

LOCAL GUIDELINES FOR TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE REGION OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Introduction

As the tourism industry in Schleswig-Holstein faces the challenges of changing demographics, evolving societal norms, technological advancements, and pressing environmental concerns, it is essential to develop and implement effective policies that align with the future vision of sustainable tourism. This set of policy recommendations aims to provide guidance on key areas that require attention and action to ensure the realization of a sustainable and responsible tourism sector in Schleswig-Holstein. These recommendations encompass various aspects, including infrastructure development, resource management, transportation, accommodation, promotion of eco-tourism and cultural experiences, education and awareness, digitalization and technology, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable business practices.

1. Embrace Sustainability:

- Invest in sustainable tourism practices to minimize environmental impact.
- Reduce carbon emissions and promote the use of renewable energy sources.
- Minimize waste and promote recycling practices.
- Support conservation efforts and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

2. Collaborate and Engage:

- Collaborate with local communities, government agencies, and environmental organizations to develop sustainable tourism strategies.
- Engage in dialogue and seek input from stakeholders to ensure inclusive decision-making.
- Foster partnerships with local businesses, sports clubs, and community organizations to create unique experiences for visitors.

3. Address Overtourism:

- Encourage sustainable tourism practices among stakeholders, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), accommodations, restaurants, and tour operators.
- Manage tourist numbers to avoid overtourism and preserve the local community's quality of life.
- Implement strategies to distribute tourism flows throughout the year, reducing the strain on infrastructure during peak seasons.

4. Cater to Diverse Demographics:

- Adapt offerings to cater to different age groups, interests, and preferences.

- Develop tourism products and services that appeal to both younger and older visitors.
- Invest in infrastructure and amenities that address the specific needs of different demographics, such as accessibility for older tourists.

5. Promote Sustainable Practices:

- Encourage the use of sustainable transportation options, such as public transportation, walking, and biking.
- Promote the use of eco-friendly facilities and services.
- Support local and sustainable businesses, including the use of local products and services.

6. Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt:

- Monitor the impact of tourism on the local community, environment, and economy.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented guidelines and adjust them as necessary.
- Embrace technological advancements and digital solutions to enhance efficiency and meet the changing demands of the tourism industry.

7. Promote Communication and Collaboration:

- Foster ongoing collaboration and communication between stakeholders.
- Share best practices and success stories to inspire others to adopt sustainable tourism practices.
- Engage with visitors and residents to raise awareness about sustainable tourism and encourage participation.

Conclusion

These guidelines provide a framework for stakeholders in the tourism industry in our region to embrace sustainable practices, address the specific challenges and opportunities presented in different scenarios, and work together to create a resilient and vibrant tourism sector.

By implementing these guidelines, stakeholders can contribute to the preservation of the region's natural and cultural heritage, while maximizing the economic benefits of tourism in a sustainable manner.

Policy Recommendations for Achieving the Futures Vision of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Infrastructure Development

Policy Recommendation 1: Governments and regional authorities should establish guidelines and regulations that mandate sustainable infrastructure development in the tourism sector. This can include requirements for energy-efficient design, the use of locally sourced and sustainable materials, and climate-resilient construction practices. Financial incentives, grants, and subsidies should be provided to encourage tourism stakeholders to adopt sustainable infrastructure practices.

Policy Recommendation 2: Conduct regular audits and certifications to ensure compliance with sustainable infrastructure standards. Establish a certification system that recognizes and rewards businesses that meet or exceed sustainability criteria. This will not only encourage adoption but also enhance the reputation of sustainable tourism destinations in Schleswig-Holstein.

Responsible Resource Management

Policy Recommendation 3: Implement effective resource management strategies by setting targets and regulations for water and energy efficiency in the tourism sector. Encourage the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, in tourism establishments. Provide financial incentives for businesses that adopt energy-efficient technologies and practices. Promote water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.

Policy Recommendation 4: Develop waste management policies that prioritize waste reduction, recycling, and proper disposal. Establish recycling facilities in popular tourist areas and promote waste segregation and recycling education campaigns among tourists and residents. Encourage businesses to adopt eco-friendly packaging and reduce single-use plastics through regulations and awareness programs.

Eco-Friendly Transportation

Policy Recommendation 5: Invest in the development and expansion of an integrated multimodal transport system that prioritizes electric public transport, cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian-friendly routes. Provide financial support and incentives to tourism stakeholders for the adoption and promotion of eco-friendly transportation options, such as bike-sharing and e-scooter services. Develop comprehensive urban planning strategies that enhance the accessibility and safety of pedestrian and cycling routes.

Policy Recommendation 6: Implement congestion pricing or other measures to discourage private vehicle use in congested tourist areas and promote the use of public transport. Establish partnerships with transport providers to offer discounted fares for tourists using sustainable modes of transport. Improve connectivity between tourist destinations through efficient and sustainable transportation networks.

