Sustainable Marketing

And Communications Manual

for

Tourism Marketing Organisations

ECEAT & Green Destinations

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INTRODUCTION

1:1: Overview – what is this manual for?

Welcome to the Sustainable Marketing and Communications Manual for National Tourism Boards (NTBs). This manual provides a framework to enable NTBs to embed sustainability powerfully and coherently within their marketing and communication strategy. It is specifically designed as an evidence-based and methodical approach to understanding and leveraging sustainability to attract more visitors to support the local economy and to protect local environments and communities.

This manual is designed for National Tourism Boards worldwide who want to present their country as a sustainable destination. The framework encompasses elements to appeal to both business / stakeholder (B2B) and visitor (B2C) audiences. It includes sections on developing your offer to ensure it will be attractive to all audiences and subsequently, how best to communicate that offer to key target audiences and avoid misleading claims and "greenwashing".

1.2: How to use this document

The manual follows a module-based approach taking you step-by-step through the process. At each step you will find specific guidance, tips and often additional resources to help you rigorously plan and develop a sustainability marketing and communications strategy that can work seamlessly within your current destination brand and marketing activity. Throughout, we have also included good practice examples of countries and tourist boards who have taken an active approach on sustainability.

Not every NTB or destination will need to complete each section, but the manual has been written on the assumption that every step is important in the process. More experienced NTB marketing teams can skim read certain sections or use existing relevant research results or findings on which to build. It is recommended that the manual is worked through methodically to ensure that all the relevant questions and necessary insights are considered.

1.3: What sustainable tourism means for you and your destination

This guide is not intended to be an exhaustive resource on sustainable tourism, but we do need to define what it means in the context of improving results for destinations and why, therefore, NTBs should be aiming to achieve its inherent goals.

The concept of sustainable tourism emerged in response to the negative effects caused by the growing demand of tourism and the recognition that the industry needed to take responsibility and act in a sustainable way.

The UNWTO states that sustainable tourism should:

- *Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*

- *Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.*

- *Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contribute to poverty alleviation.*

In short, sustainable tourism is about moving away from a traditional high volume, low margin tourism model to an approach that has less negative impact on your destination and creates a greater balance between biodiversity, social-cultural value and economic benefit.

Sustainable tourism can be explained using the triple bottom line (TBL) approach, a way of measuring tourism so that it has an equal social (people), environmental (planet) and economic (profit) impact. These three pillars of sustainability are often referred to as People, Planet, Profit.

- **People** (social sustainability) in tourism relates to the initiatives and practices that aim to ensure the cultural and social wellbeing of the destination, stakeholders and local communities have been taken into consideration throughout the planning and promotional process of the destination.

- **Planet** (environmental sustainability) in tourism relates to the management and promotional practices that aim to minimise the industries negative effects on the environment and increase positive impacts for the destination's conservation and natural resources.

- **Profit** (economic sustainability) refers to the ability of the tourism industry to increase long term economic benefits for the destination and its stakeholders and local communities.

Sustainable tourism should not be treated as a separate niche, it should be taken into consideration throughout all planning and promotional activities. Sustainability should underpin every activity that destinations, stakeholders and local communities take when planning and promoting tourism.

The following table gives you examples of how a sustainably managed tourism industry can create positive change.

People (Social)	Place (Environment)	Profit (Economic)
• Increase local employment and economic opportunities • Preserve local culture (strengthening sense of local identity) • Increase access through infrastructure development • Increase community engagement • Increase local conservation and environmental conditions (like a reduction in pollution and litter) • Increase local, youth and female empowerment • Reduce conflicts between locals and tourists	• Protect local habitat and wildlife • Promote conservation • Increase funding opportunities for conservation and preservation initiatives • Reduce exploitation of natural habitat and resources • Reduce water pollution and carbon emissions	• Support local business development and entrepreneurship • Increase job creation and reduce seasonal unemployment • Increase revenue generation and fairer distribution across communities • Increase foreign exchange gains • Create investment opportunities in local infrastructure • Promote regional development

To achieve these benefits and be able to market a sustainable tourism offering, your destination needs to be managed sustainably. To find out what this means in practice, familiarise yourself with the international standards for sustainable destination management prepared by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

The GSTC is the leading international body that sets the sustainable criteria for the industry. Take a look at the criteria for both destinations and businesses to get an in-depth understanding of how a destination needs to be managed to be a truly defined as a 'green' destination. Here you can read and download The GSTC Destination Criteria and The GSTC Industry Criteria.

1.5: The benefits of a sustainable marketing approach to your destination – sell it in!

If nothing else, a sustainable marketing approach can improve visitor perceptions and how your destination appears to the outside world. Visitors are likely to form a perception of the destination long before visiting it, and a visible increase in the negative impacts of tourism demand can leave destinations struggling to shake off negative social, political, and economic perceptions. In today's world, with an increasing consumer demand for sustainable, ethical and responsible travel any negative perceptions play an increasingly important role in where these consumers choose to travel.

When tourism is managed and promoted in a sustainable way, NTBs have the opportunity to not only address negative societal, cultural and environmental issues, but also create the following positive impacts which support the delivery of the 17 United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

For destinations and NTBs themselves, effectively promoting and supporting sustainable activity can contribute directly to several key metrics and address some specific tourism issues:

- Increase sustainability awareness and influence stakeholders
- Reduce and remove negative visitor perceptions and unsustainable practices
- Address over-tourism (specifically, minimise the negative impact this has on destinations)
- Address seasonality pressures

- Increase length of stay, spending and green travel practices
- Increase accessibility and inclusivity
- Reposition the destination
- Increase repeat visitor numbers.

Here the UNWTO explains how tourism can directly contribute to delivering the UN SDGs.

For example, to help deliver SDG 5 on Gender Equality tourism can *empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from SMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society. (Tourism4SDGs).*

1.6: The role of a National Tourism Board

A National Tourism Board has the key role in positioning the country as a sustainable destination.

The traditional role of an NTB was to market the destination, helping to grow visitor numbers and spending. However, the need for sustainable destination management has seen many NTBs taking a more strategic approach, with greater emphasis on research, analysis, development and planning of a destination rather than simply its promotion. This change is right at the heart of the intention of this manual. It is not enough to simply market a destination as "sustainable". To be credible, a destination must back this up throughout the visitor experience, embed it throughout its interactions with its stakeholders and use it to guide the direction and ethos of development within the destination.

A further factor is that many of the sustainability actions and activities will be undertaken by businesses and organisations within the destination, rather than at a destination level. This places the onus on the NTB to "lead from the front", to understand and champion all these activities, to influence further sustainable behavioural change and help identify new opportunities to grow and develop.

However, promotion and marketing of the destination is still the primary domain of the NTB. Effective destination marketing should provide a promise to the target audience of what they will experience when they visit the destination. It acts as the motivational, emotional, and psychological link between the visitor and destination and should be implemented consistently throughout destination's websites, email campaigns, social media, trade shows and other media sources. Most destinations will already have a brand and core marketing strategy in place, the challenge is to bring the sustainability message and actions to the fore in harmony with any existing elements.

Therefore, undertaking a range of different steps is imperative in developing a sustainable marketing strategy. The foundations must be solid with a strong sustainable offering to promote, the internal communications clear and the external marketing credible and authentic in the eyes of prospective visitors. This manual lays out these steps, alongside guidance and resource documents helping you to revise and develop your marketing and communication strategy and actions.

1.7: Successful sustainable marketing and communications

So, what does success look like? Successful sustainable destination marketing should:

- Communicate the true identify of a destination, which may include its cultural heritage, natural beauty, landmarks, history, cuisine, offerings, and many other key features
- Provide clear motivations for visiting the destination for different target markets

- Set out the destination's sustainable positioning, which may include; what it is doing, why it has chosen to do it, who is doing it and how the benefits are distributed
- Influence the sustainable perception of the destination from the eyes of the customers, stakeholders, and residents
- Convey the sustainable experience for the target audience, what will it look like and how will it feel for them?
- Be credible and build trust and confidence in the audience.

But sustainable tourism marketing and communications should avoid:

1. **Green washing** - exaggerating and making unfounded claims around the sustainability practices within the marketing. https://www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com/insights/lexicon/what-is-greenwashing/

2. **Green hushing** - is the opposite to green washing, underclaiming or staying quiet on their sustainability practices through marketing (usually due to fear of public failure). https://www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com/insights/lexicon/what-is-green-hushing/

It is important to avoid green washing and green hushing by ensuring all the claims that you are making in your marketing are true and evidence is available to back them up.

1.8: KEY PRINCIPLES underpinning all actions within this guide

The key principles which successful NTBs need adhere to before any planning of marketing communications takes place, during its delivery and when evaluating success are:

1. Be clear and articulate what objectives you want to achieve by adopting and marketing your sustainable tourism approach. Consult with stakeholders (government, business, relevant local communities, conservations and environmental organisations) to gather feedback and amend your approach accordingly.
2. Agree at a high-level what timescales your sustainable tourism marketing plan will cover so that all stakeholders are aware of how long it might take to see positive results and to understand the length of their and the NTB's commitment.
3. Share your jointly agreed approach as clear objectives, including hard targets that are most relevant to your destination, where possible (eg: increases in visitor length of stay, reduction in carbon emissions, increase in local employment).
4. Ensure that every stakeholder and relevant group understands their responsibility to help track and measure progress and that they know what data to collect and how to feed it back.
5. Secure and communicate the available budgets to all stakeholders for clarity and as evidence of the NTB's commitment to improving sustainable marketing for the destination. *NB – the budget may not be secured until a formal marketing communications strategy is agreed. This is not a problem as long as it is aligned with the timescales and targets the NTB has set itself and its stakeholders.*

The following Modules provide guidance on how to deliver each of these actions as well as on creating a viable and relevant sustainable tourism marketing strategy.

MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR DESTINATION

INTRODUCTION

The first step in building an effective sustainable marketing strategy is to understand where you are now. This means taking a close look at your destination, how sustainability and tourism are managed and developed, what your sustainable tourism offer encompasses and your current marketing and brand positioning.

However, sustainable actions are often delivered by a large number of businesses, organisations and other stakeholders within the destination alongside the NTB. It's therefore vital to identify and engage with the people who have a vested interest in and who will be enabling your success.

Finally, it's important to look at the wider context in which you're operating. What are the latest trends that could impact you and your plans and what are your competitors doing that your destination could learn and benefit from?

By understanding all these factors, you can start to develop a clear understanding of where your strengths lie and what you need to do. The outcomes from this module should be added to those of Module 2 to form the evidence-base which will underpin the opportunities and strategy you will develop in Module 3 onwards.

Step 1: Strategic Direction

This first step will help you to build the overall objectives for your sustainable tourism marketing strategy, by enabling you to understand the current strategic context of sustainable development within your destination and articulating your own reasons for addressing sustainable tourism.

1.1 Destination Strategic Context - What is your destination doing already?

Introduction:	Sustainability does not exist in a vacuum, and it is extremely unlikely that this marketing strategy will be the first time someone in your destination has considered it. It is also likely that improving the reach and visibility of sustainable tourism will assist with reaching other national or local goals. Therefore, this first stage looks to understand what other strategies, plans and policies already exist that your strategy needs to work alongside and complement. You may also find that some of the key work or research has already been done, saving you time.
Guidance:	Review the most recent national development and tourism strategies, plans and policies published. This may include reports like: - National development strategy - National tourism marketing plan - Sustainable tourism strategy - Regional development strategies - Tourism policies - Green growth plans For each, list the key objectives and visions and note where sustainable tourism will support achieving those goals. This analysis provides a short-list of the key objectives that your sustainable tourism marketing strategy can help to deliver (and which can then be used for justifying funding or other support).

Tips:	These reports may provide you with additional information about the positive and negative impacts of tourism within the destination. This can be extremely valuable later, so keep notes! Don't neglect non-tourism strategic documents. There is plenty of overlap into areas such as energy generation, transport, planning, housing, heritage management, nature management, food, water, and resource management, where tourism has a role to play.

1.2: What is the vision for sustainable tourism in your destination?

Introduction:	The previous stage looked at what the destination needs at a high level and later in the process you will articulate the objectives of the marketing strategy. At this point however we need to define what we aim to achieve. This is particularly important to not only frame subsequent research but also to assist with engaging others (who will be key to delivery).
Guidance:	In Module 4 your will define your vision. At this stage the vision or statement of intent can be very loose and high level, it simply needs to communicate an idea of what you want your destination to be in the future. You should include a couple of key elements: • What does sustainable tourism mean to you? Articulate your definition as you currently envision it • What will success look like? How will tourism in the destination look if this is successful You also need to consider: • What level of change does that mean? Is this a complete change of direction or something smaller and how hard will it be to deliver? • How are you planning for it to be delivered? Who is most important here, set expectation early about who is needed to make this work. This is the formulation of a common goal for the destination and becomes a key tool you can use to engage and motivate others initially and develop further with them later.
Tips:	You may want to do this alongside a stakeholder group (see Step 3); however, it is often more effective to go to that group with an initial idea that they can expand on and enhance. Do not be too prescriptive at this stage as you will probably revisit this later (after analysis of research). Consider this the starting point to help frame the next steps.

CASE STUDY – Visit Berlin, Sustainability Mission and Vision
Visit Berlin have implemented several visions and missions as part of their tourism development plan.

To find out more about their goals, click here.

CASE STUDY – Visit Monaco, Responsible Tourism White Paper

Visit Monaco have published a Responsible Tourism White Paper that lays out their goals and visions. The document also provides information on how the destination worked to meet these goals.

To find out more click here.

CASE STUDY – Visit Morocco, Sustainability Statement

Visit Morocco have made their commitment to sustainability public on their website, which they update on a regular basis. This helps to increase consumer and visitor engagement around their sustainability goals and efforts.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Schouwen-Duiveland, Netherlands (Green Destinations Certified since 2018)

The municipal council of Schouwen-Duiveland drew up the strategic vision entitled, 'Tide for the Future' at the end of 2011. A vision until 2040, it provides direction and inspiration to help the municipal council and the mayor in short- and long-term decision making.

The vision is reassessed from time to time and translated into an implementation program during each term of the municipal council.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Eggental, Italy (South Tyrol Sustainability Label Certified since 2022)

Eggental's vision for 2030 highlights collaboration as their path to sustainability. Centered around seven strategic goals, it aims to deliver a good life for all, intact nature, and successful tourism.

For further information click here.

Step 2: Your Sustainable Product Offering

This step involves building a detailed understanding of your destination's current sustainable assets and product offerings.

2.1: Destination Sustainable Asset and Product Audit – What have you already got?

Intro:	Any sustainable marketing strategy needs to be grounded in a sound knowledge of all the features of the destination that relate to a sustainable visitor experience. This provides the evidence base to be able to assess your current sustainable tourism offer, identify areas for sustainable product development AND give you content to talk about later. *Remember* - a destination's assets and products are not limited to tourism's economic supply chain of facilities and services (e.g., accommodation, paid attractions, restaurants). Look at the wider picture, which includes natural assets, environmental features, built and intangible/living cultural heritage, social and community values.
Guidance:	Create or update an inventory of the destination's existing sustainable assets as defined above, ensuring it includes natural and cultural sites. Use the Sustainable Tourism Assets and Product Audit Checklist (Resource 1A) which provides guidance on the categories to consider and the level of information to provide. While you may already have detailed lists or in-depth understanding on what the destination has to offer, the following sources might help build your inventory: ○ Services, facilities, and experiences promoted on the NTB website ○ Online Travel Agents (OTAs) websites ○ Reviews and tips for your destination on TripAdvisor or WikiTravel. ○ Google! - especially Google search, Google maps, Google Things to do and Google My Business. ○ Social Media to see what others are sharing. ○ Local guidebooks and other publications ○ First-hand experience and site visits It is important, regardless of how you discover the asset, to double check that it is still in existence/in business/open and visible.
Tips:	Record the information on a spreadsheet so the data can easily be sorted, searched, and analysed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the destination's sustainability offer. Keep a notes section to highlight any specific points of interest that will support the sustainability goals (it's an important aid to memory for later!) To decide if an asset is 'sustainable', check it is certified or consider whether it contributes to your sustainable vision, helps to meet your sustainability objectives, and fits with the People, Planet, Place pillars of sustainable tourism (see Introduction).
Resource:	Green Destinations Tourism Impact Assessment Worksheet (Resource 1A).

