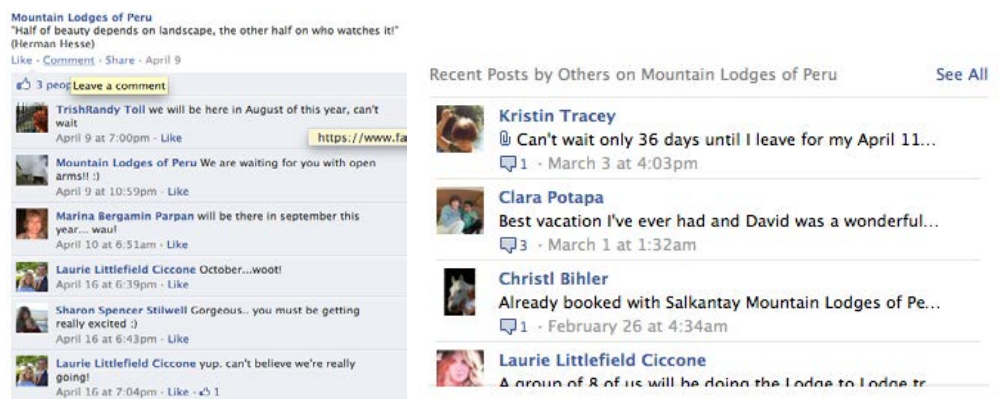
These comments are positive digital 'word-of-mouth', appearing on users' pages and in friends' Facebook streams. Mountain Lodges say they're awaiting the user 'with open arms', creating the beginnings of a relationship with their guest. People who have 'been there' are also that most valuable asset, potential repeat business, so encouraging their endorsement and engagement is critical. Picking up on customer comments by linking to itineraries and providing further inspiration to travel is key to converting enthusiasm to bookings, as companies like Maple Leaf recognise. GVI, Tiny Island and Intrepid posts also show users asking questions of previous guests. For young travellers, particularly volunteers with parents paying for the 'experience of a lifetime', trusting

that it will deliver the experience safely is essential. Volunteer companies' pages should enable them to find that endorsement from previous guests, as Facebook is where both are likely to spend a lot of their time.

DFDS Seaways and Tiny Island Volunteers highlight the importance of trust when a company's reputation is at stake and crisis management is needed. DFDS faced accusations from animal rights activists that it was shipping live animals, allegations which could quickly escalate and result in a boycott campaign. Some of the posts by users had been deleted as part of the company's response to the crisis but the screengrabs below show how it unfolded:

In the bottom left post of January 25, DFDS clearly sets out how it will respond, explaining why it's deleted some user posts which sparked the crisis. It also intervenes in the discussions, showing that it is listening. The promised response is also quick - on

the same day - but as the posts on the 26th show, it's not enough to stop the protests. An unambiguous company statement and a online conversation with an activist are enough to close the matter:

> **DFDS Seaways UK** · 6,435 like this
> January 26 at 4:43pm · 🌐
>
> 👍 **Like**
>
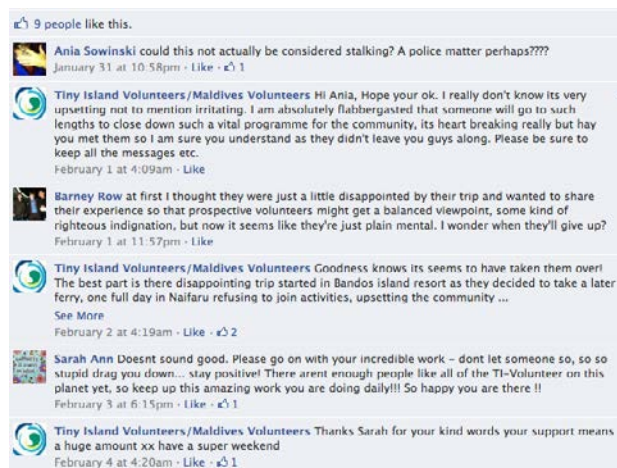> DFDS Seaways transports animals to the UK for many reasons, such as livestock for breeding purposes, animals for sporting or recreational purposes, and dogs and other pets in the company of their owners. We take pride in complying with the highest standards for animal welfare and only accept transport of animals where we can provide sound and healthy conditions for them.
> Furthermore, the captain will always decide whether the weather conditions are suitable for transporting animals.
>
> In view of the latest discussions about the transport of animals for laboratory research purposes, we wish to emphasize that we will not accept bookings for transport of animals for laboratory research purposes.

Tiny Island Volunteers seemingly had to deal with negative posts from a disgruntled couple, and also deleted their posts with a clear explanation as to why, and how potential volunteers' concerns could be answered:

> **Tiny Island Volunteers/Maldives Volunteers** · 1,397 like this
> January 31 at 2:43pm · 🌐
>
> 👍 **Like**
>
> Hi All, again the crazy harassment still continues and I have deleted a post and blocked someone. As all of our Tiny Islands family are fully aware of all the facts and have spent months with us you will all know the aims and objective of our programmes and ALL are centred around the communities in which we work. As I speak we have ten volunteers out here who are all amazing and incredibly supportive as are the 100+ that have become a big part of our family. Obviously one couple preferring the surroundings of a luxury five star resort will not put us off as we are not afraid to help those communities that really do desperately need assistance. If you are preparing to visit and would like to speak to a volunteer let us know as the lists are endless and they can give you some amazing advise and also put your mind at rest.
> Thanks all for you endless support and well wishes xx

Users then join in to defend the company and undermine the credibiity of the accuser, effectively endorsing Tiny Island Volunteers' version of events and doing their crisis management for them.

> 👍 9 people like this.
>
> **Ania Sowinski** could this not actually be considered stalking? A police matter perhaps????
> January 31 at 10:58pm · Like · 👍 1
>
> **Tiny Island Volunteers/Maldives Volunteers** Hi Ania, Hope your ok. I really don't know its very upsetting not to mention irritating. I am absolutely flabbergasted that someone will go to such lengths to close down such a vital programme for the community, its heart breaking really but hay you met them so I am sure you understand as they didn't leave you guys along. Please be sure to keep all the messages etc.
> February 1 at 4:09am · Like
>
> **Barney Row** at first I thought they were just a little disappointed by their trip and wanted to share their experience so that prospective volunteers might get a balanced viewpoint, some kind of righteous indignation, but now it seems like they're just plain mental. I wonder when they'll give up?
> February 1 at 11:57pm · Like
>
> **Tiny Island Volunteers/Maldives Volunteers** Goodness knows its seems to have taken them over! The best part is there disappointing trip started in Bandos island resort as they decided to take a later ferry, one full day in Naifaru refusing to join activities, upsetting the community ...
> See More
> February 2 at 4:19am · Like · 👍 2
>
> **Sarah Ann** Doesnt sound good. Please go on with your incredible work – dont let someone so, so so stupid drag you down... stay positive! There arent enough people like all of the TI-Volunteer on this planet yet, so keep up this amazing work you are doing daily!!! So happy you are there !!
> February 3 at 6:15pm · Like · 👍 1
>
> **Tiny Island Volunteers/Maldives Volunteers** Thanks Sarah for your kind words your support means a huge amount xx have a super weekend
> February 4 at 4:20am · Like · 👍 1

Customers' ability to voice their concerns immediately on social media magnifies potential brand damage, and it's essential to respond openly, honestly and effectively. These posts show digital word-of-mouth can defend brand reputation and reinforce trust if these are threatened. They also illustrate how companies claiming to be responsible and ethical can quickly be exposed if their actions do not stand up to scrutiny.

Responsible practices need to be at the core of the business, or greenwashing will be quickly and mercilessly revealed.

The research findings illustrate different ways in which companies try to do engage, and to what extent people respond. There are differences in presentation, language and tone. Companies that used very little text, dry or one-sided posts and few or no photos, get fewer post likes overall. Overtly enthusiastic posts with strong visuals were strongly 'liked'. In general, posts which were enthusiastic and used inspirational language received more likes than the more prosaic. This appeared to be the case too where the attached link conveyed responsible tourism issues, suggesting that using friendly and engaging language to introduce them is helpful.

Striking photographs also drew many likes. The photos below received high numbers of likes and were shared and commented upon by users. GVI followed up on the picture of the little boy in their next post, saying that as users had liked it they might want to volunteer at the orphanage in Cape Town, linking to the web page and asking previous volunteers to tell their stories.


The fact that users did strongly like and share good photos reinforces their importance in inspiring people and addressing the 'intangibility' issue. They can also help draw people in to further discussion of RT issues as GVI demonstrated.

Posts which involved the user, getting them to 'do' something elicited a greater response than those which just stated something, or in the old marketing world, 'broadcast'. Actions varied from questions about where people wanted to travel, to requests to read something or vote in awards, as well as soliciting guests' own video and photographs. This Intrepid post generated a big response, with many travellers competing for the best "When I got lost story":

Hands up if you wouldn't mind getting lost in France... — with Kathleen Bradley.

Many of these requests resulted in positive comments about the companies, reinforcing the customer endorsement/trust factor. Posts trumpeting victories in awards, including those for RT or sustainability, were also liked, vindicating the companies' work and the guests choice of holiday.
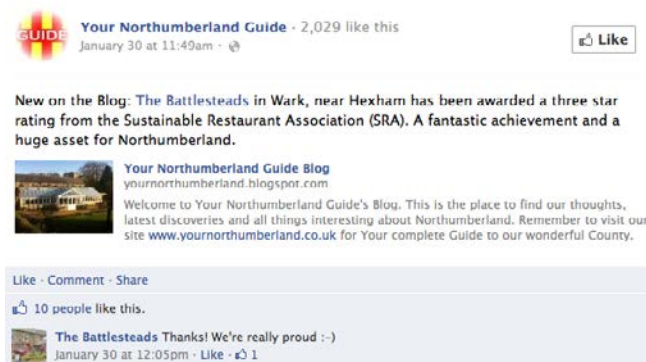
Content that users shared was principally the striking, different and whacky, or the more personally useful like the 'best 50 hotels', 'most romantic' and some itineraries. The former were most shared, for example 'viral' videos posted by Intrepid, Whistler and GVI including 'S**t skiers say' and timelapse videos of travellers cut to music. These are popular with younger travellers which should be noted by businesses targeting them. Another type of content liked and shared was non-travel related, but aimed at users sharing the same ethics as the business; links to environmental issues like Earth Hour, recycled clothes, and the dangers of a new gas pipeline. Social media is a social space and not just somewhere to hard sell, so sharing content for 'people like me' is a good way to keep them engaged.

The findings also show how users interacted with each other. In three quarters of the sample, around a quarter of posts were by users themselves rather than the company. This indicates they felt 'comfortable' enough to share information with it and interact. Often this was positive feedback:

Mountain Lodges and DFDS talk to their guests and help them build their travel experience. The conversations contrast with this user post:

Robin Pope hasn't answered the question so looks uninterested, as if it's not paying attention and using social media to broadcast one-way. The company would never not answer a customer question in person or on the phone - the same should apply to social media. Creating an environment where other people feel free to post also enables *them* to post content which demonstrates the difference in travelling responsibly, such as the Intrepid user's video tribute to a dead Navajo guide, and two other Intrepid travellers who posted big 'thankyous' to their local guides. A Mountain Lodges of Peru client asked advice on authentic tours of Cusco, an Intrepid Traveller's posted video highlighting the Heritage Stay and Village life as his favourite holiday experience.

Some companies made an effort to get users involved with each other, like Battlestead's business networking, Kasbah du Toukbal's Marrakech cycle ride and Fauzi Azar Inn's frequent events. These help build a sense of community and make your page somewhere to return:

GVI and Tiny island's pages featured lots of conversations *between* volunteers, which were absent on Coral Cay's wall.

Companies with young target markets need to encourage and facilitates these conversations because Facebook is where potential guests and their friends spend their

time, and they *expect* to both engage with brands and with each other on brands' pages. Finally, companies posting their users' own content not only acts as endorsement of the responsible product, it shows that you are listening to them and elicits a positive response from them. Most importantly of all, it demonstrates to everyone else they had a good holiday experience that others might want to try.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that Responsible Tourism is integrated into most of the companies' social media marketing, but they could do much more to convey the difference of travelling responsibly in an engaging way, to differentiate themselves from competitors. Using social media in marketing doesn't need to be time-consuming and can be done effectively by small companies as well as large. Posts illustrate that it's a medium where travellers are inspired and begin having holiday conversations, so businesses should focus on building a rounded RT experience using the enthusiastic language and strong visuals which are so much a part of travel, and clearly favoured by users. Photographs which convey positive interaction and community benefits can show the real impacts of work the companies are doing *and* connect with existing and potential customers.

Consumers are seen to play a significant role in engendering trust in brands in a crowded digital market, through positive comments, photos and videos about their experiences, so they should be encouraged to share more. This endorsement is magnified when reputation is at stake, with customers' support paying an invaluable role in crisis management. RT companies should use social media quickly, honestly and openly to deal with crises, and use trusted, responsible status to differentiate themselves, particularly where these are significant considerations, for example for young travellers. Businesses are eschewing the drier language of 'responsibility', describing instead what it means for travellers enjoying their holidays and communities benefitting from them, and it is clear conveying RT issues in this way is not a barrier to customer engagement. There is evidence of a shift from companies telling stories to customers telling stories, and this digital word-of-mouth should be encouraged. Guests are talking about the difference they experience travelling responsibly, so their blogs, videos and photographs demonstrating this should be shared more widely.

Travel is essentially a social experience and travellers love to talk about it. The research shows that through social media businesses can have proper conversations with their guests which are mutually beneficial, can build relationships to encourage repeat-bookings, and could feed back to better inform product development and overall marketing strategies. Finally, consumers will talk *about* you on social media, so being there to reply and engage is a responsible step for business to take.