Encourage Off-Peak Tourism

Policy Recommendation 7: Develop marketing campaigns and incentives to promote off-peak tourism. Collaborate with tourism stakeholders, including accommodation providers, tour operators, and local businesses, to create attractive off-peak travel packages and experiences. Highlight the unique charm and attractions of Schleswig-Holstein during less crowded seasons to distribute tourist visits more evenly throughout the year.

Policy Recommendation 8: Establish a reservation and booking system that encourages tourists to visit during off-peak periods by offering discounts or additional benefits. Engage with travel agencies and online platforms to promote off-peak travel opportunities and educate travelers about the advantages of visiting outside the high season.

Sustainable Accommodation

Policy Recommendation 9: Develop and enforce sustainability standards for accommodation providers, including hotels, guest houses, and vacation rentals. Establish a certification system that recognizes environmentally responsible practices in the hospitality sector. Provide training and financial support to help accommodation providers implement energy-saving measures, waste reduction strategies, and local sourcing of food and supplies.

Policy Recommendation 10: Encourage the adoption of eco-friendly cleaning products, toiletries, and amenities in accommodation establishments. Promote responsible guest behavior through education and awareness campaigns. Provide information to guests about sustainable practices, local regulations, and cultural etiquette to foster a sense of responsibility and respect for the environment and local communities.

Promote Eco-Tourism and Cultural Experiences

Policy Recommendation 11: Invest in the preservation and promotion of natural and cultural attractions in Schleswig-Holstein. Develop and promote eco-tourism experiences, such as guided nature walks, birdwatching tours, and cycling routes that showcase the region's biodiversity and natural heritage. Collaborate with local communities to create authentic cultural experiences that highlight traditions, crafts, and local cuisine.

Policy Recommendation 12: Establish partnerships with tour operators, travel agencies, and online platforms to promote sustainable and culturally immersive experiences. Encourage the inclusion of sustainability and responsible tourism practices in tour itineraries and marketing materials. Support local communities in developing sustainable tourism initiatives that enhance their livelihoods and preserve their cultural heritage.

Education and Awareness

Policy Recommendation 13: Implement educational programs on sustainable tourism in schools, universities, and vocational training institutions. Integrate sustainability principles into the curriculum to educate future tourism professionals about responsible practices. Develop awareness campaigns targeting tourists, local communities, and businesses to promote responsible tourism behavior, including waste management, cultural sensitivity, and the protection of natural resources.

Policy Recommendation 14: Provide accessible and comprehensive information to tourists about local regulations, protected areas, wildlife, and cultural etiquette through visitor centers, online platforms, and mobile applications. Collaborate with tourism stakeholders to develop interpretive signage and audio guides that educate visitors about the importance of sustainable tourism and the unique attributes of Schleswig-Holstein's natural and cultural heritage.

Digitalization and Technology

Policy Recommendation 15: Invest in digital platforms and technologies that enhance the efficiency and sustainability of tourism operations. Develop virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) experiences that allow potential visitors to explore destinations virtually, reducing the need for physical travel and mitigating over tourism. Implement AI-based resource management systems to optimize energy and water consumption in tourist establishments.

Policy Recommendation 16: Promote the use of digital platforms for booking, ticketing, and visitor management to reduce paper waste and enhance the overall visitor experience. Collaborate with technology companies to develop innovative solutions that promote sustainable tourism practices, such as carbon footprint calculators, sustainable travel apps, and online platforms that connect tourists with local sustainable businesses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the policy recommendations for achieving the future vision of sustainable tourism in Schleswig-Holstein provide a clear roadmap for transforming the tourism industry. By implementing these recommendations, Schleswig-Holstein can establish a sustainable and responsible tourism sector that respects the environment and local communities.

The recommendations cover various areas, including sustainable infrastructure, responsible resource management, eco-friendly transportation, off-peak tourism promotion, sustainable accommodation, eco-tourism and cultural experiences, education and awareness, digitalization and technology, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable business practices.

By focusing on these aspects, Schleswig-Holstein can develop low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, efficiently manage resources, minimize congestion and carbon emissions through eco-friendly transportation, distribute tourist visits throughout the year, promote sustainable accommodation practices, showcase natural and cultural heritage, educate and raise awareness, leverage digitalization and technology, collaborate with stakeholders, and embed sustainability in business operations.

While challenges lie ahead, including the need for investment, coordination, and mindset shifts, the benefits are substantial. Sustainable tourism will preserve natural and cultural heritage, stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and enhance residents' quality of life by minimizing negative impacts.

Schleswig-Holstein can be a global leader in sustainable tourism, setting an example for others. By embracing this vision and working together, we can ensure that future generations can enjoy Schleswig-Holstein's beauty while preserving it for years to come.

Let us embark on this transformative journey towards a sustainable and responsible tourism industry, where travelers and locals coexist harmoniously with the environment, supporting the well-being of Schleswig-Holstein and its communities.