2.2: Mapping other sustainable activity – What else does your destination have?

Intro:	It is very unlikely tourism is the only industry in your country addressing sustainability. There will be a lot of other existing initiatives and practices happening throughout the destination. Whilst a visitor may not have direct contact with these, they are an important part of your destination's sustainability story, may have "behind the scenes" impacts on tourism and are further evidence of positive activity. In addition, these initiatives will often be led by passionate people, who may be useful contacts and stakeholders for your work.
Guidance:	Create an inventory of the destination's most significant, non-tourism specific sustainability activities and practices. Like the previous stage this is a mapping exercise, however here the only criteria is whether the activity is actively promoting or improving sustainability AND could be important in support of your destination's sustainable tourism goals. Use Other Sustainable Assets and Product Audit Checklist (Resource 1B) which provides guidance on the categories to consider and the level of information to provide. Record the information on a spreadsheet so the data can easily be sorted, searched, and analysed to identify specific strengths of the destination's sustainability offer. This can seem a large exercise for a whole country, so focus on visible and established schemes, rather than recording every single instance of a business or organisation undertaking sustainability. However, if a business/organisation is an industry leader or doing something ground-breaking then DO include it. These can be particularly useful as exemplars of activity in your marketing later.
Tips:	Make a note of the key contact for each activity you record; this will be useful for the stakeholder mapping exercise in the next step. Keep a notes section to highlight any specific points of interest about an activity as you record them.
Resource:	Green Destinations Tourism Impact Assessment Worksheet (Resource 1A).

2.3: Mapping issues and negative features

Intro:	A final step in assessing the offer is to record the elements that are actively working against you or existing practices that have an obviously negative sustainable impact. Being aware of these affords you the opportunity to influence behaviour in the future. In addition, it ensures you are forearmed for any potential negative attention which could pose a risk to your strategy. For example; you may find it harder to effectively market your sustainable credentials if images of deforestation in your destination are being widely shared on social media. Being aware can help you address these issues.
Guidance:	For this stage you are looking to map and note all the visible areas of non-sustainable activity or practice in your destination. Again, this is a mapping exercise, so you have a clear picture of what is happening. You may want to research: • Specific un-sustainable tourism practices • Areas suffering from environmental degradation • Wildlife under threat and un-sustainable wildlife tourism activities • Deforestation • Pollution • Overfishing • Wealth inequality • Cultural or built heritage under threat • Non-sustainable waste disposal • Non-sustainable water use and extraction • Non-sustainable energy use • Agriculture (including overgrazing, and the use of pesticides) • Mining • Transport infrastructure • Un-sustainable business practices Record the information on a spreadsheet so the data can easily be sorted, searched, and analysed to identify the specific weaknesses of the destination's sustainability offer. Again, you should not look for every specific undertaking of these practices. The important point here is to be aware of larger trends across the country (e.g., dependence on fossil fuels or deforestation for agriculture), very visible examples (e.g., a specific, large, open-cast mine) or tourism activities likely to attract negative reviews (e.g., caged tiger tourism)
Tips:	Make a note of the key contact for each activity you record; this will be useful for the stakeholder mapping exercise in the next step. Keep a notes section to highlight any specific points of interest about an activity as you record them.
Resource:	Green Destinations Tourism Impact Assessment Worksheet (Resource 1A).

Step 3: Stakeholders

Sustainable tourism must have the ambition to not only create better places to visit, but first and foremost to ***create better places to live in for the local population***. The local population therefore needs to have a key say in what their ambitions are in terms of living conditions and how they see tourism to contribute to these better living conditions. They should not just be consulted but involved at every stage (where feasible) throughout the process.

The destination's stakeholders must understand, believe in and "own" the drive for sustainable tourism and this only occurs when they play a key part in creating it. Remember that they are the destination's "ambassadors" and the ones who will have contact with visitors. If they support and are taking active steps to support sustainability, they are reinforcing any marketing messages you communicate in the actual experience a visitor has.

3.1: Stakeholder Mapping – who does what and can help you to deliver?

Introduction:	The first part of this step involves identifying the key stakeholders within the destination to engage with throughout the process. For a sustainable approach to destination communications, all stakeholders that are both involved in or impacted by tourism should be considered.
Guidance:	Look at the Stakeholder Mapping Chart (see Appendix 1C). Choose the key themes and stakeholder groups that need to be considered for the mapping process. Where to find the stakeholders: ○ NTB's database of suppliers ○ Trade association directories ○ Government licensed business lists ○ Sustainable tourism certification organisations members ○ Online Travel Agents (OTAs) listings of accommodation and experiences – focus on OTAs that promote sustainable accommodation and experiences *(e.g. Responsible Travel or Travelling Spoon)*
Tips:	Ensure the mapping includes key tourism stakeholders from several different industries, sectors, and locations. Look beyond the obvious stakeholders, such as accommodation and attractions.
Resource:	Stakeholder Mapping Template (Resource 1B)

3.2: Stakeholder Working Group

Introduction:	A sustainable tourism working group is a useful asset to set up at the start of planning and research stage. The key purpose of this group is to: - Help the NTB with research and data collection - Provide feedback, validation and support in the development and implementation of the marketing strategy - Assist the NTB in promoting the strategy to wider stakeholder groups - Assist in the roll-out of any marketing activity through their contacts. Successful selection of working group members is essential to ensure representation from a broad range of the stakeholders identified above. The group's members will need to become advocates within their own networks to build awareness and support at each stage of the process.
Guidance:	Start by identifying the stakeholder groups that need to be represented. When selecting the members for the working group ensure: o Members represent different stakeholder groups, including a mix of NTB staff and external stakeholders from private, public sector and community organisations o Members interests are in line with the destination's sustainability vision. You will need to approach them individually, explain the overall vision and scope (see Step 1) of your plan and then ask them to nominate a single representative for their group. At this point the group themselves should then decide who will chair the working group. However, there are few key things to be aware of: o The group will need a very clear Terms of Reference (ToR). People need to know what they will be asked to do and what their commitment will be o The ToR will have to clearly indicate how the group works with the NTB. Are they solely an advisory group? Are they a steering group that takes decisions? And crucially – who is actually doing any work? o Being able to set specific timescales for their involvement at this point is very helpful too
Tips:	Refer to the stakeholder list that was completed in the previous step to help identify the most appropriate stakeholders that represent all aspects of sustainability. When choosing the group, it is important to consider your destination's sustainability objectives. For example, if an objective is to grow the domestic tourism market, then having a representative from a business association that represents businesses that provide services to this market would be crucial.

3.3: Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Intro:	This step will help identify stakeholder perceptions of the impacts of tourism, their ideas of products and experiences to share and market to visitors and their sense of who these visitors are. It will engage them and build connections for further participation at a later stage. Stakeholder involvement can assist with knowledge sharing and empowerment building, helping to create awareness and local sustainability ambassadors.
Guidance:	Use the product audits that you completed in Step 2 and your stakeholder mapping to help identify which stakeholders should be included in the engagement process. Ensure relevant community and resident groups are included. Businesses should not be limited to just those directly involved within the tourism industry. Remember that tourism can impact non-tourism businesses who operate within the destination. You can engage with stakeholders using several different methods: - One-to-one interviews (by telephone, online or face-to-face) - Surveys - Focus groups - Workshops Once you have decided on which methods you are going to undertake, start building a list of themes and questions that you would like to cover within the research.

CASE STUDY – Sedona Arizona, Stakeholder Survey and Focus Group Research

Arizona State University's Centre for Sustainable Tourism in partnership with the local tourism board, gauged stakeholder attitudes about sustainable tourism management practices through surveys, focus groups and community meetings. The research took place in the first nine months of 2018. It was undertaken to assist the Sedona Tourism Board with the development of their sustainable tourism plan. Allowing them to understand and involve a variety of different stakeholders in the research process.

Several different research methods where undertaken; residents were surveyed by mail, visitors were intercepted at popular locations, business groups received email surveys, non-profits organisations, government agencies and other stakeholder partners participated in focus groups.

When all the data was collected, the results were publicized online in advance of community meetings to further encourage greater involvement. In the end, this research involved thousands of residents, visitors, businesses, and other stakeholders who were all given the opportunity to contribute to this community-wide conversation, informing every aspect of the completed Plan.

Find out more about the research and review the results here.

CASE STUDY - Vail, USA (Mountain IDEAL Certified since 2018)

In creating the Vail Stewardship Roadmap, community engagement was a priority. More than 50% of the resident population participated in one way or another by responding to surveys, attending town hall meetings and focus groups.

Find out more information click here.

CASE STUDY - Dahar, Tunisia (Green Destinations 2021 Top 100 Story)

The Tunisian coastline is overrun with mass tourism, however as you go into the most rural areas, such as Dahar tourism is stagnated and fails to benefit the local people. Tourists tend to enter the area to visit the most popular sites with day visits and then leave again.

To overcome these issues a Destination Management Organisation was developed with international support. The DMO was made up of 38 members who met twice a year to discuss issues and opportunities to overcome them. Alongside this, the destination has seen great success due to its inclusivity and involvement of the local communities during the inception and development process. By 2021, they had involved 30,000 and 11 villages in the development of the Sustainable Authentic Tourism Model. 15 meetings were organized to allow for open discussion with locals.

The outcome of the entire plan was a great success, the DMO supported locals with product development, training and other support to help them grow the visitor economy.

Find out more information click here.

Step 4: Marketing and Branding Audit

Any new sustainable tourism marketing strategy must work within the context of your existing destination brand or replace it altogether. Two brand strategies with similar emphasis will only compete and distract your target audiences. To understand which approach is better suited, we first need to assess and understand what your destination is already saying about itself and what is being said and perceived by others. Remember, brand is much more than a logo and strapline!

4.1 Brand Assessment – what are we saying about our destination and how sustainable it is?

Introduction:	A destination's brand is an articulation of what it offers and its key values that will appeal to its target audiences. At a national level you will likely already have a destination brand, which may or may not have been developed with sustainability as one its core pillars (or essence). To be able to work cohesively within your destination brand you need to understand and be aware of its values, visuals, identity, and personality.
Guidance:	As an NTB you are likely to be the controlling organisation for your destination brand so you should have easy access to any branding strategy, assets and brand toolkits that lay out the fundamentals of your brand. If you don't you will need to contact whoever does hold these assets. You should be able to clearly pinpoint: • The core pillars or ideas your destination brand is conveying • Its target markets (who is it aimed at?) • Its personality • Its core values • How is it communicated (visuals, logo, colours and other identity elements). The final step at this point is to look carefully and ask a few key questions: • Is sustainability inherent within it? • If it is, does it match with how you are defining sustainability? • If it isn't, is there scope within the brand messages, values, and identity to promote sustainability without making a fundamental change?
Tips:	This stage can be made much easier by working directly with those responsible for creating the brand in the first place. Keep notes on your current brand to use when you collate ideas to build your brand story in Module 4. It can be difficult to judge whether your brand is fit for purpose just by reviewing it internally. If there is any uncertainty, it is recommended that after completing Module 2 – Know Your Audience – you test it with them via a Brand Perception Survey and record their feedback for analysis as part of Module 3.

4.2 Marketing Activity Audit

Introduction:	Your destination marketing strategy will likely already include a range of activity and messaging. By understanding what is already being communicated and how, you can gain an insight into what may need to change and opportunities for improvement. This stage will review the destination's current marketing activity and assess its impact in relation to the sustainability of your destination.
Guidance:	To start you will need to gather some core data on your current marketing strategy, this will need to include: • What are the targets and objectives of the current strategy? • Who is the strategy targeting? • How long has the strategy been running? • What budget and resource has been committed? • What marketing channels is the strategy using? • What is the current (if any) sustainable messaging? The next step is to look for any results to determine the relative success of the current strategy. The following data sources may be useful: • Website analytics • Social media analytics • Analytics or reports from other channels (e.g., e-news) • Marketing evaluation reports • Customer surveys • Sales data Finally, you need to analyse the data. Where possible, you should identify the following: • Whether the strategy met its targets (or is it on course to)? • What has been successful or unsuccessful? • Which channels have had the most impact? • Who are the most engaged target audiences? • What specific messages had the most impact? • How was sustainable tourism communicated and received? • Did sustainable tourism messaging contribute to any specific success?
Tips:	Use a variety of data sources. This will give you a more complete picture of your marketing performance. Be objective and unbiased in your analysis. The point of this exercise is not necessarily to critique and improve any campaign, instead you are looking to understand what is being done right now and considering how sustainability could be integrated.

Step 5: The Wider Picture

Your destination does not exist in isolation and whilst we will consider your audience specifically in Module 2, it is worthwhile looking at what is happening in the wider world that could impact you. It is also extremely useful to gauge wider perceptions of your destination and see who else is competing with you in the sustainability space.

5.1 Market Trends – what's happening outside of your destination that could impact on your goals?

Introduction:	The world doesn't stand still, therefore it's extremely important to understand the current trends in tourism. Knowing how behaviours are changing, what's more important, what's becoming less important and what issues are driving action. These are key when developing a strategy around sustainable tourism.
Guidance:	Research local and regional trends that affect your destination and consider how they will impact your tourism sector over the next five years. International tourism has changed since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the following elements represent general trends related to sustainability in tourism that have been growing since 2019/2020: • Less flying and more overland travel and domestic and regional holidays • Preference for direct flights • Longer stays for long haul trips to maximise flight and positive economic impacts • Demand for more sustainable products in general • FIT and small group tours, solo travellers • Private, exclusive, and customised experiences, high end tours • Growth in sales of experiences, particularly related to adventure and local communities in some parts of the world • Small-scale leisure activities or activities based on self-guidance • Small/boutique/luxury/eco accommodation options (lodges, guesthouses, private villas) • Off-the-beaten track, nature, fresh air, wide open spaces, soft adventure activities and wellness • Fresh organic homegrown food, à la carte dining • Flexible booking options, reasonable prices and great customer service booked through a reliable partner with good local knowledge and protocols in place ▪ Providers having implemented hygiene & safety protocols. Of course, you should undertake your own research. There are many places where you can find information on tourism trends. Here are a few suggestions: • NTB's or Travel Associations in your target source markets will often provide information on the latest tourism trends in their country or region. For example, the United States Travel Association has a section that discusses the latest trends in US tourism. • Tourism industry publications: often regularly publish articles on tourism trends. Examples include; Travel Weekly, Skift, and TRBusiness.

	• Online travel agencies (OTAs) such as Expedia and Booking.com often publish reports on tourism trends aggregated from their own data. • Social media. By following travel bloggers and influencers, you can stay up-to-date on the latest trends in travel. • Organisations such as CBI, government statistics offices, other NTBs and relevant government departments have a raft of market information and trend reports. See CBI Tourism Trends Report
Tips:	By using a variety of sources, you can get a comprehensive overview of the latest tourism trends. Be cautious about the source of any information on trends. Be sure to look closely about who is publishing it, where their data came from and who they are talking about specifically (e.g., specific nationalities or demographics).
Resources:	CBI Tourism Trends Report, Travel Weekly, Skift, TRBusiness, Expedia and Booking.com

CASE STUDY = Estonia Tourism Board, Digital Nomad Visa

Destinations worldwide were suffering from external implications from the lack of tourism numbers due to Covid-19 and increase in air travel and high leakage due to short stay holiday trends in the wake of the pandemic. To overcome these issues, Estonia was the first country to introduce the Digital Nomad Visa. The visa was produced in reaction to the growing trend of remote working and aims to:

- Disperse tourism spending – as digital nomads are likely to travel to more remote destinations and spend money in locally owned businesses.
- Reboot the tourism economy after Covid-19.
- Promote slow travel options.