Notes

1   Krippendorf (1987) *The Holiday Makers. Understanding the impact of leisure and travel*

2   Clapperton (2010) *This is Social Media: Tweet, Blog, Link And Post Your Way to Business Success*

3   Anderson (2008) *The long tail: why the future of business is selling less of more*

4   Experience Hitwise (2011) *Carpe diem - Seizing the moment in Social Media*

5   BBC (2012) Facebook surpasses one billion users as it tempts new markets

6   Mashable (2012) http://mashable.com/2012/03/21/happy-6th-birthday-twitter/

7   ITU (2011) *Measuring the Information Society 2011*

8   WTM (2011) *WTM 2011 Industry Report*

9   Gigaom (2012) Study: Pinterest drives more referral traffic than Google+, nearly on par with Twitter

10 ITB (2011) *ITB World Travel Trends Report 2011-2012*

11 Discover Dominica (2012) Dominica embraces social media networks to entice travellers

12 Kwak et al (2010) What is Twitter, a Social Network or a News Media?

13 BBC (2012) #getmehome: Social media and stranded travellers

14 Experian Hitwise (2011) *Carpe diem - Seizing the moment in Social Media*

15 TheRealTimeReport (2012) http://therealtimereport.com/2012/09/14/social-networking-stats-instagram-tops-100-million-users-rltm-scoreboard/

16 Gigaom (2012) Ibid.

17 Ragan.com (2012) How Lonely Planet juggles social media channels with success

18 Youtube (2012) http://www.youtube.com/t/faq

19 Solis (2008) *New Communication Theory and the New Roles for the New World of Marketing*

20 Font (2009) *Responsible Tourism Marketing*

21 Edelman (2012) *Edelman Trust Barometer Findings*

22 Allsop, Bassett & Hopkins (2007) *Word-of-Mouth Research: Principles and Applications*

23 Weber (2009) *Marketing to the Social Web*

24 Porter et al (2012) *How to Foster and Sustain Engagement in Virtual Communities*

25 Mintel (2011) Two thirds of consumers fail to click with unengaged social media advertising

26 Weber (2009) Ibid.

27 Qualman (2009) *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business*

28 Briggs (2010) *Social Media's Second Act: Toward Sustainable Brand Engagement*

29 Font (2010) *Keep it real - market and communicate your credentials*

30 LinkedIn (2012) *How can we consider a Certification of Sustainable Tourism as marketing tool?*

31 Goodwin (2003) *Ethical and responsible tourism: Consumer Trends in the UK*

The 2012 Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards

Harold Goodwin, Professor of Responsible Tourism Management in ICRETH at Leeds Metropolitan University, Chair of the Judges of the Virgin Holiday Responsible Tourism Awards

The Responsible Tourism Awards were launched in 2004, and since 2007 they have been sponsored by Virgin Holidays[1]. This is the ninth set of Awards and competition remains strong, although some categories are more fiercely contested than others. The Awards are announced each year on World Responsible Tourism Day at World Travel Market. The purpose of the Awards is to encourage people to take responsibility for making tourism more sustainable; to use tourism to benefit local people; and to conserve their natural and cultural heritage.

The announcement of the Awards in the *Metro* and on the Awards website is followed by an awareness campaign as the organisers use a variety of networks to encourage consumers, and those in the industry, to nominate examples of good practice for the judges to consider. This activity, and the publication of the results each year, contributes to spreading the message about Responsible Tourism.

Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable, addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Responsible Tourism Awards, like the World Travel Market's World Responsible Tourism Day,[2] use the 2002 Cape Town Declaration as its definition of what Responsible Tourism means: it is about making "better places for people to live in and for people to visit"[3], in that order.

Details of the categories, winners and highly commended for each year since 2004 can be found on the Awards website[4] . The Awards are not an accreditation scheme, and they are not about certifying an organisation as responsible. The Awards are about recognising responsible practice and explaining why the judges chose to recognise them from amongst those who were nominated, we rely on others to nominate. If businesses are not nominated, and if they do not return the substantial questionnaire all those long-listed are sent, then they cannot be considered for an Award. We are looking for examples in each category that will excite interest and help us to drive the agenda forward, we particularly look for examples which will inspire and which are replicable.

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1   They were previously sponsored by First Choice Holidays

2   www.wtmwrtd.com

3   www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/whatRT.html, www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html

4   www.responsibletravel.com/awards/categories

The judges aim to celebrate innovation, to inspire change in the industry, and to recognise organisations that demonstrate best practice. We, the judges and the organisers, want the Awards to be the place to share stories about those organisations leading the way in Responsible Tourism. Some idea of the scale of the operation can be gained from the following statistics that also show how much the awards have grown. In 2004 there were around 700 nominations in 2012 there were 1,397, for 570 unique organisations. In 2004, 107 were long-listed, in 2012, 210 long-listed individuals and organisations were sent questionnaires, 114 completed questionnaires were returned.

We look for examples of Responsible Tourism in practice that have some, or all, of the following characteristics:

- Demonstrate the application of Responsible Tourism in taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable across the triple bottom line, addressing economic, social and environmental issues.

- Credible evidence of having exercised responsibility based on the questionnaires we send out to all those who make the long-list and the references that we take up

- Novelty –we want organisations with original ideas, innovative approaches to solving problems in sustainable tourism, and unique initiatives that drive the Responsible Tourism agenda forward.

- A track record – proven results, demonstrable achievements illustrated with real data, well recorded metrics and detailed information about investment of time, effort and resources in Responsible Tourism initiatives.

- Replicability – practices and initiatives that are inspirational and have the potential to be applied elsewhere, adaptable concepts and ideas that could have an impact beyond their own business.

- Local focus – Responsible Tourism is not limited to a tick list of key requirements, we are interested in practices that address local issues and provide solutions with the local community in mind.

The Judges have no knowledge of the sponsorship arrangements each year and they are not recompensed for their time or their travel expenses. They are genuinely independent volunteers and they come from a wide range of backgrounds, embodying a considerable range of expertise:

Chair: Harold Goodwin, Professor of Responsible Tourism Management in ICRETH at Leeds Metropolitan University

Justin Francis,Managing Director and co-founder of Responsibletravel.com

Graeme Gourlay, Owner, Circle Publishing

Dr Rebecca Hawkins, Considerate Hoteliers Association, CESHI

Debbie Hindle, Managing Director, Four bgb

Sue Hurdle, Chief Executive, The Travel Foundation

Fiona Jeffery, Chairman of World Travel Market

Ian Reynolds, Chairman at Family Travel Association and Citybond Holdings Plc, former Chief Executive ABTA

Lisa Scott, Travel Editor, Metro

Jonathan Smith, Conservationist

John de Vial, Director of ABTA, The Travel Association, Travelife and The Travel Foundation

Mark Watson, Executive Director of Tourism Concern

Nikki White, Head of Destinations and Sustainability, ABTA

We seek nominations from the public and the industry. The nomination process is an open one, but only those nominated can be considered for an Award, and then only if they make the substantial effort required to complete the questionnaire they are sent. There are six stages in the process:

1   In April each year nominations are sought.

2   Members of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism5 research all the nominations – they determine a long-list. Like the judges they too are unpaid volunteers.

3   Long-listed businesses and individuals are then asked to complete a long questionnaire and provide referees.

4   In pairs the judges then review those long-listed nominations for which questionnaires have been completed. Each pair of judges makes recommendations for two categories.

5   On the judging day, in September, there is debate around the table about the recommendations made by the judges to the judging panel and a collective decision is reached.

6   Where there are particular concerns or uncertainties, the judges undertake a further stage of due diligence.

Obviously some categories are stronger than others but we persevere with categories that only have small numbers of entrants, because we are seeking to drive the agenda for change. In many categories competition is stiff. This reflects the change that has accelerated in the last five years. This makes it more challenging for the judges to select the inspirational stories that best serve as an example for the industry.

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5   www.icrtourism.org

Small and large businesses win every year. Where a business or organisation is nominated for a second time they will only be awarded if they have made significant progress since the last time they were awarded.

In 2012 the judges decided to make 32 Awards and on the judging day created a new category: Best Innovation.[6] This year there are winners and highly commended from 18 countries: Australia, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, The Gambia, Kenya, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Slovenia, South Africa, the UK and the USA.

There has been interest from winners, journalists, those who have entered and been unsuccessful, and others about the reasons for the judges' decisions. The judges can only award from amongst those who are nominated, and who make the time and effort to complete our extensive paperwork. We know that this is an onerous task. Competition in many of the categories is stiff and often the differences between the winners and highly commended, and the others who reached the final stage of the judging process, are relatively small.

Here I have sought, on behalf of the judges, to indicate what gave the edge, and the Award, to the winners and highly commended in 2012.

1 Best in responsible transport

Awarded to an airline, train, ferry or cruise operator, or other transport initiative with an innovative approach to managing environmental and cultural impacts.

Winners: Big Lemon Bus Company, UK and Green Tomato Cars, UK and Australia

This year the judges decided to award two winners in this category, partly because there were a number of strong nominations and applications this year, but also to reflect the importance of taking responsibility for reducing carbon emissions in the provision of both public and personal transport.

The Big Lemon Bus Company[7]

The Big Lemon Bus Company, founded in 2007, is a social enterprise[8] which carries 380,000 passengers per year on its services. It runs public bus services, bus and coach hire, a festival coach service and a waste cooking oil collection service. All their vehicles run on biodiesel from locally sourced waste cooking oil, much of which they collect

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6   See Category 14: innovation, below

7   www.thebiglemon.com

8   It is a registered CIC, a community interest company. The business is owned by members of the community, many of which are staff at The Big Lemon

themselves in Brighton and Hove. The judges were impressed by the clarity and breadth of their core community service proposition, expressed on their website: "We will use your oil to power our buses, saving CO_2 emissions, reducing waste, providing local jobs, giving people affordable transport and contributing to a happier, healthier future for us all."

The services provided by the Big Lemon are funded almost entirely from their trading activity; profits are re-invested in the businesses services for the benefit of the community. The judges were impressed by Big Lemon's holistic approach to the sustainability of its business activities and its self-reliance. The headline proposition is running on waste cooking oil, but they are also thorough in their approach to composting, local sourcing, recycling and reuse, all their office furniture is pre-loved waste furniture.[9] They run a book swap on the buses to encourage the re-use of books, it is planned to extend this to clothes. On the first Sunday of each month, travel on The Big Lemon is free, passengers are asked for donations to the *Give Something Back* fund, half of which goes to the staff social fund and half to a local community project voted for by passengers and friends.

Green Tomato Cars[10] UK

Founded in 2006, Green Tomato Cars in London has grown to become the second largest private hire, pre-booked taxi service in the capital.[11] The growth demonstrates that there is demand for a green approach to private hire and taxi services in London and that both companies and individuals express their preference by purchasing this more sustainable service. The consumer proposition is clear: because Green Tomato Cars uses low emitting vehicles customers can be confident that they are getting from A to B in the greenest way possible short of using public transport, cycling or walking. The judges were impressed by the leadership being exercised by Green Tomato Cars, this will continue in 2013 when they add 100 more cars to their fleet; Electric Vehicles and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles, both with zero exhaust pipe emissions.

With a fleet of 300 vehicles on the road Green Tomato Cars emit 238.4 g/mile less than an average black cab. Over the 18 months from January 2011 to June 2012 the Green Tomato cars travelled over 5 million miles saving an estimated 1,300 tonne of emissions. Green Tomato Cars has exerted leadership in the industry with new firms offering similar services over the last two years.[12] Green Tomato Cars use the Prius which emits

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9   To download a copy of their sustainability policy: www.thebiglemon.com/pdfs/The Big Lemon Sustainability Policy December 2011.pdf

10 www.greentomatocars.com, www.twitter.com/greentomatocars

11 Since November 2010 it has become a wholly owned subsidiary of the Veolia Transdev Group, the world's largest sustainable transport company.

12 Carrot Cars (www.carrotcars.co.uk) and Broccoli Cars (www.broccolicars.com/Fleet.html) in London; and Green Bean Cars (www.greenbeancars.co.uk) in Leeds.

no particulate matter or nitrous oxides, significantly contributing to improvements in air quality in London. Green Tomato Cars offset double the amount of CO_2 they emit, they are currently supporting a project in Brazil which switches ceramics factories from using heavy fuel oil to renewable biomass and waste products.

Highly Commended: Grand Canyon Railway, USA[13]

When Xanterra Parks & Resorts acquired the Grand Canyon Railway in 2007, the logistics of operating a fleet of steam and diesel locomotives within the company's sustainability guidelines presented major challenges. Each steam train round trip consumed 12,000 gallons of water, 1,200 of diesel and petroleum-based lubricants. In 2009, Grand Canyon Railway put the old steam engines 29 and 4960 back into service using 100-percent renewable waste vegetable oil collected from their restaurants at the Grand Canyon, and eliminating engine idling, a reduction in carbon emissions of 26,856 pounds per train trip has been achieved. Since 2008 Grand Canyon Railway has reduced diesel, water, and overall fossil-fuel consumption by 51%, 61%, and 34.6%. Water conservation strategies have included rainwater and snowmelt harvesting to avoid depleting the aquifer, and reusing treated waste water to generate steam. By implementing a Chemical Management Control Program, the railway has banned F-listed chlorinated solvents used for cleaning resulting in a 98% decrease of hazardous waste generation.

Highly Commended: New Forest Tour, UK[14]

The New Forest Tour is a network of four open top buses operating two circular routes in the New Forest National Park. The New Forest Tour operates between June and October and is instrumental in reducing congestion in the New Forest and stimulating economic growth, whilst providing a unique and memorable visitor experience for its customers. The New Forest Tour[15] is funded through a combination of revenue from ticket sales and income from strategic marketing partnerships with tourism businesses in the New Forest National Park. Many initiatives taken to establish public transport in national parks fail, but in the New Forest, between the years 2006 and 2011, the number of operating days has increased from 100 to 130 and the average number of passengers per day from 90 to 259. Roughly 50% of New Forest Tour customers arrive at the point at which they join the Tour by private car. If it is assumed that had they had not joined the New Forest Tour, they would have made a journey of equivalent length by private car, and assuming an average group size of two[16] this amounts to a saving of approximately 147,000 miles.

