
Book Review

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Handbook for Sustainable Tourism Practitioners – The Essential Toolbox

by: Anna Spenceley

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The theme of sustainability is unavoidable and is present in almost all speeches and actions, for researchers and academics, as well as for professionals working in the tourism sector. The timing for the release of this Handbook for Sustainable Tourism Practitioners is extremely opportune, as the world is going through one of the biggest crises in recent decades, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the work does not specifically focus on the problems associated with Covid-19, this theme is referred to in some chapters.

Tourism has been one of the sectors most affected by the pandemic and therefore all instruments that can help rethink the activity and contribute to its recovery are welcome.

Anna Spenceley is the Editor of this work, which is divided into four parts, has twenty-seven chapters and counts with the collaboration of 34 experts in the field of sustainable tourism.

The introduction (Chapter 1) written by the Editor, has a detailed presentation of the work where it is possible to find its objectives and the answer to the question “Who should read this book?”. The answer is broad and includes researchers at all levels, people working in government institutions responsible for tourism, private tourism businesses, practitioners from non-for-profit organisations, consultants and university students.

In Part I, about Planning and Designing Sustainable Tourism there are nine chapters. The papers in this first part present various strategies and instruments for planning tourist activity, always focusing on creating a more sustainable solution for destinations. Chapter 2 is the explanation of Tourism Theory of Change, an instrument used to map connections between planners and developers. This is followed by two papers with a very direct approach to the process of planning and strategy formulation, which are intended to give practical indications to readers, one about guidelines for tourism policy formulations in developing countries (Chapter 3) and the other about, tourism master planning: the key to sustainable long-term growth (Chapter 4). The next three chapters have a strong economic link, dealing with marketing strategies, for parks and protected areas (Chapter 5), feasibility studies, business plans and returns (Chapter 6) and finally, a work

about funding proposals for new tourism ventures (Chapter 7). If in previous works the economic aspect stood out, in the following chapters the socio-cultural component is highlighted. For example, a local involvement and partnership development is valued (in Chapter 8), several approaches are discussed related to sustainability design (in Chapter 9) and finally, the United Nations Program and the importance of informing and communicating sustainable development in tourist destinations are highlighted (Chapter 10).

Part II is dedicated to the theme “Enhancing the Sustainability of Existing Tourism” and has five chapters. The authors sought to give some examples that show how sustainability can be enhanced in destinations that are already touristically developed. Chapter 11 is about sustainable supply chains in travel and tourism and in Chapter 12 the author explains how economic development improves sustainability. Next papers are about establishing sustainability standards in tourism (13), designing protocols to enhance sustainability (14), and consultation approaches (15).

The third part is dedicated to “Balancing Overtourism and Undertourism: Visitor Management in Practice”. The four chapters in this part refer to the importance of good management of tourist destinations, to avoid extreme situations, such as overtourism and undertourism. Readers are given directions on how to act in certain situations, for example, Chapter 16 refers to a research strategy to understand what biophysical and social conditions are appropriate and acceptable in tourism destinations. Next chapters offers a view about visitor use management (Chapter 17) and targets for visitation in parks (Chapter 18). The last paper in this part is dedicated to one of the most touristic regions in the world, which suffers a lot from overtourism – the Mediterranean, and the objective is to present an approach that alleviates the impacts of tourism, in order to optimise the tourism development.

The fourth and last part of the book is dedicated to the processes of “Monitoring and Evaluation” and has seven chapters. This last section is very diverse in the themes it presents: visitor counting and surveys (Chapter 20); economic effects assessment approaches (Chapter 21 and 22); stressors assessment (Chapter 23); social and cultural impact assessment (Chapter 24); tourism certification audits and certification programs (Chapter 25); inclusive community-based tourism (Chapter 26); and the last one, Chapter 27 is about establishing and managing research programs in tourism destinations, setting the example of South African National Parks.

In conclusion, the book is well organised, addresses a variety of themes and scenarios, and refers to today’s most urgent and important challenges in the tourism sector.

In the various chapters of the book, there are some boxes, with the explanation of some concepts and ideas, which the authors refer to in the text. This idea facilitates the reading and understanding of the exposed themes.

Overall, this is a good guide for those who manage destinations or for those who study them, from a tourism point of view. The *Handbook for Sustainable Tourism Practitioners – The Essential Toolbox* shows examples of sustainable practices at different levels of evolution, that is, it can be useful for destinations that are still starting to plan a more sustainable strategy, but also for destinations with more consolidated practices, making suggestions on what can be improved.