For further information click here.

Examples of other destinations who have introduced similar visas: Costa Rica, Namibia and Argentina (also offer a gift card to spend on local experiences for those who stay for over 30 days)

CASE STUDY – Gangwon State, Republic of Korea (Green Destinations 2023 Top 100 Story)

The state of Gangwon is a very popular winters tourism destination, especially after it was the host of the winter Olympic games in 2018. The need to expand its offering and promote itself as a year round destination to increase the sustainable development of the destination was identified.

Research was undertaken to identify niche market opportunities that might support this process. Wellness tourism was one of the key niches that was identified to focus on and the destination shifted its efforts into promoting it as a wellness destination to reach this growing demand.

Through local efforts the 'Wellever Gangwon' brand was established, incorporating environment, social and governance throughout.

For further information click here.

5.2: Online Reputation Audit – how does the wider world perceive you?

Intro:	It is important to understand how the wider world and consumer base sees your destination and what they are saying about you publicly. This step is vital in understanding how you are perceived. And particularly whether sustainability is associated with your destination. Specific brand perception surveys are possible, but an online audit is often cheaper and quicker.
Guidance:	An online audit involves searching multiple platforms and online media as a minimum you should cover: ○ Customer review websites (e.g., TripAdvisor, Google Reviews) ○ Reviews on the website of your destinations' top attractions ○ Travel blogs (search for blogs on your destination on Blogilicious) ○ Social media reviews and discussions (e.g. the Sub-reddit or Facebook group dedicated to your destination) ○ Set up Google alerts / IFTTT no-code platform ○ Google trends ○ Independent and / or international news sources. When you find a mention of your destination, analyse the sentiment of the mention. Is it positive, negative, or neutral? Look especially for repeated references and mentions on a similar topic or subject – the more you see of these the more likely a given idea or thought is widely held about your destination. Where possible summarise the key topics, themes and mentions that make up your destination's visible presence online. You can also make a list of: ○ Where the most active conversations on the destination occur ○ Who is talking about the destination ○ How your online presence is compared with competitors.
Tips:	There are plenty of paid services and tools known as "Social Listening" tools that can undertake this activity for you (and keep doing it on an ongoing basis). They not only do the hard work but can aggregate and interpret results too! Be extremely careful about focusing on specific comments or mentions. Overall, you are looking for trends. For some platforms you may need to identify specific search terms or keywords. If you are doing so, make sure you use a variety of terms to get a holistic picture. Keep a clear record of where you searched (and what you searched for) as repeating this exercise can help you track your progress and spot any change in your online reputation over time.

Next Steps

The findings from this module represent what you (and others) think and know of your destination, and by default, will include its strengths, weakness and start to suggest opportunities or potential threats you need to consider in developing a marketing strategy. These will be further developed in Module 3.

Next, we must consider our external audiences: visitors, customers, and markets. Module 2 will help you explore who they are, what they want and who should be a priority moving forwards.

MODULE 2: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Introduction

In constructing any marketing strategy, it is vital to understand your audiences. By understanding their needs, wants, and pain points, you can build stronger relationships with them and better position your activity to meet their needs and win their loyalty.

You will have more than one target audience which would typically include: consumers (visitors in the context of tourism), businesses (suppliers, enablers and beneficiaries of your sustainable tourism strategy) and influencers of both groups (people or organisations whose opinions or actions could support your agenda indirectly to the end target audiences)

Each of these audiences (sometimes called market segments) will have its own unique wants and needs which can be used to create the most appealing, tailored messages to convert them. For example, sustainability means different things to different people. For some, it may just mean using products and services that are environmentally friendly. For others, it may go much further. By better understanding them, we can focus on the aspects of sustainability that really matter and leverage those in our marketing activity (as well as educate these groups further).

Ultimately, some audiences are more important to your success than others. By identifying your most important customers, contacts and enablers, you can focus your time and resources on the relationships that matter most.

This module will enable you to identify:

- Who are your key audiences right now? What do we know about them that could improve our marketing to them and what can we learn to help us attract new audiences?
- Who are the prospective consumer (visitor) audiences you need to attract, what do they want from a sustainable destination and how can you reach them?
- Who are the prospective business / organisational audiences you need to attract?
- Who are the influencers that will help you to convince these audiences to act?

Step 1: Understand your existing audiences

It is essential to have a thorough understanding of the volume, value, behaviour, and preferences of your current visitor markets. These are people who have already chosen to experience your destination. Who they are, what they do and what they respond to is vital data in understanding where you are currently. Unfortunately, it is not usually possible to encompass all of this one simple step, so you may need to undertake multiple elements of research to gain a useful understanding.

1.1 Who are your current visitors? Collate existing quantitative data

Introduction:	Your very first action should be to broadly understand who your current visitors are on a macro level. By examining quantitative data, you can uncover demographic, geographic and some behavioural information on them. This allows you to identify your source markets, begin to group visitors by specific characteristics and draw some top-level conclusions.
Guidance:	We need answers to some key questions: - Who are they? (as many demographic, geographic and social data points as you can find) - What is the scale? (visitor numbers)

	- Where are they coming from? (domestic / international) - How are they getting here? (transport preferences) - Why are they coming here? (leisure, business, family etc) - What is the main activity do? (beach, safari, historic sites, adventure etc) - How much are they spending? - How long do they stay? - Who or what is influencing their decisions to come? Are there any significant changes over the last 5-10 years (in addition to the impact of Covid-19 in 2020-21). Potential sources of information include: - The destination's existing tourism strategy or marketing plan. Use this as your starting point and update it with current and additional data. - Public sector organisations: National Statistics Bureau, Immigration Office, National Bank, Ministry of Tourism, National Tourism Board - Key destination stakeholders like hotel chains or visitor attractions - Tour operators responsible for providing inbound visitors (may be overseas but worth contacting to get their view on demand and motivators). Use this data to identify your top international and regional source markets by volume and expenditure. Start to build a profile of your visitors by: - Nationality - Place of residence - Purpose of visit (e.g. leisure, business) If not already done so in the research, analyse the data to identify and prioritise the most valuable markets to you as a destination, you can do this on a number of criteria, but consider: - Highest volume - Highest value (average daily spend x number of nights) - Fastest growing markets - Markets with most growth potential (based on your destination assets)
Tips:	- If you are unable to get hold of national data, refer to the UNWTO's data dashboard. However, this information is provided on a yearly basis and therefore it won't provide the most recent statistics. - Each destination is different. So don't limit your data collection to the points listed above. Draw on issues identified in the Strategic Context step (Module 1). See if additional data can be collected and analysed. - Look at data from the past 5-7 years so you can identify trends. Remember that data from 2020-21 during the Covid-19 pandemic does not represent a typical year. Comparing your data from the last full year from 2019 will give you the best indication of your industry's current performance. - It is unlikely that there will be a significant amount of data relating specifically to sustainable tourism at this stage but there will be useful proxy indicators to help you understand trends (eg: visitor numbers at businesses with certification or strong sustainable credentials or to attractions with a strong sustainable character).
Resource:	Look at your: Existing Tourism (and/or Marketing) Strategy, Regional / Local sustainable development strategy and Local / Tourism businesses and attractions. UNWTO data dashboard

1.2 Further research with existing visitors – more depth on what they want and need

Intro:	Whilst the previous stage helped broadly identify your markets, we need to go further to build an understanding of their behaviour and preferences. Undertaking more in-depth research also allows you to interrogate sustainability topics directly.
Guidance:	Before you begin the research, you need to consider the following: **Method:** First, decide which methods you are going to use to reach your existing visitors. This could include any or all of the following: o Face-to-face surveys in destination o In depth 1-2-1 interviews o Focus groups o Online surveys You can use the links in the Resources section below to find out how to develop and use qualitative and quantitative research and to help decide which may be more useful. **Mechanic:** Where and how will you undertake the research? E.g. o Through local stakeholder's customer base o On departure at airports o NTB's newsletter or other visitor databases o Distribution at key visitor attractions Through international travel trade partner lists. **Question format:** A Visitor Research Interview Checklist (Resource 2A) includes a list of standardised questions that any survey could feature. However, you should tailor this extensively to meet your needs. Once you have undertaken the research you can analyse the results to flesh out the details of your visitors as follows: - More detailed information on the demographics, behaviour and characteristics of the visitors who have visited the destination - Understanding of their preferences and motivations (what they choose, what they like or dislike) - How they research and choose (media they consume and respond to) - Understand their satisfaction with the destination and whether it lived up to their perception pre-travel - Understand what sustainability means and its importance to them - Receive feedback on their perceptions of the destination's sustainability.
Tips:	- Ensure the activity is well-planned; you need to ensure you are contacting genuine visitors (especially with online surveys) and removing any bias from the process. - Ensure you don't neglect domestic and regional markets. - Keep surveys as succinct as possible. The longer the survey is the higher the likelihood of question fatigue and a dip in response rates. Consider incentives to complete surveys or attend focus groups. - Whilst you can ask similar questions for each method shown above, you will need to vary and tailor them to the specific situation. Focus groups for instance

	are ideal for open questions, whereas in online surveys you may wish to consider 'closed' multiple choice questions. - Use standard range scales throughout (e.g., 1-5 or Very Good > Good > Average > Poor > Very poor). This allows you to do some statistical comparisons and the questions are quicker to answer for respondents. - Be careful drawing inferences from small sample sizes, and if in any doubt get professional help for primary data research.
Resource:	Find out more about using Quantitative and Qualitative research methods: ProProfs, Qualitative Research Methods, ProProfs, Quantitative Research Methods Visitor Satisfaction Research Checklist (Resource 2A).

CASE STUDY - Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority, International Visitor Surveys

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Authority conducts surveys for international visitors to help understand their travel behaviours and interests. The research is available on the corporate section of their website, helping to provide insight and support to all local destination stakeholders.

Find out more and download the results here.

1.3: Inbound Travel Trade Research

Introduction:	You can complement and expand on the data from your existing visitors by targeting the inbound travel trade from your source markets. These important middlemen can share valuable information on the destination, both from their own and their clients' perspective.
Guidance:	Before you begin the research, you again need to consider the following: **Method:** first, decide which methods you are going to use to complete this research: o In-depth interviews o Online surveys o Online focus groups **Sample:** when selecting a target sample for the research you should: o Identify your core source markets o Choose 2 to 5 tour operators from these markets who sell the destination. o Select a sample with a range of trip prices, visitor demographic, niche activity and interest offering and level of service o Include tour operators who sell trips to your region, but don't sell your destination, to find out why they don't sell it. **Mechanic:** How will you reach the selected sample? o The NTB database of current source market tour operators. o Stakeholder audit research o Through international travel trade partners or associations o Online research and online travel agent platforms to see who is selling your destination and region o You may be able to meet these tour operators at trade fairs, or you can contact them via email or LinkedIn and arrange an online meeting. **Question Format:** ensure you keep the questionnaire and survey short and sweet so that they are not too onerous for the operators. Make sure your questions cover the key topics that you have identified in Module 1. **Analysis:** Once you have undertaken the research you can analyse the results to understand: - The image and positioning of the destination from a travel trade perceptive. - Reasons for choosing the destination - Barriers against visiting the destination - Key competitor destinations - Trade and consumer perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the destination's current sustainable offer - Visitor profiles and expectations in relation to sustainability.

CASE STUDY - Tajikistan Tourism Board & World Bank, Tour Operator Engagement
As part of a wider Rural Economy Development Project (REDP), funded by the World Bank, a survey was rolled out to collect data around visitor experiences within Tajikistan through engaging with outbound and inbound tour operators. Tajikistan at the time had limited quantitative

information on inbound tourism above tourist numbers and spending. The surveys aimed to build on this data, by collecting qualitative data to understand visitor satisfaction and travel motivation from the tour operators with customers within the countries target markets. The survey also targeted tour operators who were not currently selling trips to the country, to help build an understanding of the constraint and opportunities for future development.

Although the questions were based on travel in Tajikistan as a whole, particular focus was given to two regions that were of key interest for the REDP. To gain greater understanding on opportunities and constraints of tourism development within these specific areas. The survey was completed by 45 operators and interviews were organised with some of them to delve deeper and build upon the answers given. The results provided an overview of the countries tourism offerings, alongside the behaviour and interests of tourists arriving in the county. Stakeholder engagement and tourist satisfaction surveys were also implemented alongside this research to provide further context and strengthen the findings and analysis.

See results here

1.4: Are there other stakeholders that you need to know about and what do they need to help you deliver the strategy?

Intro:	In Module 1 - Step 3, you identified a group of organisations and individuals who have a vested interest in the creation, delivery, and outcomes of the sustainable tourism marketing strategy. As part of inducting them into the stakeholder working group and/or as a separate exercise, you need to ensure that you understand their needs and motivations for being part of this movement.
Guidance:	You will likely have used personal contact to engage the stakeholders so as part of your follow-up communications, it is recommended to find out the following (if it isn't already known and recorded): - What motivated them to engage with the process - What they feel is the most important part of the sustainable tourism strategy in your location (relate to the people, planet, profit triple bottom line if it's easier) - What they expect to get out of their involvement; what success looks like for them personally, for their organisations and their communities. - How they feel they can inspire and lead others to adopt the approach - What they expect the NTB to be doing, providing, supporting etc. Phone calls, face to face discussions or agenda items at group meetings are among the most appropriate methods to gather this information.
Tips:	Don't waste stakeholders' time. If your working group is meeting anyway, make this an agenda item so that it can be completed or at least discussed as part of their commitment. It may be that the members prefer to take away a short questionnaire and think about their responses privately – this is fine. Be focused when you ask the questions – don't stray into other priorities and try to ask all the stakeholders the same questions in the same way so as not to bias their responses.

	Collate the data and 1) confirm that your strategy will be able to deliver what the stakeholders need, 2) feed back to the group in collectively that this is the case, 3) use the findings as a regular check against your progress to make sure your delivery is on track.

1.5: Do you need to change your target visitor audiences?

Introduction:	With a clear understanding of your current visitors and their environmental, social, and economic impact on your destination, you need to have confidence that they are good fit for your new sustainable tourism marketing strategy or if you need to focus on different geographic, demographic, or niche markets. For example, if your largest inbound market is not acting respectfully and mainly staying in all-inclusive, internationally owned hotels, upsetting local customs, and not spending their money locally, do you want to keep investing your marketing budget to attract more of them? There may be alternative niche audiences who travel off season, spend more locally, are respectful of local cultures, travel to more remote destinations, pay more to stay in environmentally friendly accommodation, travel by train and leave a smaller environmental footprint. Targeting your marketing activities at these niche audiences is likely be more valuable in helping to deliver your sustainability objectives.
Guidance:	This stage is about analysing all the data you have collected so far on your visitors and asking some hard questions about their potential to respond to your product offering and in particular, your messages around sustainability. • What does sustainability mean to them? • How important is it to them? • What sustainable products or activities do they value in your destination? • How does sustainability influence their buying decisions? • How open are they to learning more and trying new things? • How important are they to your destination? • How easy are they to communicate with and reach? If after undertaking this exercise you are left with a mismatch between what you offer (or want to offer) and what your target audiences want and respond to, then you may have to consider either: o Focusing your marketing heavily on education and influencing behaviour change o Finding new, more receptive audiences (see next step)
Tips:	Don't forget domestic and regional markets, they will have lower carbon footprint than your international sources markets and will probably be more resilient to concerns about health and security. Be honest and practical with what your research has shown you, if sustainability is simply not an important driver for your audience, then focus your marketing on one who is. However equally, be extremely careful in alienating an existing audience, there is almost always scope for promoting change.