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13   www.thetrain.com; www.facebook.com/grandcanyonrailway

14   www.thenewforesttour.info; www.facebook.com/newforesttour

15   The service is operated by bus operators Bluestar and Wilts & Dorset, and is delivered in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority.

16   An assumption supported by previous research

2   Best tour operator for promoting responsible tourism

Awarded to a tour operator with an innovative approach to educating and inspiring travellers about their responsible tourism policies and practices, issues in their destination, and what they can do to be a responsible traveller

Winner: Explore, UK[17]

Explore was the winner of the 'Best Tour Operator' category in the Virgin Responsible Tourism Awards in 2008 and Highly Commended in the awards in 2005. The judges were impressed by the thoroughness of Explore's approach to placing Responsible Tourism principles at the core of its business model. They employ local leaders and guides, and use small, local and family-run hotels, restaurants and facilities wherever possible. This benefits the local community economically at the same time as ensuring that their customers have a more authentic travel experience.

Explore were able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the judges that they have campaigned against the road being built through the Serengeti, offset all international flights for customers and staff, briefed customers to avoid littering beaches and trails, and briefed agents not to anchor, and customers not to stand, on reefs whilst snorkelling. On their tours in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam, they provide a 20 litre cask of potable water which is filled up regularly so that customers can re-fill their own water bottles without having to buy new plastic bottles of water. In November Explore began to operate again to Myanmar after a 16-year absence. They do not use junta-owned hotels, flights or other services and they minimise traveller contact with the government as much as possible.

Explore were also able to demonstrate that they are engaging their travellers in their Responsible Tourism approach helping them to understand better what they do and how they can get involved. Their Responsible Tourism pages give information to customers about how they can make their trips more responsible both before and during their trip, as well as when they return home. They have successfully piloted 'RT cards' on their tours in India, given to customers at the beginning of their tour, the cards outline what they can do to help the local community and environment that they are visiting. They also engage with post-graduate tourism training and organise an Explore Goes Green Day to engage Explore staff, agents, suppliers and travellers all over the world.

Highly Commended: None

The judges looked closely at the other nominations and completed application forms in this category and reluctantly decided that no other operator had demonstrated in the

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17   www.explore.co.uk

application form that they had done enough to merit an award. Many of the applications reported initiatives directly connected with the preservation of their product, which, although laudable in themselves, are in their obvious business interests to support. The judges have looked for initiatives that "go the extra mile", which we would not normally expect a company in their market, or of their size or nature to do. The judges were not convinced that any of the other applicants had achievements significant enough to merit an award. Surprisingly, given the focus of the award this year on issues in their destination and what travellers can do to be a responsible traveller, the judges felt that few companies made the most of the communications section of their applications and some misinterpreted this as an opportunity to report the ways in which they had been congratulated on their achievements in Responsible Tourism by their clients and communities.

3　Best engagement with people and cultures

Awarded to a tourism organisation with an inspiring approach to protecting, conserving and promoting the cultural heritage and traditions of local people.

Winner: South Nottingham College[18] in Partnership with the Institute of Travel and Tourism of The Gambia[19]

The Gambia is often seen as a traditional cheap winter sun destination six hours flying time from northern Europe, but it is a great deal more than that. The Gambia has sunshine, it has little built cultural heritage, it has very good bird watching but none of the traditional game parks; what it has in abundance is a rich living cultural heritage, friendly people who enjoy engaging with tourists, it is this opportunity for engagement with the cultures of The Gambia that accounts for the high level of repeat visits. The judges were impressed by the strength of the partnership between South Nottingham College and the Institute of Travel and Tourism of The Gambia (ITTOG). Like all good partnerships it is based on mutual respect, shared values and reciprocity.

The relationship has grown since 2000 into the partnership that is ITTOG. South Nottingham College provides courses at ITTOG and played a major role in securing its establishment, winning the endorsement of the Gambian Training Authority and developing the curriculum and staffing. The curriculum team's strategy of directly involving students in the charity work[20] undertaken in Gambia and in this way delivering unique, aspirational and innovative education around responsible and sustainable travel and tourism, has contributed to the success. The judges were impressed by the way in which the partnership between South Nottingham College and

18　www.snc.ac.uk/Gambia

19　www.ittog.org

20　http://www.globalinaction.co.uk

ITTOG has delivered benefits for both organisations and their students. The partnership has helped to deliver better results for students in both Nottinghamshire and The Gambia. This is a unique, although replicable, programme using vocational education and training in Responsible Tourism to develop the aspirations of young people to do their bit in making the world a better place. It brings socio-economic and cultural benefits to The Gambia and to Nottingham, a city ranked 20th worst in England and Wales on the index of multiple deprivation.

Highly Commended Siraj Centre, Palestine

The Siraj Center[21] for Holy Land Studies is a Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People. It's vision is to "enhance the image of Palestine as a safe destination for responsible experiential tourism, and not only as a pilgrimage destination, by increasing the number of conscientious visitors coming to Palestine…. our aspirations also involve impacting both local hosts and visitors through intercultural exchanges and life-enriching experiences at the grassroots level, as well as increasing economic benefits to people living in rural communities." [22]An accredited tourist and travel agency the Siraj Centre is part of the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism[23] (PIRT). Believing that both tourists and hosts can be enriched by human encounters through tourism, PIRT seeks to transform current tourism patterns in the Holy Land by encouraging pilgrims and tourists to include Palestinian cities, towns and villages in their itineraries to meet the Palestinian people and learn about their culture in order to achieve a more equal distribution of tourism revenues. Founded in 1990 the Siraj Centre had 367 guests in 2011. Pioneers of tourism they have developed walking and biking routes, volunteering, home stays, and exchanges between locals and visitors contributing to re-branding Palestine as a destination for experiential travel and human connection, they work with 140+ communities.

Highly Commended Uptuyu Adventures, Western Australia[24]

Founded in 2002, Uptuyu Adventures is about "travelling with your mates" – about sharing the Aboriginal heritage with travellers and tourists. They offer the opportunity to take the photo of a tree and to understand what it is about, what it means.[25] Uptuyu Adventures is a small operator; it carried 100 guests in 2011, offering a "designer tour[26] … the opportunity to have a true outback Kimberley experience with an authentic Aboriginal flavour."[27] In 2010 Uptuyu formed a joint venture partnership with

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21 www.sirajcenter.org

22   www.sirajcenter.org

23 www.pirt.ps

24 http://www.uptuyu.com.au

25 www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0LGWEZJgRI

26 "your experience and chosen route of travel is Uptuyu"

27 http://www.uptuyu.com.au/

Aboriginal community owned Oongkalkada Wilderness Camp which provides a venue for cultural training, and hosting services for meetings and events. Uptuyu events at Oongkalkada provides for cultural inclusion in a location that has traditionally been used for training, trading, healing and decision making for many thousands of years. The partnership has created a culturally approved revenue base for the Oongkalkada Community and enabled land title to be granted to the traditional custodians, the wilderness camp and cultural training centre create opportunities for new micro industries to emerge out of the community and allow for more families to return to traditional country and practice their culture.

4   Best destination for conserving and presenting architectural heritage

Awarded to a tourism destination, heritage site or attraction that protects and promotes built cultural heritage.

Winner: St Kilda[28], Scotland, UK

The National Trust for Scotland owns and manages the St Kilda archipelago with the primary management objective of conserving the island's outstanding heritage. St Kilda, the remotest part of the British Isles in is Scotland's Outer Hebrides. Originally inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list for its natural heritage in 1986 its cultural heritage was listed in 2005. The village was abandoned in 1930 by the remaining 36 islanders when life on St Kilda became unsustainable and the buildings rapidly fell into disrepair. Between 2008 and 2010 the National Trust for Scotland, who own the island, carried out a sympathetic restoration refurbishing the manse as a visitor centre providing staff accommodation, office space, a shop and public toilets.

This is an excellent of using tourism to maintain the integrity of the natural and cultural heritage of a very special place, a place that needs to be managed to ensure that non-native species are not introduced and that climbing on the sea stacks does not disturb the nesting birds. The annual maintenance includes the re-tarring of roofs, lime washing of the manse and Factor's House, maintaining open field drains and re-turfing cleit roofs. There are over 1300 cleits (storehouses) and several kilometres of wall, maintained over the past 50 years by around 200,000 hours of labour contributed by people on working holidays. There are no tourism businesses based in St Kilda, but visitor number has grown from 1,978 in 2007 to 3,107 in 2011 and tourism to the islands makes a significant contribution to the economy of the Western Isles. The judges saw the National Trust for Scotland's work in St Kilda as a good example of the contribution which tourism can make to the maintenance of built cultural heritage in remote areas.

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28   www.kilda.org.uk

Highly Commended: Liverpool,[29] UK

Liverpool is by contrast a densely populated urban area with about 30 million visitors per year. The Management Plan for Liverpool's World Heritage Site[30] seeks to manage it as an exemplary demonstration of sustainable development and heritage-led regeneration, and to ensure sustainable access for all. Liverpool has the largest Heritage Open Days programme in the country outside London, with over 70 venues and organisations across the city involved in the 2012 programme which has been extended to a Heritage Open Month. Liverpool's conservation estate extends beyond the World Heritage Site to 2,500 plus listed buildings, 36 conservation areas, 10 historic parks and gardens, amounting to 10% of Liverpool's built environment. Liverpool City Council has put aside of £4.6 million of public funding to encourage owners of historic buildings to conserve them and bring them back into beneficial use. The Council has taken pro-active approach to dealing with Buildings at Risk resulting in a substantial decline in the number of buildings at risk from 13% of the listed buildings to 4%, this is below the national average. A survey in 2008 showed that Liverpool's World Heritage Site status was an important or very important factor in the decision to come to Liverpool for 72% of the visitors. The visitor economy has played a significant role in maintaining Liverpool's rich architectural heritage.

5   Best carbon reduction initiative.

Awarded to an organisation or programme with a replicable and inspiring approach to reducing the carbon intensity of travel.

Winner: Sawadee Reizen,[31] Netherlands

Sawadee Reizen is part of the PEAK Adventure Group, carrying 8,000 passengers per year on 150 trips worldwide. Sawadee has recognised that climate change is an urgent issue and that the tourism industry is both impacted by climate change and is a growing contributor to the problem. The judges were impressed by the clarity of Sawadee's understanding of the issue, their acceptance that tourism contributes to the problem, and their willingness to begin to address the issue of their carbon pollution. Sawadee chose to work with NHTV's[32] Centre for Sustainable Tourism & Transport (CSTT), one of the world's leading centres of expertise on tourism and climate change to identify Sawadee's carbon footprint (CF). The bulk of Sawadee trip carbon emissions are produced by origin-destination transport (81%), followed by accommodation (11%) and local transport (8%).

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29   www.liverpool.gov.uk , www.visitliverpool.com

30   www.liverpoolworldheritage.com

31   www.sawadee.nl

32   Breda University of Applied Sciences (NHTV)

Using the financial year 2010 as a baseline, Sawadee has established a target of reducing its average CF per pax per day by 6% by the financial year 2014, and is using the independent experts at NHTV's CSTT to undertake the auditing. Sawadee is moving from using indirect to direct flights, reducing the number of domestic flights used during trips, spending more days in destinations with lower carbon footprints, increasing the length of trips and encouraging extensions to reduce carbon pollution per day, and using the train to reach hub airports rather than flying to them. Sawadee have identified that changing to direct "point-to-point" flights as the most effective way of reducing the carbon footprints of trips, reducing carbon emissions by an average of 10%. The judges were also pleased to see that Sawadee's initiative has resulted in a shared project engaging with other Dutch tour operators to introduce a carbon-label across a number of brands.

Highly Commended: Beechenhill Farm,[33] UK

Beechenhill Farm is an organic dairy farm in the Peak District National Park with two en-suite B&B rooms, two self-catering cottages; and a restored Hay Barn for weddings and courses. The farm also offers renewable technology demonstration days. They have reduced their carbon footprint from 41 to 14.4 tonnes (by 64.8%) over the last three years whilst the business has continued to grow. This has been achieved by installing low energy lighting, solar photo–voltaic panels and a pellet biomass boiler. They collect guests from the local railway station, hire out electric bikes and have an electric car charging point. Their next projects are to install a small-scale bio-digester and scale up their educational efforts to run three Pilot Light Demonstration Days per year to encourage more renewable technology to be used in the Peak District. This is a small family business making a difference themselves and encouraging others to follow their lead.

Highly Commended: ITC Sonar[34], Kolkata, India

This is a large hotel, or Business Resort, in an urban area offering responsible luxury to over 400,000 tourists and day visitors each year. It was first hotel in the world to be registered by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for Carbon Emission Reductions. ITC Sonar has reduced its energy consumption through smart design, the use of low energy appliances, highly efficient ventilation and renewable energy within a management system that uses sub-metering and daily monitoring to drive carbon reduction. Over the last five years they have reduced carbon emissions by 5,368 tons of carbon dioxide, and their plan is to continue to reduce carbon emissions at 5% per annum.

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33   www.beechenhill.co.uk
34   www.itchotels.in

6   Best accommodation for local communities

Awarded to a hotel, lodge or other accommodation with a positive impact on the local supply chain and local people.

Three very different properties demonstrate what can be achieved by businesses that take seriously their responsibilities to the communities in which they are located.

Winner Soria Moria,[35] Cambodia

Soria Moria Boutique Hotel, with 38 rooms, opened at Angkor Wat in 2007, and had more than 3,000 guests in 2011. Soria Moria was founded and established by Kristin Holdø Hansen, who still works at the hotel as the Educator and Sustainability Adviser, and Ken Oishi, the investor who made it possible. Soria Moria only employs local staff. Their training programme is designed to develop their careers; all department heads are locals. All the staff have personal accident insurance and are members of the National Social Security Fund. The hotel also provides training places for disadvantaged young adults, 16 to 21 years of age, who are paid a per-hour salary based on a normal full-time salary for their respective positions. The Soria Moria Higher Education Programme also currently supports nine students at Bachelors level and three at Masters level.

The judges were impressed by the innovative Employee Ownership Scheme through which the local employees have become partners and majority owners of the business, with 51% of the shares. The share ownership is determined based on seniority and responsibilities in the hotel. Through their share ownership the employees are able to participate in decision-making, this mechanism effectively empowers locals through responsibility and ownership; and they share in any profits made. The ambition is to build a successful business model that can be replicated elsewhere. To maximise the social impacts the long-term objective is to transfer the remaining 49% of the business to the local employees. The Soria Moria has many staff biographies on the website – a refreshing acknowledgment of their importance to the business and the guest experience.[36]

Highly Commended: Bulungula Lodge[37], South Africa

Bulungula Lodge is on the Wild Coast of South Africa, with ten huts (five doubles and five small dormitories). The community of Nqileni village owns 40% of the lodge and is an integral part of daily life there. As they say on the website "No fences, no crime, no beggars, no hassles, just friendly smiles. Take a walk around the village at any time of the day or night and you'll be invited into the mud huts for a drink and a

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35   http://thesoriamoria.com

36   http://thesoriamoria.com/about-us/the-soria-moria-team/

37   www.bulungula.com

chat."[38] The Lodge has helped a number of local community-owned businesses start up[39] horse-riding, canoeing, fishing, guiding, baking, sewing, cooking, wood-carving and the iLanga Fire Restaurant which is reputed to have the best sweet and savoury pancakes in Africa. Two women from the village have been professionally trained as masseuses and offer luxurious full body and Indian head massages. The lodge has created permanent employment for 24 people and there are 13 community owned tourism businesses creating livelihoods for 30 people, all this in area which before the founding of the lodge offered no employment opportunities. There are other welfare and health impacts to. For example, 53% of households have lost at least one baby to diarrhoea in the past, but now that the lodge provides clean drinking water for the village, there have been no further baby deaths.

Highly Commended La Villa Bethany,[40] India

La Villa Bethany is located at Landour and at 7,000ft it offers striking views of the Garhwal Himalaya. An old colonial cottage with seven rooms offering boutique homestays, close to the tourism hub of Mussoorie . Founded in 2011 the Villa has had 300, mainly long stay, guests. The objective was to conserve the colonial heritage and to employ and train underprivileged local youths. La Villa Bethany trained and now employs eight young men and women, literate and illiterate, who now have the skills required in the hospitality industry. La Villa Bethany is committed to use only local resources and developing local talent through training. All the materials used for renovating and refurbishing the property were locally sourced, and wherever possible furnishings and guest supplies are procured from local co-operatives working with women who are widows, destitute or abandoned by families. La Villa Bethany supports three independent taxi service providers who are local, vegetables, fruits and dairy products are sourced locally and they encourage guests to venture into the Landour Bazaar and Suakholi, a nearby village, to buy local handicrafts.

7   Best accommodation for the environment

Awarded to a hotel, lodge or accommodation run with a positive impact on the environment and biodiversity.

Winner Song Saa Private Island[41], Cambodia

Located in the Koh Rong archipelago in Cambodia, Song Saa, was founded in 2006 and has 3,500 guests annually. Song Saa was identified by one of its referees as "one of

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38   www.bulungula.com

39   For details of the incubator see www.bulungulaincubator.org

40   www.lavillabethany.com

41   www.songsaa.com

the only examples of a company seeking to integrate biodiversity conservation, research and protection in to a business model in Cambodia, and the only example from the marine environment"[42] Song Saa's strapline is "luxury that treads lightly" and in pursuit of this ambition the resort operates to a detailed Sustainable Management Plan which details both the issues and the management response. The management approach is based on the avoidance, remedying and mitigation of adverse impacts and these are identified for marine and fresh water, land, biodiversity, waste management, energy and staff and guest interaction with the environment. The judges were impressed by their thorough and holistic approach to ensuring environmental sustainability through annual conservation plans implemented by a five-strong conservation and community team.

Song Saa has created artificial reef structures to support the rehabilitation and growth of coral reef and a coral garden research programme, promoted hornbill conservation, and created a research and learning incubator for domestic and international graduate research students. The judges were particularly interested in a pioneering initiative to promote a blue carbon sequestration project using sea grass and mangroves. The Sala Song Saa, the Song Saa School, provides environmental and agricultural education on the environment and agriculture for local people living in the Prek Svay Basin and youth training on organic soil husbandry. Song Saa has also supported local families in developing small-scale irrigation systems, providing seeds and educational workshops on organic vegetable growing.

Highly Commended: Bohinj Park Eco Hotel[43], Slovenia

The Bohinj Park Hotel is a 5* property in the Triglav National Park. Opened in 2009 it has 20,000 guests per year. The hotel is thermally insulated and is heated with geothermal energy, also used to heat the water used in the hotel, as the geothermal water cools it is used for flushing sanitation. Waste hot water from showers and washbasins passes through heat exchangers where the energy is extracted and used for heating in winter and cooling in the summer. The hotel uses low energy light bulbs and floor heating and cooling-heating grids. In 2010 the Bohinj Park Eco Hotel initiated the "Green weekend in Bohinj" where all accommodations in the region joined together and offered 10% of their rooms as free accommodation to those guests and visitors who took part in cleaning rivers, grass, woods, pathways in the region. The local tourist organisation now manages the event.[44]

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42   Confidential reference from the country programme officer of an international conservation NGO.

43   www.phb.si/eng/

44   www.cipra.org/en/alpmedia/events/3922/

Highly Commended Maliba Mountain Lodge,[45] Lesotho

Founded in 2008 the lodge is located in the Ts'ehlanyane National Park. It is a 5* mountain retreat set in a pristine sub-alpine wilderness valley deep in the heart of Lesotho's mountains. The lodge was built on a rehabilitated site, originally a base-clearing site for the Katse Dam Water Project. The lodge assists the national park with fence relocation and maintenance, all black water is used to generate biogas and a botanical alpine garden has been created. The Maliba Trust, with the help of KZN Wildlife, Endangered Wildlife Trust and the community, has started a vulture restaurant[46] in the park, to assist in the protection, monitoring and conservation of vultures, particularly the Bearded Vulture, providing a valuable attraction for birders and photographers

8   Best in a mountain environment

Awarded to an organisation related to a mountain environment, such as an eco-friendly ski resort or a trip that contributes to the welfare of mountain porters.

Winner 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking and Empowering Women of Nepal [47] Nepal

Established in 1998 and with 1,000 clients each year, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking works with their sister organisation Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN) a local grassroots non-profit organization, focused on working through tourism in Nepal to gain, gender equality, the elimination of child labour, peace and responsible economic development. They are most active in remote areas of Western Nepal, focusing on community development through tourism. EWN is funded by 20% of the profits of 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking; the remainder is funded by individual donors, and grants. One of their referees, an international consultant who knows them well, commented that the three sisters "were able to perfectly combine profit and non-profit objectives and have by that set a strong example to other profit oriented companies as well as to the NGO's in Nepal."[48] The judges were impressed by their work to empower women and by their success in combining business and social goals.

In the trekking season EWN and 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking employs approximately 200 people, mostly women, local to the area in which they live. To address child labour issues EWN provide a home and education for girl children

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45   www.maliba-lodge.com

46   A vulture restaurant is an open place where dead carcasses of domestic and/or wild mammals are placed with the intention of providing a food source for vultures

47   www.3sistersadventure.com

48   Confidential reference from an independent, an very experienced, consultants who has audited the organisations twice in 2010 and 2012. He concluded "they are definitely one of the most impressive examples of responsible tourism I have seen… "

who would otherwise be working and a safe place to live and grow so that they can confidently return to their remote villages and share their education and skills. They also address the issues of child labour within our small lodge management training courses and guide and porter training. The judges were particularly impressed by the success of their guide training programme for women. Most of the trainees have been lower caste Dalits, over 1,700 beneficiaries now work within 3 Sisters Trekking, EWN or other organisations throughout Nepal, having benefitted from the training and empowerment courses giving them the confidence to move on in life and fulfill their dreams.[49]

Table 2: Female Trek Guide Training
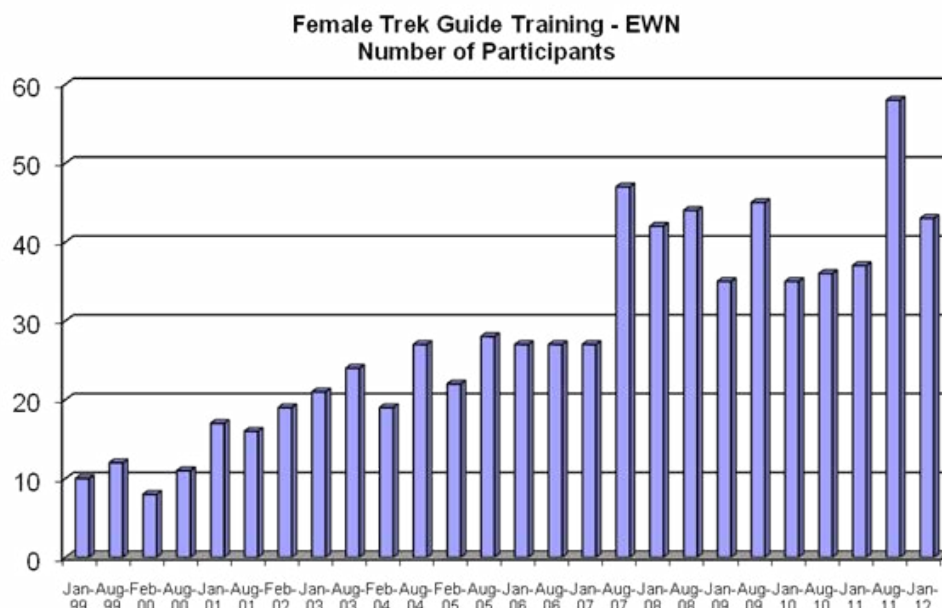
Highly Commended Ecocamp Patagonia,[50] Chile

Ecocamp Patagonia has been operating since 1999 and now hosts around 2,000 guests each season from September to April. It provides eco-friendly accommodation and guided tours in Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia. The camp was built on raised platforms to allow wild animals to pass through and flora to grow underneath the structures. Subtle solar powered lighting is used to illuminate the raised wooden walkways at night, and sightings of puma and other wildlife close to the camp at night attest to the success of this approach. The camp is constructed of domes made of galvanised iron, canvas and wood. In 2005 the camp was relocated within the park without leaving a trace. The Ecocamp uses only solar and hydro-electric power, it uses composting toilets which need to be heated to enable the micro-organisms to do their work, and all waste is recycled or composted. Over 80% of staff are from

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49 The judges were aware of the criticism of 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking which can be found on the web. We have subsequently carefully checked the specific complaints and are satisfied that 3 Sisters have an acceptable and credible response to the allegations and that this is not sufficient reason to reverse the decision of the judges made on the judging day.

50 www.ecocamp.travel

the neighbouring town Puerto Natales or the closest city Punta Arenas. Porters are employed as freelancers but they are paid above the national minimum wage and share in the tips with the guides. Their ambition is clearly stated: "EcoCamp takes care of its guests and the environment, recognising that both are essential to a successful Responsible Tourism outcome."[51]

9   Best in a marine environment

Awarded to an organisation related to a beach or other marine environment, such as turtle conservation or a marine eco-tourism trip.

Winner Moonraker Dolphin Swims,[52] Australia

Operating in Port Philip Bay, Moonraker Dolphin Swims, founded in 1990, offer the opportunity to swim with wild Bottlenose Dolphins and Australian Fur Seals. Port Philip Bay is a UNNESCO biosphere reserve, 90 minutes south of Melbourne, is one of Australia's last remaining homes for this genetically unique family of dolphins. With just over 150 of these Bottlenose Dolphins worldwide their conservation is of primary importance. Moonraker use a purpose built minimum impact vessel to offer visitors the opportunity to swim with the dolphins and the Australian Fur Seals in a carefully managed way. Moonraker has worked with the Dolphin Research Institute to develop codes to govern the interaction between humans and dolphins and fur seals. They have assisted in lobbying for regulatory reform of recreational boat traffic for the benefit of the seals and dolphins and helped with raising awareness of the water catchments and water runoff into Port Phillip Bay and the risks that this creates for the marine habitat and these charismatic species.

The judges recognised the work which Moonraker Dolphin Swims has done to educate the public, school children, local and visitors, about the importance of conserving both the habitat and the species and its significant contribution to fundraising to support the work of the Dolphin Research Institute; active engagement in the research and removal of rubbish including fishing lines from the sea; and the removal of the invasive and damaging Northern Pacific Sea Stars. The judges were particularly impressed by the contribution which field notes made by the crew and tour leaders make to the monitoring to the populations and their and health; and the strict operational rules which include having no more than ten guests in the water at any one time with the dolphins and that the boats only remain within 100m of the dolphins for a maximum of one hour per cruise.

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51   Quoted from their response to our questionnaire for the Awards.

52   www.moonrakercharters.com.au

Highly Commended blue o two,[53] Egypt

Blue o two won 'Best in a Marine Environment' in 2007 and were highly commended in 2008, they tell us that this "gave us a real boost and the focus we needed to come up with new campaigns and initiatives."[54] We recognised blue o two for its pioneering work on responsible diving. In May 2011, they signed an agreement with the UK shark and marine conservation charity, Bite-Back[55] pledging to collect £10,000 a year for the charity from clients on their Red Sea fleet. This was raised by levying 20 pence per air fill through their 'Breathe Life into the Oceans' campaign. In the first 12 months they raised more than the £10,000 target, raising £13,494 by August 2012. Their HAYAH Reef clean-up itineraries promoted as 'Not for profit... for the Red Sea' are subsidised, and each of the 156 places sold receives a subsidy of £300 from blue o two. They have run a re-usable water bottle campaign and provided private medical insurance for all staff.