	Reducing carbon footprint from travel: Destination carbon footprint calculator Green Destinations' carbon footprint calculator looks at carbon emissions based on a destinations' source markets as well as their accommodation, transportation, and activity choices. This can help decision makers learn where carbon emissions can be lowered by focusing on other (closer) source markets or promoting changes in their behavior. Learn more here.

Step 2: Exploring potential visitors – who else could we target?

Your existing visitors and the markets they represent may not be the only potential audience for your destination. New trends are emerging all the time and some segments, markets or niche groups might be a perfect fit. The challenge of course is identifying these visitors, finding them, and understanding their expectations related to sustainability. Again, you may need to undertake multiple elements of research in order to target them effectively.

2.1 Market trends that offer potential

Introduction:	Targeting new visitors is requires careful long-term planning but it may be necessary to deliver the positive benefits of your sustainability objectives. Start by looking at what's happening in tourism generally that is relevant to your destination and particularly to sustainability.
Guidance:	Research local and regional trends that affect your destination and consider how they will impact the tourism sector over the next five years. International tourism has changed since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the following elements represent general trends related to sustainability in tourism that have been growing since 2019/2020: • Less flying, more overland travel and domestic and regional holidays • Increasing awareness that direct flights are less polluting • Longer stays for long haul trips to minimise negative flight and positive economic impacts • More sustainable products in general • Flexible, independent travel (FIT) and small group tours, solo travellers • Private, exclusive, and customised experiences, high end tours • Growth in sales of experiences, particularly related to adventure and local communities • Small-scale leisure activities or activities based on self-guidance • Small/boutique/luxury/eco accommodation options (lodges, guesthouses, private villas) • Off-the-beaten track, nature, fresh air, wide open spaces, soft adventure activities and wellness • Fresh organic homegrown food, a la carte dining • Flexible booking options, reasonable prices and great customer service booked through a reliable partner with good local knowledge and protocols in place ▪ Providers having implemented hygiene and safety protocols. Of course, you should undertake your own research. There are many places where you can find information on tourism trends. Here are a few suggestions: • NTB's or Travel Associations in your target source markets will often provide information on the latest tourism trends in their country or region. For example, the United States Travel Association has a section that discusses the latest trends in US tourism. • Tourism industry publications: often regularly publish articles on tourism trends. Examples include; Travel Weekly, Skift, and TRBusiness. • Online travel agencies (OTAs) such as Expedia and Booking.com often publish reports on tourism trends aggregated from their own data.

	• Social media. By following travel bloggers and influencers, you can stay up to date on the latest trends in travel. • Trade and representative organisations such as CBI have a raft of market information and trend reports. See CBI Tourism Trends Within all this data you are looking for specific trends that match well with your sustainable product offer as a destination. Opportunities you can take advantage of AND (importantly) which might help you identify specific markets or demographics to target.
Tips:	By using a variety of sources, you can get a comprehensive overview of the latest tourism trends. Be cautious about the source of any information on trends. Be sure to look closely about who is publishing it, where their data came from and who they are talking about specifically (e.g. specific nationalities or demographics).
Resource:	CBI Tourism Trends

2.2: Targeting a niche audience

Introduction:	A complementary approach is to make clear choices about which tourism segment and niches you want to be active in, based on trends in the sector and the strengths and weaknesses of your country's portfolio. Concentrating on the niche markets that will be most interested in your sustainable tourism offer is likely to result in a good match. Specialising can also help you stand out from your competitors.
Guidance:	For this stage you need to look closely at your product offering (Module 1) and consider the key sustainable experiences you can offer as a destination, or that you aspire to develop. This might include: • hard and soft adventure markets • birding • community-based tourism • cultural heritage • culinary tourism • eco-tourism • educational tourism CBI have created an interactive infographic and market studies for various segments and their niches. Once you have a selection of niche markets identified, you need to narrow these down. Consider the niche markets that: • will generate the types of visitors that you want to attract • that are most likely to add value to your destination • offer strong growth potential • will be most effective in helping meet your sustainability goals • A template (Resource 2B) can assist with matching new target markets to your destination offer and helping you select those most suitable.
Tips:	Really focus on the core strengths your destination offers.

	Focus on a small selection of niche markets, trying to pull in too many directions can be very difficult. Be cautious of niches that require specific infrastructure and development within your destination. They may well be worth pursuing but always keep your sustainability agenda in mind. Involve your businesses stakeholders in this product-market fit analysis, as they are delivering the destination offer.
Resources:	Selecting New Audiences Table (Resource 2B). CBI Infographic to selecting niche markets

CASE STUDY – Visit Iceland, Mission Iceland

Visit Iceland launched a new campaign targeted towards attracting space tourists to the destination. Due to the delays with the access in travelling to space, they identified a gap in the market. The campaign 'Mission Iceland' launched in November 2022, showcasing the destinations space offerings for a fraction of the price and lower carbon emissions than travelling to space.

The new campaign is also in line with their strategy to move away from mass tourism and only attract key niche markets who care about the environment, stay longer and overall support the sustainable development of the destination.

For further information click here.

2.3: Test your assumptions

Introduction:	In the Steps 2.1 and 2.2 above, you have made some assumptions based on market or trend data which need to be tested by assessing the opinions and reactions of travellers from those groups. In particular, those who have never visited your destination. This allows you to gauge their current motivations and perceptions, ascertain how receptive they are to your offer and understand what you may need to say or do to engage them in future.
Guidance:	Before you begin the research, you need to consider the following: **Method:** first, decide which methods you are going to use to complete this research: o Online surveys o Focus groups **Sample:** when selecting a target market for the research you should: o Identify travellers who match one of your target niche markets or who fall within a trend opportunity o Identify travellers with motivations that match your destinations offering o If relevant include a mixture of domestic/regional/international markets o Consider what the best communication streams are with these markets and how easy they may be to reach. **Mechanic:** How will you reach the selected sample? o Commission an online panel survey o Online platforms and social media o Influencers **Question Format:** ensure you keep the questionnaire and survey short and sweet so that they are not too onerous for the operators. Make sure your questions cover the key topics that you have identified in Module 1. Once you have undertaken the research you can analyse the results to understand: o Whether this market has potential for your destination o Identify potential visitors' perceptions of your destination o Understand reasons for choosing and barriers for not choosing the destination as a travel option o Identify opportunities for future product development o Identify key competitors.

Step 3: Analysing your audiences

At this point you should have a wide selection of data relating to your current and potential audiences. You should understand (among other things); who they are, where they are, what they want/need and what influences their choices. Taking things a step further, refining and analysing the data, helps us gain deeper insight into how we can influence their choices (and will make creating a marketing strategy much easier!)

3.1: Prioritizing your B2C (consumer) audiences

Introduction:	Marketing works most effectively when you focus your efforts on a smaller number of target audiences. By tailoring your messaging and targeting the right people with the right messages, you're more likely to get the results you want. In terms of sustainability this also matters, as focused messages can help build stronger relationships with a specific audience.
Guidance:	Through your research so far you will have gained some idea of your biggest or most valuable target audiences as well as identified some markets with strong potential for the future. The next step is to prioritize them. You can use any criteria to do this, but some suggestions are: • Who is the best fit with your tourism offer and will help you deliver your sustainability objectives? • Who will be interested in your offer in the off-season? • Which audiences can reach you without flying? • Who has the most potential to spend money locally? • Who is easiest (and most cost effective) to communicate with? • Who has the most potential for growth? Once you settle on your criteria, you can use several methods to help you prioritise: • Criteria based systems • Scoring systems • Prioritisation matrix • Ranking and forced ranking VisitEngland produced a Prioritisation Guide for Destinations which includes information on all the above methods. However, you need to keep your sustainability objectives in mind when you use it. You should aim to identify three groups (with only a few priority audiences in each): 1. **Core markets**: audiences with a high importance to your destination right now. These should generally be markets who are easy for you to access and who can help you meet your goals in the immediate term. 2. **Mid-term markets**: growing markets with the potential to become a core market in the medium term. These might be markets who you have some contact with but require further work to reach. They should have a strong potential for growth. 3. **Emerging markets**: Under-represented markets currently but with high potential or value for the long-term. These are perhaps new markets who you have minimal knowledge of or contact with. They will require more work, but you perceive their value and growth potential makes them worthwhile.

Tips:	Don't lose sight of the sustainability angle. The markets you prioritise should either be a good fit for your sustainable offer and objectives OR be open to educating and creating behavior change so that they can be. Issues and trends identified in Module 1 are also very useful for making a judgement about emerging markets. Obtain feedback from your stakeholders on any prioritisation. This feedback can help you ensure that you're targeting the right audiences and that your messaging is aligned destination wide.
Resource:	Visit England Prioritisation Guide for Destinations

3.2: Audience Personas

Introduction:	Detailed visitor profiles, often referred to as buyer personas, will help to develop a more targeted and affective marketing strategy. Developing personas means creating a picture that describes who your customers are, their likes and dislikes, motivations, and frustrations. The purpose is to see your target customers as real people to better understand how they think and how they behave. This is an essential tool to ensure your digital marketing is effectively targeted.

Guidance:	The process for creating buyer personas is simple but requires research, thought and the ability to put yourself in the buyer's position to empathise with their thoughts and feelings. To do so:
	• Create a blank persona for each of your prioritised markets
	• Note down all the data and information your research has shown for this persona so far
	• Humanise them by asking yourself specific questions, such as:
	  ○ What is their name?
	  ○ How old are they?
	  ○ Do they have family or are they single?
	  ○ What is their profession? How much do they earn?
	  ○ What does a typical day in their life look like?
	  ○ Where do they go for information?
	  ○ How do they prefer to obtain goods and services?
	  ○ What is important to them when choosing a travel destination?
	  ○ What do they value most?
	  ○ What are their goals?
	  ○ What are their pain points?
	• Map out the information on a standardised template.
	
	We have provided a template (Resource 2C) which can help you create simple and easy personas.
	
	There are also many persona development tools available, both free and paid. Some of the most popular tools include:
	
	HubSpot Make My Persona - A free tool that allows you to create detailed buyer personas.
	Userforge - A paid tool that allows you to create and manage personas, as well as track their effectiveness.

	Xtensio - A Freemium tool that allows you to create interactive persona templates. These fictional profiles act as an important tool when developing content and promotional strategies, helping to guide marketing success. Additionally, these can be shared with stakeholders with research and evidence for their own marketing practices. It can also help to guide what tone, topics, channels, and activities should be used for each specific consumer group.
Tips:	Make personas as detailed as you need. However, keep your end goal in mind, they are there to help you understand your ideal customer and their goals, and guidance on how to tailor your marketing strategy. Being too detailed may lead to diminishing returns. Personas should be specific and realistic. Avoid creating personas that are too general or that are based on assumptions rather than data. Customers' needs and preferences are constantly changing, so your buyer personas should be a living document that you update regularly. Involve multiple stakeholders in the persona development process, and if possible, undertake some research with your audience to check they are accurate and relevant.
Resource:	Buyer Persona Template (Resource 2C)

Next Steps

The findings from this Module are incredibly valuable and will need to be analysed, together with the findings from Module 1 (understanding your destination) as part of the next Module 3.

This analysis will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to developing your sustainable marketing strategy AS IT RELATES TO YOUR PRIORITY TARGET AUDIENCES and will help inform the goals and objectives of your campaign, its content, and messages as well as how you choose to distribute it.

MODULE 3 – IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

Here is where all the hard work pays off! This module utilises all the findings from the research performed throughout Modules 1 and 2 and helps you draw conclusions as well as starting to define the areas your marketing strategy will focus on.

It is worth repeating that, by following this process, you have created an evidence-based approach. This is fundamental in driving action that truly benefits the destination but also ensuring you are credible and authentic in what you do and say to your audiences (and avoids the notion of "greenwashing").

More specifically in this module you will:

- Understand your destination's sustainable tourism strengths and weaknesses
- Assess whether your destination brand is fit for purpose
- Identify the key opportunities for change.

Step 1: Analysing your destination

If you have followed the steps outlined in the previous two modules, you may well have a very large dataset combining various types of research. At this point we need to analyse it, understand it and to narrow down to the important details. This may seem challenging if you have a large amount of data, so this step provides a framework for looking at things methodically.

Remember that, whilst it's easy to get bogged down in the detail, to keep in mind throughout that we are working to answer the question "how can we better present our country as a sustainable destination?" Any analysis you do or conclusions you draw need to be focussed on this end.

1.1 SWOT Analysis

<table>
<tr><td>Introduction:</td><td>This stage brings all the data from Module 1 into one tool to look at the current picture for sustainable tourism in your destination objectively and draw conclusions and recommendations.

A SWOT analysis is a commonly used tool in strategic development and marketing, it helps to identify; your destination's greatest (S)trengths and (W)eaknesses, as well as the (O)pportunities and (T)hreats it faces from external pressures.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Guidance:</td><td>To undertake a SWOT for your destination's sustainable tourism potential, you need to:
Analyse all the data from Modules 1 and 2
Identify the key trends or big issues it indicates
Decide whether those are positive or negative
You can then lay out the points in their corresponding place in a simple 4x4 grid:

<table>
<tr><th>Strengths</th><th>Weaknesses</th></tr>
<tr><td>What are your destinations sustainability strengths?
Internal, positive attributes, both tangible and intangible within your control.</td><td>What are your destinations sustainability weaknesses?
Internal, negative factors that detract from the value you offer or put you at competitive disadvantage.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Opportunities</th><th>Threats</th></tr>
<tr><td>What are your destinations sustainability opportunities?
External, positive factors that represent reasons your destination could succeed.</td><td>What are the greatest sustainability threats facing the destination?
External, negative factors beyond your control that could place your strategy at risk.</td></tr>
</table>

For example (for illustrative purposes only):
Strength - A strong bird watching product that could attract a new market
Weakness – Bird watching is seasonal (only at its best in spring/autumn)
Opportunity – Growth in interest in bird watching experiences from international travellers
Threat – Strong competition from more established bird watching destinations.</td></tr>
</table>

	Note – you do not have to address every point in all four areas, however taking each strength and considering what weaknesses you may have that hinder it and what external factors may influence it, is a useful step too. A template has been provided to help with guidance for this analysis (Resource 3A). Once you have filled out the grid, it is extremely useful to prioritise the elements in each square. Which are most important or have the highest impact? You should then have a prioritised list of: • **Strengths** – things you should promote strongly and work hard to preserve, sustain and grow (where appropriate) • **Weaknesses** – issues you need to be aware of and mark for future development work • **Opportunities** – factors you can capitalise on • **Threats** – risks you need to be vigilant of or plan to mitigate.
Tips:	Remember (S)trengths and (W)eaknesses are about what your destination is and offers, (O)pportunities and (T)hreats are about what's happening externally that impacts your destination. Collaborating with your stakeholders (potentially via the working group) to complete the SWOT analysis will provide viewpoints from a broader perspective. However, research findings from the previous stage should be shared before asking others to take part in a SWOT analysis. If you are finding this still too unwieldy, you can complete more than one SWOT, perhaps based on activity areas (product development or marketing) or perhaps focussing each on a specific strand of sustainable tourism (Planet, People, Profit), before finalising a master SWOT that brings together the most important points of each.
Resource:	SWOT Analysis Template (Resource 3A)

CASE STUDY - Visit Durango, Colorado, USA (Green Destinations 2023 Top 100 Story)

Visit Durango needed to figure out how to improve the quality of life for residents of La Plata County while responsibly maintaining its competitiveness as a Colorado Destination. We conducted a community engagement project, "Listening to Locals," in 2022 to initiate a dialog with residents by using parts of the Continual Improvement for Social Responsibility Model. Through fourteen two-hour and five one-hour workshops, we interacted with over 50 organisations from for-profit and non-profit sectors, as well as over 25 residents across La Plata County, to identify more than 30 economic strengths, 30 environmental strengths, and 50 social strengths in addition to 30 financial risks, 30 environmental risks, and 50 social risks, while also highlighting 60 economic opportunities and 50 environmental and social opportunities.