10 Best for conservation of wildlife and habitats

Awarded to a group or initiative working for the conservation of wildlife and/or their local habitat, such as a national park or wildlife sanctuary.

Winner Huilo Huilo Biological Reserve,[56] Chile

We have seen a number of initiatives in Africa to return commercially exploited land to conservation. The judges were particularly pleased to receive information about Huilo, Huilo which since 2000 has conserved over 100,000 hectares of Patagonian temperate rainforest previously used for logging. The owners have fundamentally changed the way in which they, and the local community, secure a living from this large piece of Patagonian forest, moving from consumptive wood extraction to conservation and sustainable tourism. Now 80% of the local economy is thought to be reliant upon tourism and the land is protected by its Foundation status. 20% of the local economy is still dependent on forestry, but forestry is now only 10% of what it was in 2000. The judges were impressed by the scale of the transformation at Huilo Huilo, the contribution it has made to the conservation of the Huemul, an endangered deer that is the national symbol of Chile, and the development of lodges with tours and expeditions operated by local people.

Huilo Huilo addresses all three pillars of sustainability. It works to conserve the forest and particular species including the seriously endangered Patagonian Huemul and the Darwin Frog; it has worked with local people to ensure that those who used to make

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53 www.blueotwo.com

54 Supporting statement

55 www.bite-back.com/partners/blue-o-two/

56 www.huilohuilo.com & www.facebook.com/pages/Reserva-Biológica-Huilo-Huilo/184338561624584

their living from logging and timber are now able to earn a living from tourism[57]; Huilo, Huilo has been a catalyst for the creation of new enterprises creating opportunities for local people to create their own businesses[58] and fostering local culture through music and poetry workshops, two local festivals and the Ethno-Mapuche Route. Huilo Huilo is one of the founders of "Así Conserva Chile", an organization that involves the majority of the private protected areas and areas of indigenous people and which seeks to conserve these territories for the future generations.

Highly Commended

This year the judges were not able to find, within the applications received, a group or initiative which was sufficiently impressive in its achievement to be commendable having regard to those previously Highly Commended in this category.

11 Best for poverty reduction

Awarded to an organisation that acts to reduce poverty among communities.

Winner: Reality Tours and Travel,[59] Mumbai, India

There has been a good deal of criticism in the last year or two about slum tourism and rightly so, particularly where it is little more than voyeuristic exploitation. Reality Tours demonstrates that it is possible to enable tourists to visit a slum in India in a more responsible way. Established in 2005, Reality Tours had 10,000 guests last year. They offer city and village tours in Mumbai and beyond, this award is for their educational Dharavi Slum Tours which are offered in order to raise social awareness and to break down the negative image many people have towards slums. Reality Tours highlight both the industrial and residential areas of Dharavi, one of Asia's biggest slums, to show the strengths, opportunities, challenges and issues of this very unique community.

They donate 80% of post-tax profits to their sister NGO, Reality Gives[60] (which provides educational programmes for residents of Dharavi and supports a number of micro-enterprise and community initiatives including sports, beekeeping, and youth empowerment programmes). Their purpose is to raise social awareness and break down the negative image many people have towards slums. Guided by residents, the tourists and have the opportunity to purchase honey and candles and visit enterprises and community centres. Through their community work funded by Reality Gives they have provided English classes to 142 young adults, trained 17 local women to become

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57 90% of Huilo, Huilo's employees are locals.

58 For example, beekeeping, chocolate confectionary, embroidery, wood carving and rustic furniture

59 www.realitytoursandtravel.com, www.realitytoursandtravel.com/facebook , www.youtube.com/user/realitygives

60 Reality Gives India is a registered NGO with the number 1704, under the Mumbai Societies Registration Act, 1860. In the UK www.realitycaresuk.org

teachers, supported a kindergarten graduating 131 students, and provided English classes in a local school for a total of 250 students in the first year of the programme.

The judges were particularly impressed by the way in which Krishna Pujari and Chris Wray have established a successful local tour operation with strong social values and combined that with charities in India and the UK funded by profits from their tour operation and donations from their guests and their friends. They not only run their own Reality Gives' Youth Empowerment Program, Muskaan Kindergarten, Curriculum Development, Project Front Foot Cricket Program, English Language Support Program and activities at the Ashayen Community Centre they also recognise that they can achieve more by working with others and mobilizing funding support for them. The judges were really impressed by this fully integrated approach to realising the social purpose of using tourism to raise awareness of the reality of slum life, good and bad, and to raise money from their business and their customers to assist the community in Dharavi to develop. They have developed a form of Responsible Tourism that deserves to be adapted and replicated elsewhere; for this reason, as well as their own substantial achievements, they were selected by the judges as the 2012 **overall winners** of the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards.

Highly Commended Khaplu Palace,[61] Pakistan

In 2008 the judges selected the Shigar Fort restoration project as the winner in the conservation of cultural heritage category. The Khaplu Palace & Residence is the latest project to be completed by the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan, part of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture focuses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the Muslim world fostering community-based cultural heritage development. They have successfully combined conservation, restoration and re-use for tourism; and the rehabilitation of cultural crafts and historical assets. They have used an entrepreneurial approach, building capacity and developing skills aimed to enhance cultural and natural tourism, improving living conditions and reviving local pride and sense of identity. The restoration work at Khaplu has taken five years, building on previous experiences at Baltit, Altit and Shigar the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan has maximised the local economic impact and the judges were impressed by the detailed measurement and reporting of both the social and economic impacts of the restoration programme in the construction and operational phases. There is more detail than can be reported here but for example between 2006 and 2012 individuals from over 400 households in Khaplu were employed and trained in construction work and the hotel employs individuals from 35 households.

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61   http://serenagilgitbaltistan.com/?page_id=64 & www.akdn.org/pakistan_cultural_development.asp

Highly Commended: The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille,[62] Kenya

The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille, a joint venture between Regenesis Limited and the community's Kijabe Trust, started operations in 2005 and now has 500 guests per year. This is a high-end boutique lodge described on their website as "one of the foremost community-based conservation tourism properties on the continent, so "having fun, doing good" takes on new meaning too."[63] Supported by the African Wildlife Foundation the community has signed a 25 year agreement between themselves and Regenesis to manage its tourism business and its Conservancy. The judges were interested to see that at Ol Lentille the community has not let a concession, but on the contrary the community itself has designated and protects its conservation area. The community owns the fixed assets of the tourism business, as well as earning an income from it. A number of women's groups have started economic projects including an organized bead making project, an egg project and the building of the craft manyatta. The Ol Lentille Trust is a registered English charity and Kenyan NGO that attracts donations, principally from guests, and uses these funds for improvements to habitat, water provision, education, and healthcare in its neighbouring communities. The Trust has been able to fund the development of the first secondary school in the area with four classrooms and 87 pupils. Construction of a 20-bed Community Health Centre with elephant-proof fencing and solar power is underway. 85% of the funds for the poverty reduction programmes come from guest donations.

12 Best volunteering organisation

Awarded to an organisation offering volunteering opportunities, such as the chance to work on conservation or social projects.

In previous years the judges have focused on the ways in which volunteering organisations have handled the selection and placing or volunteers, the ways in which they ensure the safety of volunteers and communities and the nature of their relationships with the community where they place volunteers as well as the volunteer experience. This year the judges decided to focus on the impacts of the programmes, as it happens this year both of those recognised for the awards focus particularly on conservation.

Winner: Elephant Human Relations Aid,[64] Namibia

Founded in 2001, Elephant Human Relations Aid (EHRA) is a Namibian registered association without gain governed by a board of five directors without ownership or

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62 www.ol-lentille.com, www.ol-lentilletrust.org

63 www.ol-lentille.com

64 www.desertelephant.org

profit. EHRA was established to respond to escalating conflict between communal farmers in the north west Namibian desert and desert dwelling elephants, mainly occasioned by scarce water resources, and it remains highly focussed. It engages in educational and research work into elephant human conflict and its mitigation; assists the conservancies with game counts, game guard training and financial planning; and engages in mitigating the conflict practically through the construction of water installation protection walls, which help to elephant-proof the people's water supply. The judges were impressed by the scale of the impact of their work.

EHRA reports that in the areas where the elephants first came into conflict with local people there are no longer reports of conflict on water issues and there is evidence that reproduction rates in the elephant herds are recovering. EHRA estimates that they have reduced conflict by around 90% in the two main areas where elephants are resident, by using 850 volunteers to construct over 110 water point protection walls, securing the water and livelihoods of approximately 3,000 communal farmers in the desert**.**

Highly Commended: Biosphere Expeditions[65] UK, Germany, France, USA and Germany

Biosphere Expeditions is a non-profit organisation which takes paying volunteers to work on wildlife conservation in ten destinations. The judges were impressed by the success of their short-term, one and two week, volunteering programmes, the development of their local and international scholarship programme[66] now with 14 sponsored places which has created opportunities for local people to participate in the conservation work; and their work on the global marine database which they have developed based on data from their site monitoring in Malaysia, Musandam (Oman and UAE), Honduras and the Maldives. They have also successfully engaged volunteers to assist the development of their programme of conservation work from the UK.[67]

13 Best in responsible tourism writing

Awarded for an article or piece of writing making a unique and inspiring contribution to understanding issues in responsible tourism. Must have been published in the last two years.

Winner: *At Home with the Himba* by Emma Thomson[68], published in *Wanderlust*, February 2012

The judges particularly liked Emma Thomson's account of her homestay with the Himba and the makeover she had as she was re-dressed as a Himba woman. It is

65   www.biosphere-expeditions.org
66   www.biosphere-expeditions.org/scholarships
67   www.biosphere-expeditions.org/scholarships
68   www.ethomson.co.uk/#/himba-homestay/4561462269

colourful and engaging and without being preachy, explains why this more responsible form of tourism makes such a better tourist experience.

> "Until recently, interaction with tourists for the Himba – pastoralists from the arid Kunene region in northwest Namibia – was limited to an hour's bartering over handmade jewellery. A meeting which makes both sides uncomfortable and offers little opportunity for learning. Even worse, some communities have been experiencing problems with unofficial tour guides turning up unannounced with groups and walking into homesteads and taking pictures without permission and without offering food gifts or purchasing jewellery. Reliant on the sale of jewellery to buy sacks of pap (porridge) in town, the community is hard pressed to send them away. However, a new initiative by Kunene Tours & Safaris hopes to change that. Their new four-day homestay programme aims to return power to the village. They decide when they want guests and when they don't. It will provide not only a source of income, but also a means of preserving their way of life. Homestays revive pride in the traditional among younger generations that might otherwise been drawn to towns in search of work. For the visitor too, it's much more rewarding."

On the day before she leaves she is ogled by some tourists "for a brief moment, I catch a glimpse of life on the other side of the fence."

Highly Commended: *Search of the Alternative Palestine* by Gail Simmons[69], published on Al Jazeera English

Gail Simmons' piece draws attention to the importance of bringing more tourists to Palestine to create awareness of its heritage and to bring economic benefit. Gail deftly raises the issues of tourists failing to engage with the local community, again without being preachy.

> "As we walk George, a Palestinian Christian, tells me about the problems they face in getting tourists to come and spend time – and money – in his country. "When tourists visiting Israel come to Bethlehem, the coaches stop at the shops on the Israeli side so they buy all their souvenirs, like our olive wood crafts, from there," he says… The Masar Ibrahim is just one of the many new tourism initiatives that Palestinians are creating to provide employment in impoverished rural areas and, by encouraging tourists to interact with ordinary Palestinians, challenge assumptions about a region that receives much negative press in the mainstream media."

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69   www.aljazeera.com/photo_galleries/middleeast/201162792458432684.html

Highly Commended: *Salt of the Earth* by Caroline Eden, published in *Geographical* November 2010

Caroline Eden's piece about the Agarias, the poorly paid salt harvesters on the Little Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, captures what is special about the place: its wildlife including the gudkhur, an Indian wild ass, the large numbers of charismatic birds, and the people. Caroline writes about the " 'Agarias' – people who work in an agar (salt pan)", the way the salt is harvested and raises awareness of their way of life

> "Salt production began in the Little Rann in 1872; now, more than a century later, little has changed in the way the salt is produced, and life remains cruel for the Agarias. They work for a pittance (a worker earns roughly 140 rupees – about £2 – per tonne of salt) with only mirages and the dazzling whiteness of the salt for company. There are no shops or markets, no running water. Living in makeshift huts and camps, with little shelter from the sun's glare, they rely on a mobile ration shop for food and tankers for potable water. There isn't enough of the latter to go around, however, which results in health problems. There were plans for a water pipeline, but they were blocked by the forest department, which feared that it could disturb the wildlife."

Tourism, growing since the region was given biosphere status, Gail writes, is "placing yet more pressure on the Agarias and their livelihood, and potentially, pressure on the wildlife itself."

14 Best Innovation

This year awarded by the judges because they were impressed by the innovative new approach nominated for an award on another category.

Winner: Nature Observatorio Amazing Treehouse,[70] Costa Rica

This is a new initiative with only 200 visitors in its second year of operation. This is a significant new form of eco-light tourism developed by Peter Garcar. The tree house is suspended in the canopy of a Nispero tree 25m above the forest floor. The judges were impressed by the great care taken to ensure that when the tree house is removed there will be no trace of it and the success that the Nature Observatori has had in working with local Naso tribal tribe members as guides and the local purchasing purchase of traditional artefacts for the tree houses. By demonstrating that a living tree can be more valuable than a felled one, Nature Observatorio has been able to reforest three hectares of former pasture land, as well as adding two more hectares of primary rain forest to their private reserve from the funds generated by the initiative.

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70 www.natureobservatorio.com

Peter Garcar's description of the tourist experience is impressive:

> "we don't alter anything. That includes our trails to access the tree house, from which we remove just fallen leaves. We rely on the careful and watchful eye of our guides who read the terrain to open a natural path. It takes about 40 minutes to hike along a small stream and then up to a ridge while surrounded by the beauty of untouched nature. As a snack, we bring along some dried fruit wrapped into banana leaf to avoid packaging or have locally grown fresh fruits to eat. We then arrive at the base of the tree where our Nature Observatorio tree house is suspended, having provided a totally organic experience, no stairs, no walkways, no foundations. The only visible sign of "human" integration into the habitat is the thin line hanging from the tree. All of our climbing equipment (ropes, harnesses, helmets, carabineers, gloves, etc.) we carry in and out each time, along with any other equipment or necessity that a guest might need for their stay."

> "No branches have been cut, nor has a single screw or nail been used in this tree. The structure itself is not only zero impact on the tree, it collects rain water which is used for the shower and sink using 100% biodegradable soap and shampoo, allowing us to redistribute the collected water safely back to the tree, ensuring it gets the proper amount of water. The toilet is a composting toilet and a solar panel generates the energy for the lights and elevator. Recycled motorcycle tires are used as bumpers where the structure is touching the tree and a recycled fiberglass tub is used as our water tank. The rainwater collection gutters along the structure are made from bamboo, as well as the hand-rails for safety. All wood that has been used to build the structure is wood from fallen trees. The structure is as lightweight as possible, taking care, through the design, to distribute the weight along eight different nylon straps which allows zero impact on the bark of the tree."

The judges were particularly interested in the innovative fractional ownership initiative that could potentially protect, through purchase, a significant amount of forest. In exchange for one week a year in a tree house for up to four people, over 5 years Nature Observatorio can secure the conservation of 500 square metres of forest. The judges hope that the plans to open in a second location will find fertile ground and spread.

If you are reading this and thinking that you know of other, or better, potential winners of the Awards please nominate them next year, only those who are nominated and do the paper work, can be winners. There will be a similar report on the Awards in the November 2013 edition of Progress in Responsible Tourism.

Links:

www.haroldgoodwin.info
www.responsibletourismawards.com

Work in Progress
Assessing the Impact of Stakeholder Engagement on Perceptions of DMO Performance

Aimee Epp, International Centre for Responsible Tourism

Given the fragmented nature of the tourism industry[12], promotion and marketing of destinations are typically managed by a central firm known as a Destination Marketing Organization or Destination Management Organization (DMO). DMOs operate at the national, regional or community level and while their organizational and funding structures vary widely, they all have as their central mandate the development and promotion of the destination to attract visitors and provide economic benefit to the local community. In doing so, the DMO must coordinate and manage various stakeholders and facilitate tourism industry partnerships towards a collective destination vision[3]. The literature refers to the DMO in many ways, from "guardians" of the destination image[4] to "catalysts and facilitators of tourism developments"[5], but it is as "orchestra director"[6] that the DMO fulfills its most critical role: to enhance the coordination and collaboration of the diverse players involved in tourism[78910]to deliver a world class experience to visitors in their destination[11].

There is a consensus in the literature that the involvement of a variety of stakeholders is a fundamental requirement of good DMO governance, and it has been suggested that stakeholder engagement may contribute to the efficiency and performance of the DMO[12]. The aim of this research is to determine the impact of stakeholder engagement on satisfaction and perceptions of DMO performance. Three objectives were identified to meet this aim: 1) To identify and determine stakeholder groups, 2) to determine how different groups are engaged with the DMO, and 3) to compare satisfaction across the groups.

Previous studies have been underpinned by an assumption that more interactive engagement is required for those stakeholders the firm deems as most important, yet there has been little examination from the point of view of stakeholders themselves. This research used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to compare and contrast the views of DMO management with those of their key stakeholders. Abbotsford, in British Columbia, Canada, was selected specifically as a case study worthy of research because Tourism Abbotsford is widely considered among tourism professionals to be an industry leader in destination management, and is the winner of numerous industry accolades. Profiling a "successful" organization provided the opportunity to identify potential synergies and gaps between corporate and social measures of DMO performance.

The constructs of "potential to threaten" and "potential to cooperate", as presented by Savage et al[13], were utilized to categorize levels of stakeholder salience and to identify appropriate management strategies. Building on this typology, an expanded stakeholder management model is presented, incorporating the concepts of participation[14][15] and involvement[16] to capture the breadth of stakeholder engagement in the destination setting.

Stakeholder satisfaction and perceptions of the DMO were also explored, providing a useful counterpoint in measuring the organization's performance. Of course, a comparison of satisfaction levels across the groups also allowed for links to be identified between stakeholder engagement, satisfaction and perceptions of DMO performance.

The findings of this research are used to inform a discussion about stakeholder identification and the relationships between stakeholder engagement and DMO performance; these will be presented as an Occasional Paper 25. It will demonstrate the "maddening variety of signals on how questions of stakeholder identification might be answered"[17] and will present interesting perspectives on resource dependency theories. Synergies, as well as significant variances with the literature are identified in an attempt to bridge theory with practice. This research will contribute to the tourism literature, and will have important management implications for DMOs.

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Decent Work and Tourism Wages: An International Comparison

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Introduction

The relationship between business and society provokes ongoing debate. Employment represents a critical interface between society and business and as such is fundamental to this relationship. In tourism, employment is often the meeting point of external business interests and community interests. However, as Pfeffer (2010) has argued, environmental impacts aside, where emphasis has been placed on social impacts of business the issue of indigenous cultures has been placed to the fore. The impacts of business on the employee have largely been ignored.[1]

This neglect is surprising because much has been made of the stakeholder concept in tourism. Thus, while employees are key stakeholders of the firm[2], because firms themselves are often placed in a category distinct from the local community (the distinction tends to be tourists, local community and business), conditions of work do not feature prominently in discussions around responsible tourism. Tourism development is often promoted because of its ability to provide jobs, particularly in areas experiencing the decline of traditional economic activity, or simply in peripheral regions. The consensus seems to be that as long as tourism development provides jobs, all is well. There is no question as to the conditions of employment.

This study draws on data provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO). It attempts to begin to address the issue of tourism employment by focussing on the most fundamental aspects of the employment relationship: wages. At the heart of capitalism lies the concept of exchange. Workers sell their labour to firms in return for wages, which are then used to buy products and services from firms. An assessment of employment must then consider the level of wages in relation to the level of products and services. Two major comparisons are undertaken in this study. The first is a comparison of wages in tourism compared to wages in other occupations. The second is a comparison of tourism wages in relation to the cost of everyday food items. Both comparisons are undertaken at an international level, i.e. by selecting a cross-section of countries on the basis of per capita GDP figures. It is commonplace to hear assertions being made about low wages in tourism. Often no empirical evidence is provided to

1   Pfeffer, J. (2010) Building sustainable organizations: The human factor. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34-35.

2   Blair, M. (1998) For whom should corporations be run?: An economic rationale for stakeholder management. *Long Range Planning,* 31(2), 195-200.

support these assertions however. Furthermore, where data exist, they are usually local in nature (Tom Baum's book on human resource management in tourism and hospitality[3], for example, dedicates a section to pay and duly cites a handful of studies albeit published in the 1970s and early 1980s, before going on to quote his own work which focussed on Northern Ireland[4] only). It is hoped therefore that this preliminary study provides robust data, broad in scope, on an important yet under-reported aspect of tourism development.

Decent Work in Tourism

The ILO promotes a Decent Work Agenda. It has recognised that responsible tourism development goes beyond the aim of full employment, but also encompasses the notion of decent work[5]. Decent work indicators (DWI) are comprised of four types of categories: employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work. Understandably given the difficulty in measuring DWIs, these have not been popular among tourism scholars.

This study sets out to provide an international comparison of tourism employment pertaining to the Decent Work Agenda and drawing on data provided by the ILO in its Laborsta dataset.[6] This database of labour statistics provides data (including estimates) for over 200 countries. Eight countries were selected for the analysis. It was decided to select 2 countries from each quartile according to per capita GDP figures for 2010 provided by the World Bank[7]. The countries for analysis and their respective per Capita GDP figures are as follows:

Table 1: Countries selected for analysis and respective per capita GDP

	Per Capita GDP 2010 (US$)	Distribution
Australia	50,746	4th quartile
United Kingdom	36,186	4th quartile
Brazil	10,993	3rd quartile
Turkey	10,050	3rd quartile
Angola	4,322	2nd quartile
Indonesia	2,952	2nd quartile
Pakistan	1,019	1st quartile
Malawi	339	1st quartile

Source: World Bank. Data in current US Dollars

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3   Baum, T. (2006) *Human Resource Management for Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure. An International Perspective*, Thomson, London.

4   Devine, F. and Baum, T. (2005) *Skills and the service sector: the case of hotel front office in Northern Ireland*. Proceedings of Tourism and hospitality research in Ireland: exploring the issues, University of Ulster, Portrush.

5   International Labour Organization, 2011, *Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries beyond a Tourism Satellite Account: A Case Study of Indonesia*.

6   http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/lang--en/index.htm

7   http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD Accessed 08 October 2012. While 2011 data were available they were not as complete as for 2010.

Employment is a complex matter containing numerous facets that together might characterise a particular job as being decent or not. It is argued here that one outstandingly positive aspect of a particular job would be insufficient to characterise it in its entirety as being decent. For example, a job that pays above the industry average but where the employee is not entitled to union membership, has no rights to sick leave, is bullied and so forth should not be regarded as being decent. Just which aspects of employment might be regarded as critical to the DWI agenda, and which tangential is a matter for debate. Nonetheless, remuneration lies at the heart of the employer-employee relationship, and as such has been selected for analysis in this study. Furthermore, data on wages/earnings are more readily available than for other aspects of employment. Certainly, any assessment of decent work in tourism cannot ignore this issue.

There are numerous ways of measuring and assessing earnings in tourism. The issue of measurement is not without its difficulties. Just some of the issues which can arise are the inclusion/exclusion of overtime pay, other bonuses, the reliability of the data themselves if self-reported, and the lack of reporting on employees who may be working unofficially. These measurement issues have consequences for assessing earnings, i.e. setting them in context, either with other occupations or with the price of goods and services. Notwithstanding these caveats, the following ways of measuring earnings were suggested in a recent ILO report:[8]

1   Low pay rate: <2/3 of median hourly earnings

2   Average hourly earnings in tourism occupations compared to average hourly earnings in selected occupations

3   Average real wage compared to average real wage in tourism

4   Minimum wage as % of median wage compared to minimum wage as % of median wage in tourism industries

5   Manufacturing wage index compared to tourism wage index

Methods 4 and 5 were discounted in this study because these data were not available in the Laborsta database. Similarly, while technically possible to calculate median hourly earnings, too many unsubstantiated assumptions would have had to be made (e.g. calculation from weekly or monthly earnings to hourly earnings across all occupations and industries on the assumption that people work the same amount of hours irrespective of occupation, industry or country), and, in addition, too many data were missing from the database to justify the inclusion of this measure here. Instead, it was decided to focus on variations of measures 2 and 3. The first measure here (both measures to be discussed in greater detail below) relates to weekly earnings in tourism occupations compared to a selection of non-tourism occupations. The second measure focuses on

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8   International Labour Organization, 2011, Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries beyond a Tourism Satellite Account: A Case Study of Indonesia.

real wages, i.e. wages set in relation to the price of goods, specifically groceries. While it would have been possible to cover real wages in tourism compared to real wages in non-tourism occupations, because wages in tourism and non-tourism occupations were already compared in the first measure this would in fact not provide any additional information that could not be gleaned from the first measure of earnings.[9]

Average Earnings in Tourism Occupations

The analysis of earnings is initially undertaken at a national level. Subsequently, some discussion around a comparison of countries also occurs. It is acknowledged that because of a lack of data, cross country comparisons must be treated with a degree of caution. As a general rule, the most recent data available were selected for analysis.

The first analysis that was undertaken with the Laborsta data was a comparison of weekly wages in tourism with weekly wages across a range of occupations. There is no one credible measure of tourism wages because tourism as an economic activity is far too diverse to allow meaningful summary in one single statistic. Laborsta data are broken down into occupations and eight occupations have been selected as being representative of tourism employment within the Laborsta dataset. The first four occupations (ILO occupations 97-100) are classified into 'Restaurants and Hotels' and the latter four (120-123) into 'Air Transport'. The Laborsta dataset makes no reference to tourism as an industry. Even within this narrow selection of eight tourism occupations there is great diversity in terms of skill requirements and wage levels. Seven comparator occupations were chosen as representing a range of industries and occupations as per Table 2.

Data in Table 2 refer to weekly wages[10]. The figures represent percentages relating to the average weekly wage per country (the average was calculated based on the fifteen occupations analysed). The lowest three occupations in terms of weekly wages are highlighted. The comparison indicates that across all countries room attendants/chambermaids fall within the lowest earner category. Waiters likewise fall into this category for all countries barring Malawi. It should be noted however that in many cases waiters use tips to supplement their income, and indeed can represent the larger part of their income. The Laborsta data rely only on official figures and do not take into account discretionary income such as commission and gratuities. In three of the eight countries selected for analysis hotel receptionists fall into the low wage bracket. Interestingly, two of these countries are in the highest GDP per capital quartile. What is clear then from this analysis is that tourism appears to deserve the questionable accolade of a low wage industry. This claim deserves some further consideration however.

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9   For example, if an accountant earns 50% more than a room attendant, then if a loaf of bread takes up 2% of a room attendant's weekly earnings, then the corresponding figure would be 1% for the accountant.

10   Not all data were presented as weekly wages. Data for some countries were represented as hourly wages and others as monthly wages. The necessary transformations were undertaken that resulted in weekly wages (the assumption of a 40 hour week was made, which is a limitation of the accuracy of the data here).

In Table 2 the three lowest paid occupations have been highlighted for each country. What the data demonstrate is that, firstly, classifying tourism as a low wage industry does not do justice to many tourism occupations that clearly pay above average wages. Airline mechanics and cabin attendants would be an example of this as per below table. Secondly, the data reveal that there is quite considerable variation in the level of wages across tourism occupations and countries. In Pakistan and Brazil, for example, some forms of tourism employment are particularly low paid, making up less than a third of the average wage[11].