To view the final case study report click here.

Step 2: Assess your current brand and offering

In creating a sustainable destination marketing campaign, we want it to work in harmony with your existing destination brand, however we must be pragmatic about whether that is possible. This should not be about reinventing everything for its own sake, rather, this exercise focuses on looking hard at your brand and product offer to see whether it is fit for this purpose.

2.1 Competition Analysis

Introduction:	Marketing and destination's do not exist in vacuums and you will be competing against other destinations (to a greater or lesser degree) for potentially the same visitors to deliver relatively similar (from the audience perspective) experiences. Benchmarking yourself against competitive destinations helps identify where you have an edge, or if you need to change course.
Guidance:	The first step is to identify who your competitors are. You can use the Strengths identified in your SWOT can help you do this. It may not mean those closest to you in terms of location, rather, look for destinations who are: • Offering a comparable product or experience • With similar cultural and community offerings • With similar environmental assets • Operating at a similar price point for an entire experience • Offering an experience of comparable quality • Operating in a similar location relative to their customer base Restrict your list of competitor destinations to a handful (3-5 is a good idea), too many becomes unwieldy. Although you may have different competitors for different aspects of your product offer. You could choose them by looking at criteria such as: • Who is the market leader? • Who is at a similar stage to you? • Who else is after the same target audiences as you? The attachment in (Resource 3B) includes a checklist of things to look for, and tips on where to find the information. With that data you will need to analyse your competitors and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The easiest way to do a like-for-like comparison and compare yourself against is to undertake **a simplified SWOT analysis** for each of them. This will make it simple to match yourself up against them. Finally, it can be very useful to contrast yourself and all your competitors against the wants and needs of your key target markets. For each of your priority audiences. Create a chart for each audience with their key wants and needs identified. Then rank where your destination and key competitors would sit in your ability to deliver on these needs.
Tips:	If you are an adventure destination, use the Adventure Tourism Development Index to identify competitors in your region and worldwide that are highly ranked.

	Focus on their sustainable messaging – what are they saying and how are they communicating it? Equally look at how they are evidencing these claims. Analyse them through the eyes of a consumer as well as a competitor, how do they come across, do they provide everything you need to know and answer all the questions you have? Things change! Once you have some identified competitors monitor their websites, social media profiles, and industry publications to see any changes or new initiatives.
Resource:	Competitor Analysis Checklist (Resource 3B)

CASE STUDY - Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotional Authority, Tourism Demand Assessment and Competitor Analysis
Research was undertaken, in partnership with the World Bank to identify key competitors, within the destinations identified niche markets. In depth case studies were created to help identify areas where these competitor destinations are successful. To view the final case study report click here.

2.2 Brand Assessment

Introduction:	The previous steps should have given you a strong idea about where some of your key strengths and weaknesses are, as well as how you match up to your competitors. Now we need to ask the difficult question of whether your current destination brand is fit for purpose to convey that offer and whether it can help you stand out against your competition.
Guidance:	The tool at Step 4 of Module 1 asked you to look at your brand and understand what it offers, its values and its essence. With that data to hand, ask yourself the following tough questions: • Is it the right vehicle to convey your sustainable tourism offer? • Are its values and personality in line with a sustainable offer? • Can the way it is communicated clearly convey a sustainable message? • Does it really focus on what gives you an edge in terms of sustainability? • What kind of organisation or individual will positively respond to your brand? (travel trade, Millennial women, Baby boomer men etc.) • How much support does your brand have from your tourism businesses and stakeholders? • How well known and recognised is it amongst your target audiences for this strategy? As stated before, it can be difficult to judge whether your brand is fit for purpose just by reviewing it internally. If there is any uncertainty, it is recommended that you test it with a few of your key target audiences via a Brand Perception Survey see template (Resource 3C). Your results should tell you whether your audience perceives any sustainability attributes and messages within your brand, and if not what they ARE perceiving from it. If you do believe it is fit for purpose (or can be with minor tweaks) then move ahead. **However, if you believe it is not the fit for purpose then we would recommend halting this process** and undertaking a reworking of your brand before moving forward. For you to market your sustainable tourism offer effectively, it is important that your brand incorporates and conveys sustainability to some extent. Without it you are trying to implement change under an umbrella that doesn't support you.
Tips:	Be cautious here as a brand reposition is not a matter to take lightly at NTB level. Do undertake research and have an evidence base before making any decisions if you are the slightest bit uncertain. Do not be tempted to shoehorn sustainability into your current destination brand if it is diametrically opposed to it. You need to reconsider its pillars, values, and identity fully. The good news is that the work you have done so far will be invaluable in any brand reworking that you need to do.
Resource:	Brand Perception Survey (Resource 3C)

2.3: Gap Analysis

Introduction:	A final step of analysis is to look at where your offer is right now opposed to where your vision places your destination. You are looking to identify the gaps in your provision and consider how to bridge those, either by innovation or change. This could include things like product development, new target markets, new promotional practices, website development, research opportunities and more.
Guidance:	To start with, you need to re-visit your vision to get a sense of what you are hoping to achieve in terms of sustainable tourism in your destination. If you haven't already you will need to expand on "what success looks like" to build your future goal. Ask yourself (in an ideal world): • What would your product offer need to include to deliver this vision? • How would your marketing and promotion need to work to deliver the vision? • What resources or delivery structures would you need? • What expectations might your visitors have if the vision was realised? • What needs might your stakeholders have if the vision was realised? • What impacts might there be on the destination if the vision was realised? This allows you to create a hypothetical idea of what the desired state of sustainable tourism in your destination would entail. The second step is to compare this to the current state that your research shows you and ask, "where are the gaps?" – what is the difference between where you are and where you want to be? For each of those questions you just answered about the ideal state of your destination, look critically at the current situation to determine the gaps. Once you have identified a gap, you need to ask a few specific questions: • What is the gap specifically? Your ideal state may be a little vague, so take the opportunity to extrapolate your current state into something clear • Why does the gap exist? Understanding the causes for a gap are an important part of planning how to bridge it • What would be the implications and impacts of bridging the gap? Take some time to consider the wider impacts of this change for People, Place and Profit. Finally, you should separate out the gaps you have found into specific lists of priorities: • Priorities that require product development • Priorities that affect how you deliver your marketing activity • Priorities that deal with organisational structures and resources.
Tips:	Whilst you should be ambitious and aspirational it is important to have a strong degree of realism when building your future "desired state". When selecting gaps to address, again be realistic, product development, especially, can be time consuming. Focus on a few key areas where you can make the most impact.

Step 3: Implementing Change

3.1 Identifying priorities for your marketing strategy

Introduction:	This section has asked you to analyse your sustainable offering and methods in several ways. By this point you should have a clear picture of the areas you need to focus on to help your vision become reality. These become the priorities your marketing strategy seeks to address, and drive what specific activities you plan to deliver.
Guidance:	This step asks you to articulate your list of priorities. If you feel some are related or not specifically distinct from each other, you may wish to group these priorities where possible to create a clear list of focussed areas to address. If you are unsure of what a priority might look like, you could consider some of the following, for example (depending on whether your data indicates a need): • Raising Visitor Awareness - s*howcasing and better exposing your sustainable offer to your target audiences as part of your wider tourism offer* • Awareness and education of stakeholders - m*aking the case for and instilling more sustainable practices and knowledge within your destination* • Spreading the impact of tourism within the destination - a*ddressing overtourism and impact at "honeypot" sites and spreading benefits across the destination* • Addressing seasonality - p*romoting off season activities or targeting markets with preference for year-round activity* • Influencing Visitor Behaviour change - p*romoting the availability of and improving access to sustainable options for visitors* • Embedding best practice - b*asing your offer on sound sustainable practice and making these visible to the target audience (e/g certification schemes)* • Increasing repeat visits - b*uilding a purposeful and lasting relationship with your target audience*
Tips:	Group priorities where it makes sense to but do not feel you have to. Refer these priorities back to your vision and analysis. Will they help deliver the vision? Do they address the key outputs of your analysis?

CASE STUDY – German Tourism Board, Feel Good in Germany Campaign

In response to ongoing research on the rise in sustainable travel, the German Tourism Board launched a campaign to assist travellers' awareness around travelling in a sustainable way when planning and experiencing the destinations offerings. This campaign included education and awareness on low emission transport options, natural and cultural experiences, and sustainable accommodation offerings. An online carbon calculator tool is also available, allowing travellers to track and offset their travel.

As part of the campaign, the tourist board invited tour operators from their key target markets on familiarisation trips. These trips showcased the sustainable and low carbon travel options that the destination has to offer, hoping to educate and change their consumers travel behaviours to align with their sustainable development objectives.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Puerto Rico Tourism Company, Agro-Tourism Program

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company has identified the positive impacts that tourism can provide to other local industries. Subsequently they have developed an agro-tourism program that promotes the work of farmers on the island and helps to provide alternative forms of income for these businesses whilst also educating visitors on an important part of the islands culture.

Find out more here.

3.2 Marketing Delivery Issues

Introduction:	If the previous steps of analysis highlighted weaknesses or gaps in HOW you market and communicate your destination, then these should be addressed and included as part of your marketing strategy. By doing so you can improve and develop how you do things as well as developing new things TO DO.
Guidance:	This is an optional step, dependant on what your analysis has told you. However, if you have highlighted gaps, weaknesses or untapped opportunities that change how you market and communicate **in-house** these should be grouped together to sit as **a specific separate** priority. This might include things such as: • Increasing/decreasing or changing the choice of platforms you work across • Specific training needs for your marketing team • Recruiting or out-sourcing for new resource in your team • Improving your media assets library • Arranging for your team members to get first-hand experience of your sustainable product offer • Improvements or changes to your technology and tools • Improvements to the speed and mobile user experience on the NTB website • Improvements to your own management or approval processes for marketing activities • Sourcing budget for delivery IF you feel any of these elements pose a significant risk to delivering this marketing strategy then we recommend you halt at this point **UNTIL** you have addressed these issues. It is important your strategy has the right resources and that you have the right systems in place before you push further forward.
Tips:	Be honest about these issues and the risk they pose. If need be you can run a risk analysis to ascertain whether these issues should halt progress (as well as consider how to address them).
Resource:	Risk analysis tools: Mind Tools, Queensland Managing Risk

3.3 Organisational Priorities

Introduction:	If the previous steps of analysis highlighted weaknesses or gaps in the organisational set-up of tourism in your destination and how it is resourced and managed, it is not something you should ignore. Although destination management is outside of the scope of a sustainable marketing strategy, there is a place to address B2B issues here, especially if those threaten the success of your work promoting a sustainable destination.
Guidance:	Tourism is organised differently in every destination so there is no one-size-fits all picture. The research in Modules 1 and 2 should have shown: • Who the key players are • The nature of the relationship and how they interact with your destination level marketing. If through your analysis you have identified any of the following issues you may need to undertake some specific destination management work to address them: • Conflicts between interest groups • Breakdowns in communications and working relationships • Competing marketing organisations • Apathy or intransigence amongst stakeholders • Prevalent cultural attitudes that are diametrically opposed to the principles of sustainability • General lack of funding or investment in tourism structures • Unclear relationships between various bodies and the NTB. There is scope for education and awareness raising within a marketing strategy so you can place some of these through your B2B activity. However, IF you feel any of these elements pose a significant risk to delivering this marketing strategy then we recommend you halt at this point **UNTIL** you have addressed these issues. It is important your strategy can operate effectively and consistently across the destination to have any chance of having impact with target audiences.
Tips:	Again, you can run a risk analysis on any specific issues that could halt progress (see previous step). A stakeholder working group can be a fantastic vehicle for addressing and overcoming these kinds of issues. However, you and they may need to put in specific work first before you are able to roll out a marketing strategy.

CASE STUDY - Sierra Leone Tourism Board, Explore Freedom Campaign

Sierra Leone has a wealth of natural assets, including one of Africa's most beautiful palm-fringed coastlines, lush rainforest, dramatic mountains, exotic wildlife combined with resilient, naturally hospitable people, vibrant culture, and heritage central to the abolition of the slave trade and the repatriation of freed slaves. However, negative perceptions of the country based on the long civil war, Ebola outbreak and the recent mudslide continue to hinder the development of the country's tourism sector.

To combat these issues, the NTB went through a re-branding process and launched the new brand promise "Sierra Leone is the realm of the free and it invites you to explore freedom" and the tourism marketing slogan "Explore Freedom" along with the destination brand identity/ logo.

To kick-start the launch of the Explore Freedom brand, an influencer-led digital marketing and social media campaign was undertaken.

Find our more here.

3.4 Product Development Priorities

Introduction:	Finally, if the previous steps of analysis highlighted weaknesses or gaps in your product offer that requires new products, services, activities or infrastructure, these are again largely beyond the scope of this marketing and communications strategy. However, again, your B2B activity can help pave the way for them and important gaps and ideas should not be lost.
Guidance:	Product development is a key part of destination development. However, in any instance you can only tangibly communicate what you have to offer (or what you might imminently have to offer), as your consumers primarily care about what they can experience right now. However, the work you have done so far is extremely valuable in identifying opportunities for future developments and those can form a core part of your B2B messaging, particularly if you can show opportunities backed by evidence. Draw up a list of the key product development opportunities and retain these as an influencing "wish list" for communicating with your B2B audience. If you need further evidence to make the case for any specific product development activity, then you can consider: • Building an ongoing consumer research element into your marketing activity to assess their needs and wants in relation to the product • Monitoring specific indicators to show the need or demand (see Module 7 for more) • Building any of those propositions into your evaluation system and asking "what difference would this have made to our marketing activity if we had this available to us?"
Tips:	Share this list of product development opportunities widely within your stakeholder network, making others aware of the opportunity may be enough to start its development.

CASE STUDY - Costa Rica Tourism Board, National Sustainability Certification Program

The Costa Rican National Tourism Board launched a national sustainability certification scheme for tourism businesses to assist with awareness building around the importance of sustainability. The scheme is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and is awarded to businesses who can prove their sustainability commitments through reporting and evidence.

The scheme not only aims to entice the wider tourism industry to increase their sustainability operations, but also provides guidance for visitors when making sustainable travel decisions. This

is done through a search engine system that allows visitors to search for accommodation and other tourism related businesses by using a sustainable filter.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Slovenia

The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism is a national level certification programme to introduce sustainable models to tourism service providers and destinations in Slovenia. The Slovenia Green Brand aims to carry out the following:

- brings together all efforts directed towards the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia,
- offers tools to destinations and service providers that enable them to evaluate and improve their sustainability endeavours
- and promotes these green endeavours through the Slovenia Green brand.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Estonia

The Estonian Tourist Board in partnership with the Green Destinations Foundation, brought together seven Estonian destinations to work towards promoting the principles of sustainable tourism in Estonia. The aim of the programme was to map the current sustainable tourism situation and develop sustainable tourism experiences in the country.

For further information click here.