Table 2: Weekly wages as proportion of average weekly wage

OCCUPATION	AUSTRALIA (2006)	UK (2003)	BRAZIL (2006)	TURKEY (2006)	ANGOLA (1999)	INDONESIA (2006)	PAKISTAN (2003)	MALAWI (2000)
142 Office clerk	78.09	74.61	128.25	91.18	80.47	n.a.	34.84	25.79
152 General physician	199.87	267.29	191.41	209.09	163.00	n.a.	214.42	66.02
159 Automobile mechanic	85.63	82.09	n.a.	91.81	70.15	n.a.	65.22	44.45
44 Journalist	115.33	147.53	n.a.	138.41	156.81	67.52	27.43	87.72
85 Bricklayer (construction)	76.80	85.18	32.51	53.13	80.47	183.49	27.70	21.70
12 Miner	161.37	n.a.	58.03	73.94	96.97	88.52	71.47	n.a.
129 Accountant	110.22	160.24	382.98	138.87	163.00	n.a.	134.01	629.34[1]
97 Hotel receptionist	64.51	58.31	33.37	155.34	90.78	47.45	28.59	39.21
98 Cook	64.91	67.86	31.25	58.87	80.47	67.52	26.80	28.49
99 Waiter	61.06	50.35	29.01	58.87	74.28	44.10	23.68	35.64
100 Room attendant or chambermaid	63.19	53.79	28.72	54.52	61.90	51.19	23.68	22.71
120 Airline ground receptionist	94.41	78.12	57.36	155.34	107.29	86.66	196.55	101.03
121 Aircraft cabin attendant	105.87	78.12	167.46	67.11	103.16	154.52	178.68	70.87
122 Aircraft engine mechanic	124.15	98.82	123.27	91.81	90.78	154.52	312.70	198.64
123 Aircraft loader	95.20	96.24	36.38	61.67	80.47	154.52	134.01	28.26

Source: ILO Laborsta data

1   This seems remarkably high and yet this figure was checked and is in accordance with data supplied by the ILO.

An important issue that arises from the preceding analysis relates to the issue of inequality in the distribution of occupations in communities. Adler and Adler[12] undertook a study of tourism employment in Hawaii and segmented the tourism workforce into four categories of ethnicity. Each ethnic category typically undertook a limited range of occupations in tourism. Very rarely was there any mobility between occupations. If host communities are to benefit fully from tourism, then ensuring they have access to the entire gamut of tourism jobs is paramount. Tourism developers often

11   Average of those occupations included here.
12   Adler, P. and Adler, P. (2004) *Paradise Laborers. Hotel Work in the Global Economy*. Cornell University Press, New York.

argue that they are providing jobs for the local community. While this may be the case, a tourism job is not a tourism job, i.e. there is great variation in the types of employment in tourism, variation in who gets what jobs, and how these jobs are remunerated. There is however a further issue that must be addressed in any discussion of distribution of benefits of tourism and that relates to tourism employment. This is the issue of a living wage. To investigate this issue the study now moves to an analysis of real wages in tourism.

Real Wages in Tourism

The following figures provide a comparison of real wages across countries and occupations. As previously noted, these figures do not relate to current data but do cover the most recent data available in the Laborsta database. Evidently, when analysing real wages, wages and prices need to relate to the same time period. Often wage data were more current than price data. Where this was the case, the most recent year was selected where wages and prices were available. No data on prices of goods in Canada were available in the Laborsta database. As a result, Canada has been omitted from the analysis. Likewise, while data relating to Angola were available, they were particularly old (1999), and were remarkable in the extent of their divergence from the rest of the dataset. In other words, the data on Angola were extremely questionable in their accuracy and it was thus decided to omit them from this part of the analysis. For some countries (notably Brazil), data relating to specific occupations were available for some years but not for others. In this instance the data tables underpinning the following figures represent a compilation across years.[13] The selection of commodities represented in the following analysis is justified mainly on the grounds of data availability across countries, and to a lesser extent as they might represent typical items purchased in all countries.

As determined previously, tourism employment is difficult to characterise with broad brush strokes because of the diverse nature of tourism as an economic activity. Nonetheless, jobs that are typically associated with tourism often belong to those that pay the lowest wages. The analysis of real wages therefore draws on the occupations of 'hotel receptionist' and 'room attendant/chamber maid'. In this sense we are drawing on a worst case scenario, and yet from studies such as Adler and Adler's[14] it is clear that often it is the local community or recent immigrants that undertake the lower paid jobs. Given responsible tourism's remit to put the needs of the local communities before those of the tourists (see Cape Town Declaration and also Goodwin, 2011[15]) we believe this selection is justified.

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13   UK = 2003; Brazil = 2006, 2003 and 2001; Turkey = 2006; Indonesia = 2006; Pakistan = 2002 and 2003; Malawi = 2006.

14   Ibid.

15   Goodwin, H. (2011) Taking *Responsibility for Tourism*. Goodfellow Publishers, Oxford.

Chart 1: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Wheat Flour, White; 1kg[16]
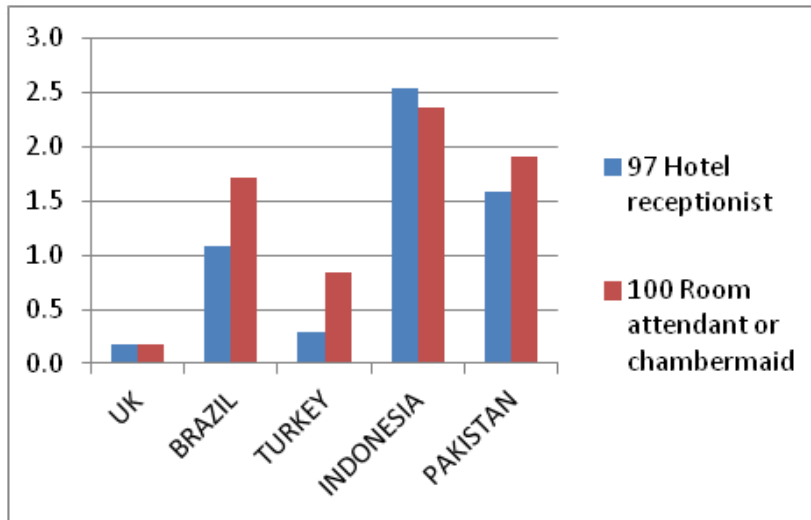

Chart 2: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Stewing Beef[17]; 1kg
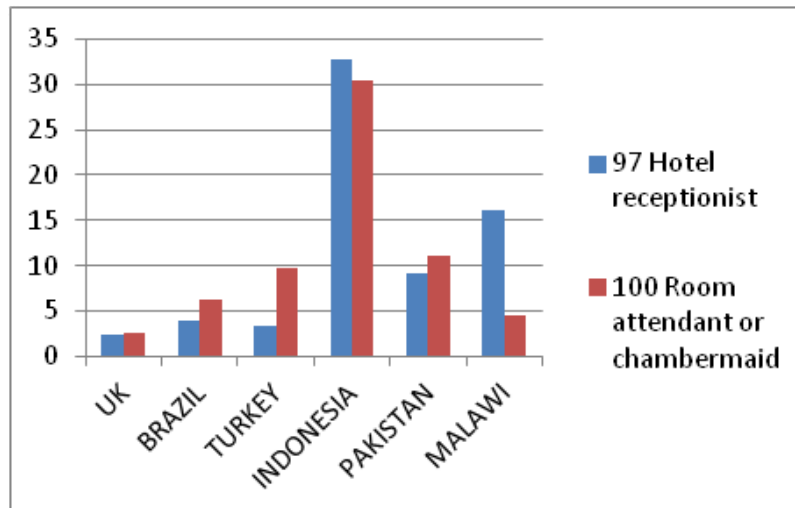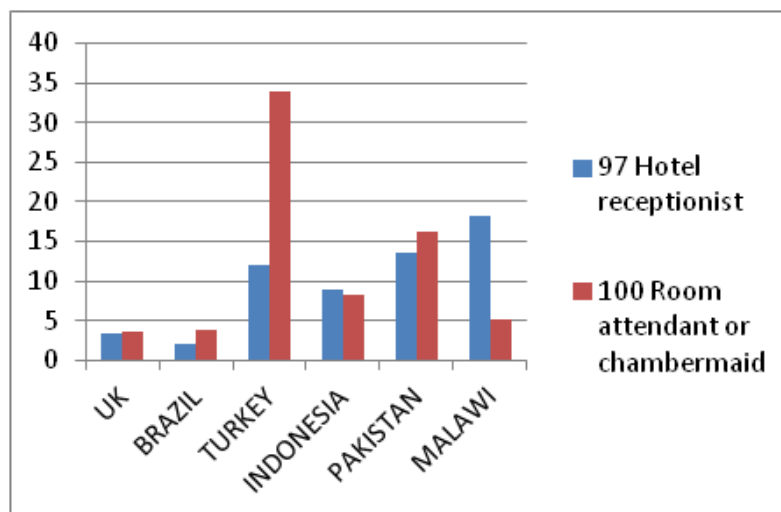

Chart 3: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Fresh Fish; 1kg

16   Data were unavailable for this item from Malawi.

17   Indonesia = Beef, without bone; Malawi = Beef with bone; Pakistan = Beef with bone.

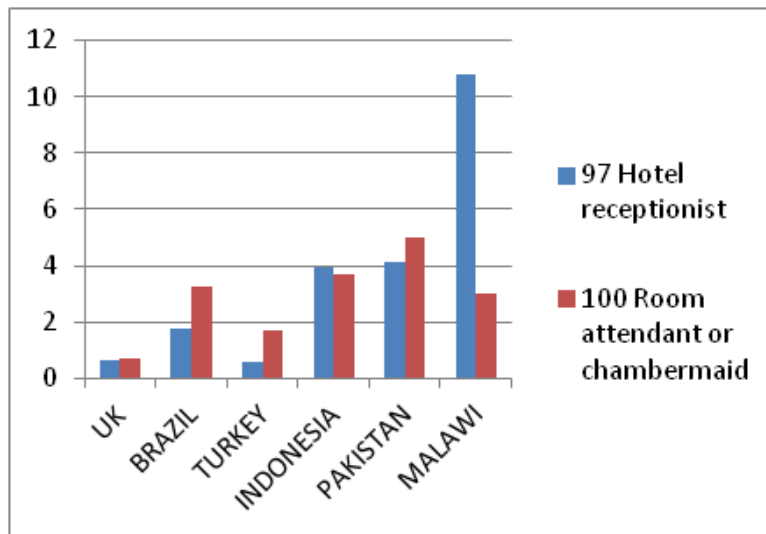Chart 4: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Chicken Eggs; (12)

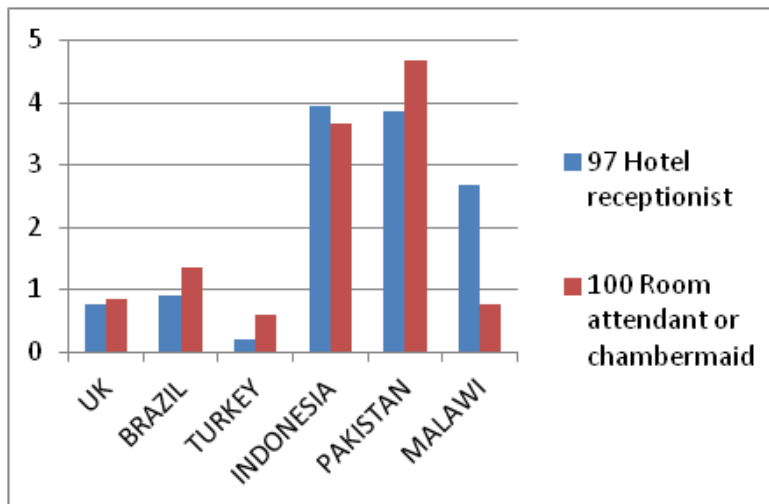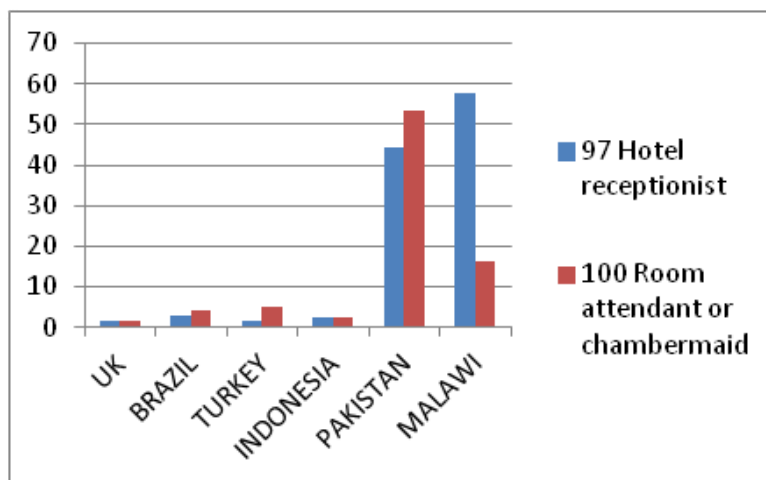
Chart 5: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Tomatoes; (1kg)

Chart 6: Relative cost (% of weekly wage) Coffee[18]; (500g)

18   Pakistan = instant coffee.

As to be expected, the more prosperous a nation is (as measured by per capita GDP), the less is spent on food as a share of weekly earnings. What is perhaps remarkable then is the extent of the cost of certain groceries in some countries compared to weekly earnings in tourism. Meat and fish take up a large portion of weekly earnings in the poorest countries (or would do if these taken-for-granted items in developed economies would feature as prominently in the daily diet). One kilogramme of stewing beef would take up more than a third of weekly earnings in Indonesia. Put differently, 1kg of beef costs more than a hotel receptionist or room attendant earns in a day. In Malawi a hotel receptionist would have to work half a day (based on a five day working week) to be able to afford a dozen eggs (this ignores income tax).