Next Steps

This module brings together your evidence base and filters that data into a set of key priorities that your product development and marketing needs to act on to positively influence sustainable tourism in your destination.

The next module helps to lay out your specific sustainable destination story which forms the bedrock of your marketing strategy and is the basis for the activity and communications that will address these priorities.

In Module 5 these points will be used to clearly lay out all the strategic elements that will ensure your plan has a solid foundation and you have a roadmap outlining what you should be doing and when.

MODULE 4 – BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION STORY

Introduction:

A successful marketing campaign requires a strong foundation of core assets. These assets can help you be consistent throughout your range of activity, articulate ideas meaningfully to your audience, ensure you are reflecting the best of what your destination has to offer, keep things grounded in the evidence-based approach and avoid green washing, and make it easy to share with others to help spread the message further.

This module will provide you with the tools and resources you need to build these core assets such as:

- Identifying your key differentiating points
- Tailoring messages to specific audiences
- Writing the core messages
- Choosing key tools, assets and channels to convey the messages
- Crafting a toolkit for stakeholders.

Step 1: Defining the essence of your strategy

1.1 What are our key differentiators?

Introduction:	This initial step looks at how you can stand out given the strengths your sustainable tourism offer has and then focusing on what will mean something to your target audiences and inspire them to act. The last point is important as this is the foundation for all your marketing activity that brings everything together into something you can use and communicate.
Guidance:	This means: • Taking the prioritised Strengths and Opportunities from your SWOT (in Module 3) • Modifying the list by considering the Weaknesses and Threats • Looking at the results of the competition analysis and seeing where you have advantages. From this you should be able to refine down to a **set of key points** that represent the very heart of what you have to say and which you feel really make your destination's sustainable tourism offer stand out. These points should articulate: • Specific features your destination exhibits • Specific benefits the end user would derive from that • Why they should pay attention to you specifically The final step is to match this against each of your main audiences to: • Consider which will address their wants and needs • Consider which of these will matter most to them.
Tips:	You can consider this step as defining a series of value propositions or even USPs. Either way you are laying out what you have, why your audience should care and why they should choose you. Don't worry about exact forms of words at this point. The meaning and intention are more important here. This can be used for both B2C and B2B audiences, if you understand what that audience is looking for. IF your final list does not match well with your audiences you may need to return to Module 2 and consider whether you have the right audience OR investigate the next step to ascertain if you need to evolve your message. Share these core points with your stakeholders. This is the very essence of the sustainable tourism marketing strategy, and they need to buy into it.

1.2 Audience specific messaging

Introduction:	Some specific audiences may need specific wording or an evolution of the message so that it resonates with them. In general, your core marketing messages should work for most of your audiences BUT if you have some niche audiences who are very important to you as a destination they may require some additional focus.
Guidance:	If the previous step leaves you feeling that your differentiators are not strong enough for some audiences, you can evolve them so that they do. You should be careful when doing this as by default those messages represent what you have to offer. However, in certain cases it may be warranted to adapt your messaging. Consider which audiences require specific messaging over and above the key messages you developed in the previous step. Judge these by: • Volume and size of the audience • Their specific wants and needs For example: • A large, established audience with significant value to your destination who are currently not especially motivated by sustainability • A specific niche group who come to your destination for a specific reason or through a specific medium (e.g. Cruise ship passengers) • B2B audiences that you want to influence specific change with For each you can then tailor your core messages specifically for them. This is easiest using a simple tool called an audience map. Here you map the audiences wants and needs and then match your key points against them in priority order. See template (Resource 4A)
Tips:	Do not recreate your destination's core offer for any particular audience, just draw out or emphasise specific elements of it if it makes your communications more persuasive to those audiences. If you find yourself having to do this for every audience, then you need to revisit the previous step and enhance your differentiators. If they showcase what you are and have to offer to the right target markets, they SHOULD do the job already.
Resource:	Audience Map Template (Resource 4A)

CASE STUDY - Japan Tourism Board, The Domestic Tourism Subsidy Program
Due to the lack of tourism numbers in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Japanese Tourism Board and government launched a subsidy program to help increase tourism numbers. The program launched in 2022 and helped domestic tourists with a 40% discount with bookings on certain experiences and accommodation options. The project was able to happen through the collaboration of certain stakeholders. The project was successful and is hoping to help build future domestic tourism demand in the future due to growing awareness of what the country has to offer. For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Central Coast, New South Wales, Australia (Green Destinations 2021 Top 100 Story)
In response to both the Covid-19 pandemic, wildfires and the need to strengthen the destinations positioning going forward the marketing and destination development was brought in house with a dedicated team from the local council. The team worked on developing a whole branding and marketing strategy, helping to build local prosperity and awareness for the destinations natural assets. Alongside this, they due to the lack of tourism during covid-19 they needed to target local audiences. As part of their new campaign their new main target audience was local residents, helping to build up the local visitor economy from its heart. For further information click here.

Step 2: Positioning your sustainable destination

2.1 Articulate the core messages

Introduction:	Getting the right tone of voice that appeals to your target audience when writing the wording of your key messages is essential. It should be produced in a way that best tells the story of the destination and expresses what sustainable experiences and products the destination has to offer.
Guidance:	Lay out the points you defined in the previous step. These are the key points you want to convey. You will also need to draft separate ones for any audience specific messaging you generated on the audience map. For each you will need to develop a few key messages which can be used to underpin ALL marketing communications activity created by the NTB as well as by tourism businesses and stakeholders in your destination. These will consist of: • Some example forms of words to convey the point • Some key facts, stories, or other elements that back it up • Specific businesses, case studies and named experiences that show it in action. The actual words and choice of examples matters here, as these are what will convince someone to visit, purchase or change behaviour. Make sure your messages: • Demonstrate value for your audience (speak to their needs) • Or address their pain points (explain how you can help them) • Then…show what the destination specifically offers • Use clear and understandable language that avoids overwhelm and confusion. Some examples of core messages have been included in (Resource 4B) Take your time with your core messages. It is vital these say the right thing and they communicate it in the right way.

Tips:	It's always important to keep on brand, whilst your marketing messages are designed to implement change, they need to work within your destination brand. Keep your values in mind as you write these. It's useful at this point to draft criteria on the tone of voice and guidance for anyone creating more tactical copy in specific activities. This is very useful to include in your stakeholder toolkit (see Step 3) Tourists are unlikely to understand sustainable tourism terms at the same level as those who work within the industry. Therefore, avoid technical and misleading terms.
Resource:	Examples of Core Messages (Resource 4B)

CASE STUDY - VisitFlanders, Travel to Tomorrow Initiative
The Travel to Tomorrow Initiative has been developed by VisitFlanders as a way of combatting overtourism within the destination and moving towards a model that doesn't just reply on growing tourism numbers. The initiative also aims to promote sustainable and regenerative tourism throughout the region as the key development priority. Find more information here.

2.2 Agree the visual assets

Introduction:	Alongside your core messages you will need to consider how your sustainable communications will be visually conveyed. Again, this is all about consistency, by setting out a clear look and feel, that complement the message, you reinforce it, build recognition with your audience and become more persuasive in your marketing activity.

Guidance:	This should be done within your existing destination brand utilising its existing assets (colours, typography, logo etc.) but you should also:
	• Select a showcase image library conveying the sustainable offer
	• Select a showcase video library conveying the sustainable offer
	• Draft criteria for future image and video creation/selection, for example:
	  ○ Subject type and focus
	  ○ Style of image/video
	  ○ Key storytelling elements to include
	  ○ Specifics to avoid
	• Any specific design schemes or layouts you might use for showcasing sustainable content
	
	IF your research has led you to target a brand-new audience you may also want to consider a specific visual identity to help that audience discover sustainable tourism specifically within your destination. In this case you can also consider:
	• Logo
	• Design schemes and layouts
	• Typography and fonts
	• Colour palette
	Note – be **extremely careful** with this as you can quite easily dilute a destination brand. Ensure you have a clear reason for doing so and ensure whatever you do is

	clearly associated with and works within your overarching destination brand. It may make more sense to do this on a temporary basis as a specific campaign rather than as a permanent sub-brand.
Tips:	Do be consistent in selecting and using visual assets, ensuring they embody and reinforce your key messages. Make your key libraries are available to stakeholders to help share consistent, high-quality assets more widely.

2.3 Platforms and channels

Introduction:	You will need to identify the main channels you will use to get your marketing messages out to your target audiences. In general, this will utilise your existing marketing channels, however you need to be sure all are fit for purpose and also to consider if there are any additional channels your audiences are listening to that you may need to exploit.
Guidance:	The one non-negotiable channel is the **NTB website**. The website acts as the homebase of information about the destination for all audiences. It is therefore important that the website forms the heart of any marketing strategy. Beyond that, you need to select platforms and channels which meet the following criteria: • Are places your key target audiences use and listen to • Are channels that best convey your key strategy messages and assets • Are channels you have the budget and resource to effectively deliver through • Are channels that allow you to measure their effectiveness • Will allow your specific sustainable tourism messages to be heard alongside other marketing • Will allow you to reach the desired audience throughout the customer journey This may include any or all the following (and more!): • Social media • Blogs • Email Marketing • Search Engine Optimisation • Influencer Marketing • Word-of-Mouth Marketing • Pay Per Click & Online Ads • PR • Print • Trade shows and events It's best to consider these channels for each key audience and we have provided an in-depth list of the ones to consider for both B2B and B2C along with some guidance notes in (Resource 4C). It's best to select a few core channels on this basis. This does not mean you cannot undertake specific activity on others, but defining your main platforms and channels is an important step.
Tips:	It is very likely you will need multiple channels, both to reach each target audience but also to reach them throughout the customer journey. Remember choosing a channel is a function of understanding where your audience is and how best you can get across what you have to offer.
Resource:	Potential Distribution Channels (Resource 4C)

Step 3 – Story or Strategy Toolkit

Introduction:	It is important, specifically when working towards sustainable goals, that everyone is promoting the destination in a certain way. Consistency will help attract the right markets, grow awareness, change behaviour and other actions that will assist in reaching your sustainable goals. It will also assist in differentiating the destination from competitors helping to drive tourism growth and local development.
Guidance:	A simple toolkit can help to provide guidance for both internal NTB staff as well as external stakeholders and businesses within the destination. The toolkit should include: • Outline of the vision • A summary of the destination's strongest sustainable tourism features • Identify the key target audiences • The core messages (and how to create their own) • Key visual assets (and adapted versions for stakeholders to use) • Outline of the platforms used and how to interact and add value to them • Resources and other tools to help them create their own linked content. The toolkit should be available freely to stakeholders through the NTB website alongside access to a media library of imagery and video that showcases sustainable tourism.
Tips:	The toolkit itself should feature heavily in the B2B marketing activity with encouragements and even incentives for businesses and stakeholders to use it. Engage your stakeholders in its creation, get advice from them on useful resources and guidance that they would value. Whilst the toolkit needs to cover the whole essence of the strategy it should be clear, concise, and easy to follow.

CASE STUDY – Destination Livingstone, Marketing Toolkit

Destination Livingstone as part of the sustainable branding and marketing process created a marketing toolkit for all those involved in the visitor economy in Livingstone. This toolkit was developed to provide information and assist local stakeholder with promotion ideas, helping to build an umbrella brand. With most local stakeholders being SMEs, they were unlikely to have the capacity and knowledge on marketing best practice. This toolkit therefore provided free support, helping them grow their businesses in a sustainable way.

Previously the Victoria Falls was the key selling point for Livingstone, however they have several different offerings that will help with attracting a wider audience. Therefore, this toolkit provided information on these offerings and how they could be promoted.

The toolkit included information on key marketing themes, target audiences, business types and assistance on how to put their marketing opportunities into practice. Marketing personas were also provided to assist local stakeholders with greater understanding of the types of visitors they could be targeting.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY – Failte Ireland, Online Branding Toolkit

A comprehensive online toolkit, built to support local stakeholders in applying and communicating the destinations brand. The toolkit consists of:

- Brand Identity Essentials Guide
- Brand Workshop
- Marketing Toolkit, including free tools, templates, guides, and a curated image library.

For further information click here.

Next Steps

This module provides all the building blocks to help you convey your destination's sustainable story and offer it consistently and effectively throughout your marketing. They govern the messages, ideas and look and feel that all activity should be sharing with your audiences. Of course, tactical activity can have its own specific messages, but they should be enforcing the core messages and echoing their essence throughout.

The next module lays out the strategic framework and helps you define the specific actions and activities to undertake in your marketing and communications.

MODULE 5 – DEFINING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Introduction

A marketing strategy needs a clear and straightforward plan. This will support the NTB's team with a structure and roadmap for implementing the work. The strategic plan should take everything from the preceding modules and place it in framework that details; what is being done, how, what it should consist of and sets clear objectives and goals that can be tracked and measured.
More specifically in this module you will:

- Create a strategy framework
- Set objectives and targets
- Create a marketing activity plan.

Step 1: Create a strategy framework

The very top level of a sustainable tourism marketing strategy sets out the overarching, what, why and how, that governs all activity and ensures everything that follows is aligned to an overarching goal.

1.1 Finalise your Vision and Priorities

Introduction:	The first step in creating the strategy is clearly stating what it's seeking to achieve. A vision describes the desired long-term results of the strategy's efforts and what the destination is hoping to become as a result. This gives direction to all the constituent objectives, plans and tactical activities and ensures each of those remain aligned with your overarching goal. Your priorities represent the top-level strategic approaches to deliver the vision. Both need to be clearly laid out.
Guidance:	You developed an initial vision at the very beginning of Module 1, now is the time to refine and finalise it using everything you have researched and analysed. Try and articulate exactly what this strategy is looking to achieve. Consider making it: • Clear and straightforward – avoid waffle and ambiguity • Short but meaningful – it is NOT a tagline but rather something easily digestible and understood • Project 5 to 10 years into the future - How will tourism in the destination look? • Focus on success -what will be gained? In Module 3 Step 3 you should have refined your list of priorities. These need to be articulated clearly here underneath your vision. It should be read as: • This is what we are looking to achieve (the vision) • We are going to get there by (the priorities)
Tips:	Don't overthink your vision's wording. One of the hardest parts of creating a vision is coming up with the right wording. However, if it's clear then it does the job! Don't put anything about the HOW into the vision, that's for the rest of the strategy! The only exception to this is IF the strategy is being delivered jointly with stakeholders, you may want to explicitly reference this approach.

CASE STUDY - Croatia Tourism Board, 2020 Branding Vision
The Croatian Tourism Board's Sustainable Branding Terms of Reference highlights their visions, missions, and goals for 2020. The document also provides information on their key target markets, consumer behavioural values and other information on their branding visuals. For further information click here.

1.2 Objectives

Introduction:	Your priorities are useful guides to what to do, however by adding specific targets to them you will be able to ascertain your progress (or lack of) against each. Afterall how will you know if you have made any difference if you don't have a target to aim for?
Guidance:	For each of your priorities you need to apply a measurable goal to them. This provides a benchmark and a target but also gives clarity about exactly what needs to be done. An extremely useful approach is to convert them into SMART objectives. This means: • Specific – be extremely clear on the metric you are targeting • Measurable – what specific % or amount of change needs to occur? • Achievable – make sure that change is possible given your resources • Relevant – ensure the objective relates to your destination's overall strategy and accounts for current trends in the tourism industry • Timebound – Put a deadline on the objective Example: Increase the volume of visitors to XXX destination by 20% in off season months (November-March) within the next 3 years. If necessary, you may want to add multiple objectives to each priority to consider specific facets of the priority. However, try to keep things manageable! Example: Increase the number of overnight stays by 5% in off season months (November-March) within the next 2 years. The deadline on the objective does not have to equal the timeframe of the vision. However, they should be longer than a year and the objectives should be reviewed and updated yearly with results. You can also set yearly benchmarks to ascertain progress. Measurable objectives are essential when you are communicating your destinations sustainable achievements. You will need to back up your claims, so you can't be accused of 'greenwashing'. There is more about monitoring and setting indicators in Module 7
Tips:	Ensure you have ways to measure the change on a given objective. This might require you to consider in-depth research such as; repeating visitor satisfaction research or surveying businesses for approval ratings or feedback regularly. Be careful to make sure the objective you have set is actually an indicator of success for the priority. Will the data you collect enable you to attribute the change?

CASE STUDY - Uganda Tourism Board, Explore Uganda, The Pearl of Africa

Previously Uganda Tourism Board had utilised its iconic mountain gorilla and big 5 safari offering as a key message for tourism promotion. Whilst this promotional strategy helped with conservation activities and increased tourism numbers, it was evident that communities and businesses around these conservation areas and honeypot sights were seeing the most benefit from tourism. Research was also conducted within the European and American outbound markets evidenced the change in the interests of consumers who are looking to experience adventure and cultural experiences, that go far beyond safari tourism.

A new marketing strategy was therefore developed, helping to promote other niche offerings that the country has to offer. The campaign, whilst still promoting glimpses of the wildlife offerings went further to promote the local people, cultures, and customs.

The campaign hopes to entice visitors to stay longer, visit remote locations and experience other niche activity offerings. With the end goal of spreading out the benefit of tourism throughout the entire country.

Find out more about the campaign here.

CASE STUDY - Argentina's National Institute of Tourism Promotion (INPROTUR), The Natural Route Campaign

Argentina's National Institute of Tourism Promotion (INPROTUR) as part of their vision for sustainable tourism development has launched a new campaign. The campaign has been developed to highlight what the destination offers in the "shoulder seasons", helping to combat seasonality issues and increase domestic tourism numbers.

For the first time, they have shifted their promotion to focus on nature tourism, with a focus on preservation. They have done this, through the development of new circuits called, The Natural Route. These new routes, link nature experiences and attractions with cultural, gastronomic, historical, and other attractions. Other steps they have taken is to increase promotion for summer escapes in popular ski resorts, developing glamping sites close to popular attractions.

For further information click here.

Step 2: Marketing Activity Plans

The steps so far lay out all the core elements of the strategy. The Activity Plan covers all the specific actions to implement it. This is your roadmap of what actions to take that will contribute to delivering the vision for sustainable tourism in your destination.

It is not possible to provide guidance on what activities you should populate your plans with, as so much depends on your situation, audiences, resources, and other factors. However, some guidance and advice are included in Module 6.

2.1 Activity Plan Format

Introduction:	An activity plan is a detailed outline of the steps you will take to achieve your marketing goals. It provides you with a clear path to follow, and it helps you track your progress and make sure you are on track to achieve your goals. This step provides a simple format for laying out your plan.
Guidance:	At the beginning of each marketing activity plan, make a note of the following key points to ensure focus and the end goal does not get lost: • Which priority of the strategy are you addressing? Make a clear link to the overall issue you are trying to address • Who specifically are you communicating with? Specify the recipient audience and some key characteristics • What are the key messages to communicate Refer to your offer and pull out the key messages to convey Next create a table with itemised lines for each specific action or task showing: • What the specific task is • The resource and budget required • Ownership/ who is responsible • Timing • A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) A sample template is included (Resource 5A) You should create specific marketing plans for specific areas of your strategy, this could be differentiated by: • Target audience (e.g. a differing plan for B2B stakeholders within the destination and B2B travel trade external to the destination). • By the priority they are delivering against. • By the specific objective (if you have more than one per priority). You may also wish to organise tasks in similar areas into specific mini-plans (or campaigns) if there is a specific suite of linked actions. However you do it, the plan should involve enough detail that everyone knows what needs to be done, who needs to do it and how to measure the impact.
Tips:	Whilst it's tempting to do everything, don't spread your efforts too thinly or make plans you can't fulfil. Make sure you add KPIs to measure the effectiveness of all the activities in your plan. You need to know which has worked (or otherwise) and is or is not worth repeating.

	It's tempting at task level to focus on metrics like generated traffic, click-through rate, and impressions, which are useful but don't often mean actual results. Make sure what you measure is generating a meaningful difference to your sustainability objectives. There is more on monitoring in Module 7
Resource:	Marketing Activity Plan Template (Resource 5)

Next Steps

This module provides a framework of what you should do and when, whilst ensuring everything is contributing to the overall vision and priorities to improving and communicating the sustainability of your destination. It also enables you to share with others easily and simply what EXACTLY you are doing and to monitor its progress.

The next module provides specific guidance on certain types of activity as well as some overarching principles to keep in mind as you communicate your sustainability message.

You can also find further guidance on setting indicators and monitoring in Module 7.

Module 6 COMMUNICATING YOUR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY

Introduction

We cannot dictate what you should do, that will depend on your target audience, your sustainable product offer and your marketing strategy objectives. However, there are certain principles, ideas and tips on how you communicate that ensure you highlight the benefits of sustainable tourism and encourage people to take action.
This module outlines information on:

- Creating tactical messages and getting your tone right
- Choosing and planning the right visual assets
- Making your NTB website fit for purpose
- Communicating throughout the B2C traveller's journey
- Communicating with B2B audiences.

Step 1: Overarching Principles

This step outlines the general approach you should take to communicating your sustainable tourism offer. The story and strategic framework dictates the heart of what you should say and where you say it, this step covers how you get the message across, focussing on specific content types and areas to help guide you.

1.1 Tactical Messages

Introduction	Your core messages (see Module 4) define and frame the conversation you should be having with a given audience. You can and should use those forms of words or derivatives in your communications with them. However, you will often need to say specific things, get specific promotional or informational messages across, or point users to a specific call to action.
Guidance	A Tactical message is for that use and is a specific, short-term message that is designed to achieve a specific marketing goal. Good tactical messages are: • Relevant to the core message "conversation" and embodying its ideas and values. • Specific, clear and concise, and it should be easy for the target audience to understand. • Outlines the benefits to the audience and the destination • Offers a clear call to action Example: "Experience the beauty of XXX's [environmental feature] without leaving a footprint. A tour with [business name of green certified tour operator] is an opportunity to indulge your adventurous side whilst protecting this place for future generations. Visit the website to book." If your message requires you to convey a subject or issue that is new or unfamiliar territory or encouraging behaviour change in an audience then consider adding in some small facts or evidence to show why it matters. Example: "Did you know that XX tonnes of plastic waste pollute our rivers every year? That's why XXX hotel are offering you the option to take a stand and go plastic free when you stay with them." Over and above all however, the golden rule to follow is "**Show not tell**". Describing specifically what you have or just stating how it will make someone feel can come across as a hard sell. Instead think about what you can say or show that allows them to arrive at the conclusion themselves. That can mean: • Images and video that help the audience picture themselves in an experience • Testimonials or reviews that showcase the impact the experience has • Focus what you say on the benefits of the subject to the audience and only use facts that show how the benefit or emotion is reached.
Tips	• Targeting works • Be inspiring • Make it personal and practical

CASE STUDY – Visit Iceland, Inspired by Iceland Disaster Response Campaign

In 2010, the eruption of an Icelandic volcano closed the airspace across Europe. This huge disruption to travel and its coverage in the media resulted in several negative misconceptions around travelling to Iceland.

In response to the disaster the Visit Iceland partnered with several different private and public stakeholders to develop a campaign to help build consumer confidence and increase tourist numbers. The campaign 'Inspired by Iceland' that is still running to this day has won a few awards and now supports different development themes each year helping the country work towards its sustainable targets.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY – Sonoma County, California (Green Destinations 2023 Top 100 Story)

In response to a lack of care for the local environment from visitors within three counties on the coast of California they partnered with a local not-for-profit organisation to develop the Leave no Trace Campaign.

The campaign was developed through extensive stakeholder engagement (surveys, focus groups and a working group). A toolkit was produced and given to local businesses to promote the campaign that was developed using messaging to prompt and grow awareness for the need to treat the local surroundings with care. Video content was also produced and played at the local airports to help build awareness with visitors on arrival to the destination.

For further information click here.

1.2 Tone of Voice

Introduction	How you communicate is as important as what you communicate. So, getting the right tone of voice that appeals to your target audience is essential. You need to write for your audience BUT also keep uppermost in mind that you are often going to be inspiring, influencing, educating, and showcasing issues and ideas that may be new to a given audience. The tone of voice in communicating sustainability MUST be more than simply shouting about what you have.
Guidance	Overall take guidance from your destination brand and your core messaging. These strategic marketing elements should have already identified your values as a destination and given examples of what to write and a style of writing. Whilst you always have some latitude and freedom in the specific tone of voice that you use, it is important you keep consistent to your destination's core values and personality. The article from NN Group elaborates on this. Beyond that you should consider the following points: • Be passionate – you are communicating on issues that matter, it must come across as authentic that you care deeply about them • Be positive – Your communications are designed to influence, make them enthusiastic and inspiring to others

	• Be helpful – If you are communicating new ideas to an audience, be their guide, offer as much as you can to help them make decisions • Be real – To build trust in your audience you need to communicate as a human being, that means showing personality, communicating with empathy and being conversational. Importantly remember to always **Be clear** – Use language that avoids jargon and confusion. Your audience won't understand sustainability or sustainable tourism terms in the same way you do. For example, if you are promoting certified businesses, do not use 'these stakeholders are GSTC sustainability accredited, due to their commitment to the three pillars of sustainability', instead you could use phrases such as, 'these hotels have been recognised for their commitment in protecting the environment and improving the quality of life of local communities'. The Rooted Storytelling Guide can help translate some of the key terms.
Tips	Coordinate all the people who communicate on behalf of your destination, so there is consistency in activity tone of voice. Avoid extremes of "corporate speak" and "informal chattiness". You do have to appear human but you do also have important message to convey.
Resources	Tone of Voice: NN/G – Tone of Voice Visit Britain's Accessible & Inclusive Marketing Toolkit *Rooted Storytelling, 70+ Sustainable Tourism Terms Guide* VisitEngland's Keep It Real for Destinations is a guide for stakeholders on how to communicate their Wise Growth strategy to visitors, residents and businesses.

CASE STUDY - Visit Scotland, Keep Scotland Unspoiled Campaign

Due to the rise in domestic tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic, Visit Scotland experienced a growing number of issues caused by irresponsible behaviour across a variety of visitor sites. These included an increase in littering, environmental damage, fire hazards, wildlife disturbances and unsafe water disposal.

In response, Visit Scotland worked with several partners developed a strategic plan for visitor management. This included a new campaign dedicated to educating and inspiring 'novice' outdoor adventurers and visitors in how to enjoy Scotland's great outdoors responsibly. The "Keep Scotland Unspoiled" campaign used video, photo, and other content to help raise awareness.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Cook Islands Tourism Corporation, Regenerative Travel – How to get involved

The Cook Islands Tourism Cooperation use several different videos and articles to help visitors become educated around traveling sustainably.

These include videos on learning how to become a responsible visitor and learning about the Cook Islands culture.

To learn more about their sustainable tourism strategy and initiatives click here.

1.3 Nudging and incentivising

Introduction	Nudging and incentivising are two sides of the same coin. Making it easier for consumers to choose or undertake desired behaviours and outright enticing them with a reward for doing so. Both have a place is communicating your sustainable tourism offer.
Guidance	Both tactics require clear understanding about what motivates your audience to do something. Obviously, the types and activities you may consider depend very heavily on your target audience, product offer and goals. For "Nudging" you provide the choice and make it more enticing, more fun or simply more attractive. Nudges don't force behaviour they just make it simple to take this choice. You can consider nudges in your marketing by: • Offering sustainable options as the "default" e.g. on the home page of your website as the option of choice, rather than on a separate "sustainable activities" page • Subtly highlighting a sustainable option amongst others or skewing sustainable options to the top of lists • Showing how many positive reviews an experience has • Using "Trust symbols" – dedicated graphics that mark an experience as meeting a standard (these can be actual schemes or simply labels you use consistently) • Labelling experiences and products discreetly with the sustainability benefit they provide (e.g. with a clear link to the details of how) • Showing the more personal, tailored reality of an experience off-season • Creating a visitor pledge • Report on the environmental impact of various experiences to allow visitors to weight the costs themselves. For incentivising you overtly dangle the behaviour choice in front of the customer whilst offering a reward for taking it. These are far more straightforward, but you can consider incentives in your marketing by: • Offering discounts or rewards • Offering dedicated sustainable options of mainstream services at a cheaper price • Gamifying sustainable behaviour (e.g. levels of a loyalty program) • Make eligibility for certain experiences conditional • Giving people recognition for sustainable behaviour.
Tips	Make sure you build in a way to track and measure the impact of any of these tactics. Play heavily on the impacts of not taking this action when planning nudges. Given the choice most people will do what they believe is the right thing. Therefore, your job is to ease their way to that decision, by positioning it as the right thing to do and highlighting the benefits.
Resources	*Green Nudges Playbook*

CASE STUDY - Visit Norway, Travel Better

CASE STUDY – Visit Finland Practical Tips for Sustainability

Visit Finland have a dedicated section on their website to support visitors when travelling in a sustainable means. This includes a directory of sustainable certified businesses from their national program Sustainable Travel Finland. It showcases sustainable businesses and experiences, including the best second-hand clothes shopping in city destinations, which also supports and promotes other industries within the destination.

To help visitors navigate and engage with their sustainability program, there is a section on the website that explains how the program works, including information on the criteria that businesses need to meet to be awarded with the certification.

For further information click here.

Visit Norway has a travel better section on their website, providing consumers with information and tips on how to travel in a more sustainable way. These include articles such as 10 Norwegian train travel tips and 11 cool ways to explore Norway for eco-conscious travellers.

CASE STUDY - Republic of Palau Tourism Board, The Palau Pledge

Palau, an archipelago of over 500 islands in the Pacific Ocean has experienced environmental issues due to its growing popularity from tourists seeking remote travel experiences.

In reaction to these issues, they have become the first nation to diversify their immigration laws for the cause of protecting the environment. Visitors are now required to sign the Palau Pledge in front of an immigration officer and breaking these rules may result in a fine of over $1m.

The pledge was written by the children of Palau, as they will be the ones to experience tourisms key negative impacts if nothing changes. A business certification scheme has also been introduced to help grow consumer and business awareness around sustainability.

For further information click here.

1.4 Images

Introduction	One of the most effective ways to promote the destinations brand and story is through the promoting images that reflect the destinations offering. However, imagery can easily give the wrong message about the subject or about you as a destination.
Guidance	When collating and choosing these images, consider the following: • Quality above all. Ensure that it represents and reflects what the destination has to offer in the best possible light. • Make sure the travellers in the photos reflect your target markets, people like to be able to relate to photographs and imagine themselves being in the destination. • Select images that tell stories, show emotion, or have some kind of narrative implicit in them. What is the subject doing, how are they feeling, what part of the experience is it conveying? • Avoid over selling, through staged and inauthentic imagery. Images should reflect the genuine experience the visitor will have. • Avoid the use of imagery that promotes exploitative practices, which may include animals in captivity and inauthentic cultural representations. • Have you been given permission for using images that feature specific stakeholders or depict and represent a particular cultural practice? When seeking permission ensure that you provide them with a clear understanding of where and how the image will be used. • Avoid stock imagery. You want to tease the experience someone could have, not show them an example of something similar. Equally using images that may have been seen elsewhere in an entirely different context can devalue authenticity.
Tips	Merge all image assets you use into your media library, so they are available for use by the rest of your team across all communications activity. Don’t overuse specific images. It is acceptable to have some headline images that really represent your destination but using them repeatedly lowers their impact and value. You want to showcase all the facets of your offer. Make the image library available to stakeholders, so they can use the content within their own marketing.