The fact that many tourism employees in developing countries earn little in nominal and real terms has been made abundantly clear based on the above analysis. Another way of looking at these data is to relate earnings to items that a tourist might buy. This idea was taken up by Baum in what he terms the Club Sandwich Rule[19]. This refers to earnings in tourism in relation to the price of a club sandwich. The analysis can be applied to any item a tourist might buy. So, while an Indonesian room attendant may have to work more than an entire day to afford 1kg of stewing beef, a tourist might pay a multiple of the cost of 1kg of stewing beef when ordering a steak in the hotel restaurant.

Until now, this paper has simply tried to relate and draw attention to facts in so far as one can rely on the data provided by the ILO. But these facts in and of themselves are just that, data that we note, perhaps with interest. The real issue arises when we try to make value judgements based on these data. When faced with these data, some may sit back and shake their heads at the apparent inequality in terms of benefits accruing from tourism. Others may argue that tourism has provided communities with desperately needed income streams. An example of the logic behind this latter point is commonly encountered by those trying to defend low wages in tourism (based on this study, common forms of tourism employment are low paid, this at least cannot be denied). Take for example the position of Kevin Sheehan, chief executive of Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) who when confronted with a documentary on employment on cruise ships commented "We have an incredible number of people, from many countries around the world, who are desperate to work on board our ships because they can earn a lot more than they can at home".[20]

The fact that the employees were working in Europe, earning less than half the minimum wage in Britain (on some accounts not even a third of the minimum wage), on Kevin Sheehan's account working on the ships out of desperation, is of no apparent concern. The only thing that appears to count is that they are financially better off

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19   Ibid, page 51-52.

20   Saturday Telegraph, Cruise chiefs deny they exploit staff, October 13, T4.

working on one of NCL's ships than if they were working in their home countries. It is hardly surprising the word the journalist of the article chose to describe the employment relationship was 'exploitation'.

Conclusion

This study has picked up on the Decent Work in Tourism agenda. It provided an international comparison of earnings across a range of tourism occupations, as well as non-tourism occupations. It then focused on real earnings in tourism, again drawing on an international comparison of a cross-section of countries based on per capita GDP figures.

The study demonstrated that because of the variety of jobs in tourism, generalisations pertaining to tourism employment need to be treated with a degree of caution. Nonetheless, because certain jobs in tourism belong to the lowest paid jobs in an economy, and the distribution of jobs in tourism often follows ethnic and social lines, any assessment of the ir/responsibility of tourism development must take into account access to jobs at all levels.

The study demonstrated furthermore that, on the whole, the poorer the nation, the greater the proportion of earnings is spent on everyday groceries. In poorer economies, those in the lowest paid tourism jobs often need to give up a large portion of their earnings for what those in developed countries might consider very basic commodities. Put differently, a tourism employee may have to work long hours, sometimes days, to be able to afford the things a tourist might buy as a matter of course.

It is generally acknowledged that many jobs in tourism are low paid. Nonetheless, actual data, particularly at an international level have rarely been presented or discussed. This paper has attempted to make a contribution to the Decent Work Agenda and to the debates around employment in responsible tourism by presenting an international comparison of data on wages in tourism. While it is recognised that wages are but one aspect of the employment relationship, they are a crucial part. Further studies could profitably focus on providing more data on wages, as well as focussing on the other aspects of the employment relationship. The Decent Work Agenda is important and should not be ignored if tourism is to become more responsible.

The International Tourism Partnership Comes of Age

Stephen Farrant, Director, International Tourism Partnership

It was in the wake of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the original Rio Earth Summit) that the International Hotels Environment Initiative, now known as the International Tourism Partnership (ITP), was formed. Over the last two decades, ITP has grown and evolved as part of the International Business Leaders Forum, a not-for-profit registered in the UK and US, and with offices in China, India and Russia.

20 years on, this is a good moment to reflect on what has been achieved up to now, and what still remains to be done.

1. What is ITP?

ITP is a unique industry partnership, whose role is to act as the voice for environmental and social responsibility in the global hospitality industry. The hospitality businesses that established ITP recognised that they had a choice to make. They could either choose to ignore the environmental and social implications of their businesses and pursue economic development at all costs. Or they could use their collective might to find and communicate ways of doing business differently. And so ITP was born.

While the precise language used may have changed over the years, the mission of this small not-for-profit organisation with a global reach has remained remarkably constant. Back in the early 1990s the 'sustainability' agenda was in its infancy, whereas today every major company has a corporate responsibility function, and 'green' initiatives are ubiquitous. So what have been the accomplishments, lessons and developments along the way that have kept the partnership together for so long?

2. What have we learned over the years?

When tackling some of the world's greatest social and environmental challenges, finding the best solutions that already exist and then taking them to scale remains the holy grail for many organisations, whether they be businesses, NGOs, Governments or multi-national agencies. It has often been said that if we took the best in class and made it the norm tomorrow, we would be half way there already. ITP has always had a key role in highlighting and encouraging best practice in environmental and social responsibility across the industry, and that role continues to this day.

When asked what ITP has contributed to Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Alex Leclerc, Associate Director Global Citizenship EAME, acknowledged that '*ITP has*

been a valuable platform for best practices – this has been a source of inspiration and motivation, strengthening our commitment to doing the right thing for the environment and communities in which we operate.' Founding member and Chairman Ian Carter of Hilton Worldwide adds '*we've enjoyed membership for many years; we feel that ITP has represented our industry very well on a number of issues that actually pertained to all of the members rather than individual companies.'*

However, over the years we have also learned that best practice alone is not enough to drive real change. There has to be action to match the words. So ITP has also developed a range of practical opportunities for companies (at whatever stage they may be on their sustainability journey) to engage with the big issues and take the next step forwards. Examples include our Youth Career Initiative (YCI), Going Green, the "Environmental Management for Hotels" and "Sustainable Siting, Design and Construction" publications, and more recently, the Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative ("HCMI"), a major collaborative programme that ITP leads in partnership with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Yvo de Boer, formerly Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and now Special Global Advisor, Climate Change & Sustainability at KMPG, commented on HCMI that "*this initiative ensures that hotels are aligned in their approach to carbon measurement, which is a vital step in addressing the challenge.*"

And on the Youth Career Initiative, Catalin Popa, National Director World Vision says "*World Vision Romania is proud to work together with YCI in facilitating a practical education for a new generation of young men and women of disadvantaged backgrounds who otherwise would have few opportunities.*"

Inge Huijbrechts, Director of Responsible Business at The Rezidor Hotel Group recently commented that, "*ITP gets people around a table to discuss sustainability openly, whilst also coming up with practical solutions. This is unique; in the industry organizations of the motor industry sustainability was on the agenda mostly from a government relations perspective, but here you see genuine exchange and a platform for sharing information.*"

And more than this, we also know that, in some areas of the broad, complex and fast-moving sustainability agenda, there may not always be suitable best practice in existence that we can point to. That is one of the reasons why ITP is also now putting an increasing emphasis on forming and co-ordinating a range of thematic working groups, so that through collaboration we can work with the industry to co-create new practical solutions (for example, in areas such as water, supply chain and human trafficking), where none may currently exist.

Ed Fuller, former President of Marriott International adds '*What's unique about ITP is the consolidation of the competitive membership and the cooperative spirit they have displayed in all efforts, alongside the acceptance of ITP and partnerships by other organizations such as WTO*

and WTTC.' Which is an opinion shared by those organisations on the other side of the coin; Neill Wilkins from Staff Wanted Initiative, a joint project between the Institute of Human Rights and Business and Anti-Slavery International added *'We were very pleased with the level of engagement at the UK government roundtable on human trafficking and it certainly seems that ITP has played no small part in organising the hotel industry around this agenda.'*

3. What have been some of the milestones along the way?

- Published in 1993 and now in its third printing, *Environmental Management for Hotels*, a comprehensive guide to quality environmental management, remains one of the industry's leading reference texts

- Since 1995, *Green Hotelier Magazine* (now online at www.greenhotelier.org) has been the leading voice regarding the sustainable and responsible agenda in the hospitality industry

- In 2004 we launched the *Youth Career Initiative* (YCI), a six-month work and life skills programme for disadvantaged young people, delivered through a unique partnership with the hotel industry and local community NGOs

- In 2005, ITP published the *Sustainable Hotel Siting and Design Guidelines*, on the back of industry demand

- In 2007 ITP launched its *Going Green* guide – a free and easy-to-follow framework for the wider hospitality industry

- In 2010 ITP launched its first working group on sustainable certification schemes. Since then ITP has led numerous working groups on issues such as human trafficking, carbon measurement, and the importance of sustainability criteria in corporate procurement

- In 2010, the US State Department began funding the YCI programme to help support the re-integration of survivors of human trafficking into work and society

- In 2011 the *Hotel Carbon Management Initiative* was launched in partnership with the World Travel and Tourism Council (a unique collaborative initiative to unite hotel industry efforts to calculate and communicate carbon emissions from guest rooms and meeting space in a uniform way)

- In 2012, YCI began operating in its 12th country (India), with the active support of Accenture and the HIFI hotel investment conference

- ITP now has 16 corporate members with a collective reach of over 23,000 properties, more than 3.4m rooms and 1.5m employees in over 100 countries worldwide

4. Five lessons in developing a business-led sustainability agenda

a. You can take a horse to water...

As has been noted previously, no matter how compelling a case study or a particular example of best practice may be, these things alone are rarely sufficient to drive action or lead to real change. For example, some of ITP's publications have gained widespread recognition and acclaim as points of reference for the industry, but any argument can be easily overlooked if it is not supported by some of the points that follow.

b. Engage with and involve your audience

The hospitality industry is above all else a people business, so engagement has to be the first step in achieving any kind of success. One of the most effective areas of ITP's work has been its increasing focus in recent years on collaborative working groups. Topics are identified jointly with member companies, and have ranged from subjects as diverse as human trafficking and carbon measurement. How can one NGO have depth of technical expertise across such a broad agenda? Well, ITP doesn't always try to; our focus is on our partnering and facilitation skills, underpinned of course by strong industry and subject area knowledge, to bring the real experts together. With a stake in the origins and design of each piece of work, member companies (along with academics, partner organisations and other NGOs where appropriate) are more likely to want to engage in, contribute to, and learn from the work itself.

c. Co-creation is vital

Making meaningful progress on sustainability is a significant challenge for any business; and there are limits to what any one company can achieve alone, no matter how inspirational the leadership or how committed the workforce. That is where the multiplier effect of collaboration comes in. The old adage of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts is fundamental to ITP's approach, and the clearest possible evidence of the existence of a genuine partnership.

d. Sector-specific initiatives get the best results

The name of the International Tourism Partnership implies a broad focus on a huge global industry. But over the years we have learned that greater shared interest and therefore real traction can best be achieved by focusing single-mindedly on a single constituency, in this case the major international hotel companies. Trying to be all things to all people doesn't work.

e. Keep your head in the sky but your feet on the ground

ITP always endeavours to understand and, where possible, contribute to the big debates in the responsible business agenda. Seeing the big picture and trying to anticipate the future is essential (and inevitably we approach this from a slightly different vantage point than multi-national companies), but it is vitally important to couple this with programmes and activities that are practical, tangible and sufficiently real-world to allow business to see a clear benefit.

5. And where next?

With its strong membership base and unique position at the interface of the global hotel industry and the sustainability agenda, ITP is well placed to act as a driving force for positive change, and to demonstrate the power of pre-competitive collaboration.

The early pioneers that founded ITP made their choice clear. They chose to do business differently – to do business as if people and the planet matter – in short, to do business responsibly. Over the intervening decades, hundreds of other hospitality companies have also become advocates of the responsible business message. The collective achievements of the sector are impressive. But so much remains to be done if it is to reach its true potential as an industry delivering environmental and social improvements alongside economic development. In a finite world, this requires us all to find new ways of achieving growth; growth that is smart, inclusive and responsible. Looking to the future, ITP intends to play to the full its part in creating the best sort of growth:

1   Smart growth, by helping to create an open and transparent marketplace for environmentally responsible products and services, as the industry is already starting to do through the Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative

2   Inclusive growth, and addressing the global challenge of youth unemployment, by taking the Youth Career Initiative (already supported not just by hotel companies but also by the likes of Accenture, Starbucks, national Governments, local NGOs and many others) to full scale around the world

3   Responsible growth, by highlighting where the industry's future success depends on finding new solutions to resource constraints (for example, water in specific locations) - and where collaboration is essential to achieving this.

We have already seen repeatedly that by working in partnership, and through strong leadership, real progress can be made. The opportunities for those leading companies who are focused on this agenda are significant – in terms of profit, people and planet.

In which other industry sectors could this model of competitive collaboration be used to support the development of a more sustainable world?

Contributions are welcome in three categories

Practitioner Papers

Written by those actively engaged in managing tourism or implementing Responsible Tourism approaches – 2,000 to 4,000 words with references primarily to grey literature.

Academic Papers

Traditional papers with full academic referencing 5,000- 8,000 words

Work in Progress - Notes from the Field

Reports on new initiatives, work underway or brief comment pieces. Limited referencing, 400-1,500 words.

We anticipate that there will be a section listing new publications and sources relevant to Responsible Tourism.

Progress in Responsible Tourism also carries each November a report on the winners and the highly commended in the annual Virgin Holiday Responsible Tourism Awards.

Progress in Responsible Tourism will be published annually in November to coincide with World Travel Market, this reflects our intention that the journal should be of interest to the industry, academics and policymakers. Referencing: traditional footnotes, not Harvard, this is to make the papers more accessible to a non-academic readership.

Practitioner Papers will be reviewed by the editors. Academic Papers will be peer reviewed. Work in Progress and Notes from the Field will be reviewed by the editors. The Journal has an advisory board which has the same composition as the ICRT's Advisory Committee.

If you would like to contribute to the next edition to be published in summer 2013 please write with a brief abstract to Harold Goodwin or Xavier Font.

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