1.5 Video

Introduction	Even more so than images, engaging video content helps the destination tell its story and engage with consumers. Video allows you to convey more of the essence of a visitor experience, story-tell more effectively and grab attention.
Guidance	When planning video content consider the following: • All the points in Step 1.4 on images apply here too! • Don't be sales driven. Videos are the archetype of "Show don't Tell", they are not the place for direct sales messages and promotions. • Storyboard first! Have a clear goal for the video and then plan what it should include keyframe by keyframe. Doing so gives it a clear narrative and helps dictate what footage you might need. • Make the first 10 second's count. Don't assume anyone will watch to the end of a long video, make sure the call-to-action or key message is present early, or at minimum give your audience a clear reason to keep watching. Generally shorter video is better as a rule of thumb. • Use animated graphics to convey data or definitions clearly, don't rely on voiceovers or static text/images. • Avoid abstract visual metaphors to convey sustainability, instead tell the stories from the perspective your place, its visitors, and its people, show the impacts and benefits for them. • Provide closed captions and subtitles, allowing people of different languages and abilities to engage with the content. • Choose the audio track carefully. Voiceovers add a human and relatable element, and the right music and sound effects can help keep your viewer's attention and evoke emotions. Both need careful planning. • Create different lengths, cuts, and orientation versions of key videos. This gives you the flexibility to communicate the same message across different platforms.
Tips	• Don't neglect the video thumbnail. This is the front cover that will influence whether people choose to click on it. Make it attractive, obvious, and linked to your overall visual identity and sustainability objectives. • Encourage stakeholder contributions. • Merge video assets into your media library so they are available for use by the rest of your team and your stakeholders too.
Resources	Tips of video marketing: HubSpot, Video Marketing

CASE STUDY - Colombia Travel, Finding Encanto Video Series , Inclusive Marketing

Colombia - has integrated inclusivity into its destination brand and image, helping to promote tourism for all. Through their video series Finding Encanto they have included characters of different race, characters, and abilities.

Find out more here.

CASE STUDY - Grenada Tourism, Grenada Rocks Campaign

Grenada promotes local story telling through their Grenada Rocks Campaign, allowing local residents and stakeholders to promote the destination through image and video content. They use video and storytelling techniques to allow potential visitors to see Grenada through the eyes of the locals. This campaign also helps visitors to gain better understanding on the local people and their cultures in a holistic way and helps to build local empowerment and ownership amongst the local communities by giving them a voice.

Find out more and watch the video content here.

CASE STUDY - Visit Panama, The Next Turn Campaign

To promote their commitment to accessible travel, Visit Panama have included a blind adventurer within their marketing content alongside a range of different nationalities.

Find out more here.

Step 2: NTB Website

The NTBs website acts as the homebase of information about the destination for all audiences. It is therefore important that the website provides the right information and messaging that will support the destination in reaching their sustainability goals and guide change.

Consumers and international travel trade rely on NTB websites as a key source of information that will guide their planning and booking process, alongside providing guidance on how to travel in a sustainable way. For destination stakeholders, it is relied upon as a source of self-promotion, alongside providing key data and information that will support their own sustainability journeys, alongside educating themselves on sustainable best practice.

Introduction	Development of the website can promote sustainable best practice that will guide and nudge consumers in making more sustainable choices. However, this will only work if the sustainability elements are visible, obvious and you provide tools and information that allow the user to investigate, understand and make decisions based on it.
Guidance	Consider the following elements to improve or enhance your NTB website as a tool to support your sustainable marketing strategy: • Make your sustainable tourism best practice visible. This means featuring messages or examples on key places in the user journey. • Promote stakeholders committed to sustainability. If the destination runs its own certification, then focus on spotlighting certified stakeholders. If there is no scheme, consider promoting stakeholders holding internationally recognised schemes, alongside other stakeholders that are creating positive change. This can be implemented using labels, criteria, spotlighting through blogs etc. Ensure you provide an easy way for the user to filter, search and find these stakeholders easily. • Showcase circuits and suggested itineraries that may include off-the beaten track destinations, sustainable products and services, green transport, community and conservation projects or accessible routes for those with disabilities. • Feature key data and facts about the destination's sustainable tourism products and services, including estimated emissions, and other environmental, biodiversity, social and economic impacts. Remember to always interpret data for the user. • Promote incentives that have been developed to support the destination's journey towards sustainable development. These may include incentives that support off season travel, increasing domestic and regional travel, visiting remote locations, using green transport and sustainable suppliers. • Provide information about the destination that will support travellers to act in a sustainable way when travelling. This might include information about, history, cultures and customs, details of public transport, key phrases and language, dos & don'ts, policies, pledges etc. • Provide information for your stakeholders in a dedicated section, or hub. This area could feature research reports, strategies, policies, support documents, training resources, guidelines (including the Strategy Toolkit developed in Module 4) and key information around tourism data. • Promote inclusivity by ensuring you are using a diverse range of imagery and language when communicating your destination. • Utilise a blog or other regularly updated form of content to showcase what's happening in sustainable tourism in your destination. Users will want to know what's happening now, and what might influence they upcoming visit. Two-year-old data or last year's information isn't acceptable.

Tips	Always clarify what "Sustainability" means to you and the destination. Remember your website may be your visitors first contact with you. Consider a dedicated page that explains things simply, clearly and uses visual aids (like infographics) to get the point across. Responsible Travel do this very well. Provide a robust "contact" functionality so users with questions on sustainable tourism aspects can get answers quickly and easily. Remember they may not understand the principles and measures in the same way you do. Be there to help them out.

CASE STUDY - Visit Sweden, Off season experience promotion

Visit Sweden uses its website and other media platforms to promote experiences that can support off season travel. An example of this is their promotion of winter and autumn Kayaking on the scenic waterways of Sweden.

For further information click here.

CASE STUDY - Consumer Awareness and Education

Visit Cyprus has a section on their website dedicated to providing key sources of information about the destination, helping consumers educate themselves before and whilst they are visiting the country. This also includes a page of information for accessible travel and an introduction to their destination labels.

Learn more here.

Step3: B2C Communication throughout the visitor journey

The points in the previous section cover most of what you may need to know to communicate with your visitor audiences, however there is one specific consideration that has a big impact – **the visitor journey.** Where a visitor is on the journey between research – pre-travel – arrival – experience – post travel, will dictate what you say to them and where you say it, as they will have specific needs at each stage.

The diagram (Resource 6A) provides further information on the visitor journey, alongside marketing tactics that can be undertaken to engage with them.

The following steps indicate what you should consider and address at each stage.

3.1 Research Phase

Introduction	This phase of the visitor journey is where you need to focus most of your marketing efforts. At the research stage in the process your audience is looking to be inspired, investigating options, checking details, prices, photos, and reading reviews. The information you communicate at this stage is critical to gaining their business.
Guidance	At this stage they may be feeling: • Excitement and enthusiasm • Confused by having many choices • Frustrated by a lack of key information. To grab their attention and encourage them to explore further, you should consider undertaking the following actions: • Highlight the destination's commitment to sustainable tourism practices, let them know in no uncertain terms where you stand on the issues that matter to them • Share the top line benefits and figures on sustainable tourism in your destination to help them make a positive decision • Showcase the highlights of your sustainable tourism offer that matters most to them. This is your chance to hook their attention with the star activities and attractions of your offer • Provide information about sustainable transport and accommodation. Highlight businesses and help the audience understand any certifications or sustainability schemes. • Help them identify tour operators or travel agencies that prioritize sustainability in their operations and can help them plan or book. • Share engaging visuals, videos, testimonials, and interactive content to capture the attention and interest of potential visitors during their research phase. To do that you may want to consider: • Ensuring your NTB website is fit for purpose and contains all the information a visitor would need (see previous step) • Use infographics, images, and videos to convey sustainability messages effectively. • On social media: ○ Share engaging content, stories, tips, and images that highlight the destination's sustainability offer

	○ Encourage user-generated content and facilitate conversations around sustainable tourism from previous visitors ○ Respond to comments and inquiries to foster engagement and build a sense of community. • Partner with influencers who have a strong focus on sustainability and align with the target audience • Ensure that sustainability information is easily accessible on online travel platforms and booking websites • Develop trip report blog content showcasing the detail of an experience in your destination (ideally in the words of a previous visitor) • Proactively monitor and reply to inquiries from visitors.
Resource:	The Distribution Channels for the Visitor Journey Infographic (Resource 6)

3.2 Pre-travel Phase

Introduction	At this phase in the visitor journey your audience has decided to book and to undertake the trip to your destination as a visitor. It may be tempting to think the job is done at this point, but there is plenty you can do to build trust and anticipation before they arrive.
Guidance	At this stage they may be feeling: • Excitement and anticipation. • Concern that they made the right choice. • Anxious about specific elements You should consider the following to reassure them and build their anticipation for the trip: • Offer practical tips and guidelines for potential visitors to engage in sustainable travel behaviours in the destination. • Provide information on sustainable transportation options so they can make informed choices of how to access experiences. • Showcase local experiences and upcoming events that promote community engagement and cultural immersion. • Promote the destination's culinary heritage while raising awareness about sustainable food choices. • Provide information on eco-friendly markets, sustainable fashion outlets, or responsible souvenir choices that promote cultural preservation. • Highlight any opportunities to learn and contribute to sustainability during their visit (visitor giving schemes, cultural workshops, volunteer programs). To do that you may want to consider: • Develop sustainable travel guides or e-brochures that visitors can access before their trip and make them available on your website. • Encourage visitors to sign up to e-newsletters and provide useful information and tips related to sustainability. • Keeping up the efforts on social media but focusing some content on more specific topics to answer last minute questions visitors might have. • Use social media to feature the latest news and upcoming events with a sustainability focus.

CASE STUDY - Discover Puerto Rico , Inclusive Marketing Campaign
Discover Puerto Rico provides a vast amount of information about the destination, allowing consumers the ability to learn about the local cultures and customs. They also show the commitment in support LGBTQ+ tourism with its own section and travel guide on the website. Learn more here.

CASE STUDY - Go Hawaii - Consumer Awareness and Education
Go Hawaii promotes ways in which tourists can give back whilst travelling in the destination. Including a list of local initiatives and voluntourism organisations. Additionally, it provides information about the destinations endangered species and how to report violations or injuries. And tips on how to travel responsibly with information on cultural mindfulness/local respect, land conservation and how to support local businesses. They also provide information around travelling with disabilities and LGBTQ.

3.3 Arrival

Introduction	Arrival to the destination is a vital stage in the visitor journey where you can welcome them warmly, help them understand all the essentials and reinforce to them they have made the right choice.
Guidance	At this stage they may be feeling: • Apprehensive • Excited and eager You should consider the following to make them feel welcome and help them navigate their initial moments in your destination: • Ensure good quality customer service at arrival points • Provide clear information on sustainable transportation options on arrival at the destination • Inform visitors about the destination's waste management and recycling practices • Promote energy and water conservation practices to visitors during their stay • Remind visitors of the food and drink offer, and encourage visitors to try local and seasonal food options • Encourage them to shop at local markets, purchase souvenirs from local artisans, and eat at locally owned restaurants • Provide guidelines for hiking, camping, or exploring natural areas while minimizing the impact on flora, fauna, and ecosystems. • Educate visitors about local customs, traditions, and etiquette • Provide information to help them choose sustainable businesses throughout their stay (e.g. certification schemes) To do that you may want to consider: • Train front-line staff to reinforce sustainability messages and provide guidance to visitors on sustainable practices throughout their stay • Clear signage and displays

	• Welcome packs and brochures • Using QR codes to help visitors navigate quickly to key information on the website or help visitors download dedicated mobile apps • Show short informational videos or presentations in waiting areas, using screens or projectors • Partner with transportation providers, such as taxi companies or car rental services, to display sustainability messages in their vehicles.

3.4 Experience

Introduction	During the actual visit stage of the customer journey for a visitor to a tourism destination, it is crucial to continue communicating sustainability messages that encourage and guide visitors to engage in sustainable behaviours.
Guidance	At this stage they may be feeling: • Distracted by the experiences they are having • Elated and content You should consider the following to enhance their experience and keep the focus on sustainable behaviour: • Encourage visitors to choose eco-friendly transportation methods and reduce reliance on private vehicles, particularly for short distances • Encourage visitors to limit water usage, take shorter showers, turn off lights and electronics when not in use, and use air conditioning responsibly • Encourage visitors to minimize single-use plastics, bring reusable water bottles and bags, and properly dispose of waste in designated bins • Encourage them to shop at local markets, artisan shops, or co-operatives that promote fair trade and support the local economy • Promote responsible wildlife viewing practices and remind visitors to never disturb or feed wild animals • Highlight local conservation projects, beach cleanups, or social development activities where visitors can contribute their time and skills to make a positive impact on the destination and local communities • Educate visitors about the destination's ecological significance, conservation challenges, and sustainability efforts. To do that you may want to consider: • Training for local guides and visitor facing staff at tourism businesses • Signage and interpretation at key touch points • Information packs for accommodation rooms • Utilising mobile apps and QR codes • Equip visitor information centres with sustainability resources and knowledgeable staff who can provide guidance on sustainable practices • Offer brochures, maps, and guides that highlight sustainable attractions, eco-friendly activities, and local initiatives • Encourage visitors to provide feedback on their sustainable experiences through interactive surveys or comment cards.

CASE STUDY - Republic of Palau, Ol'au Palau Rewards Programme
In response to the growing tourism numbers on the island and the need to increase the positive contributions that the industry provides both environmentally and socially, a rewards app was developed to help prompt sustainable behaviour. The app also provides information on how to respect both the local environment and cultures in the country. This initiative has not only incentivised visitors to act responsibly, it has also helped to increase awareness of local communities and stakeholders. For further information click here.

3.5 Post travel Phase

Introduction	You should continue to communicate with your customers even after they have left your destination. They have the potential to return and, in the meantime, can become ambassadors to help spread the message of the strengths of your offer.
Guidance	At this stage they may be feeling: • Nostalgic • Exhilarated and inspired You should consider the following to build loyalty and encourage further engagement with you: • Express gratitude to visitors for engaging in sustainable practices during their visit. Acknowledge their efforts and the positive impact their actions have had on the destination's environment and communities • Highlight the outcomes of sustainability initiatives they may have encountered and interacted with during their visit • Inspire them to be ambassadors for sustainable tourism by sharing their experiences and encouraging others • Encourage them to follow social media accounts, subscribe to newsletters, or other ways to stay connected • Invite them to share feedback and insights to help you improve • Promote sustainable souvenirs or locally made products that visitors can purchase online to support local artisans and sustainable businesses. • Recommend books, documentaries, or podcasts where they can relive their experiences • Encourage them to spread the word about the destination • Showcase how your destination offer changes in other seasons To do that you may want to consider: • Follow-up email campaigns including online surveys and feedback forms. Include specific questions about sustainability initiatives and the effectiveness of messaging • Asking them to share content from their trip on social media or to you directly for future marketing purposes • Ask if they would feature on a travel blog or article and share their experience • Encouraging them to leave reviews and ratings • Collaborate with businesses to offer incentives for return visits • Make an "expert area" on your NTB website where you share experiences and tips for those already in the know.

Step 4: B2B Communication

In comparison to B2C audiences, B2B audiences are much more straightforward as what they want from you as a destination is more fixed. However, there are some specific elements to consider and some advice to ensure they engage with you and remain effective partners in delivering your sustainable tourism goals.

4.1 Key principles

Introduction	Communications can play a vital role in maintaining a healthy and productive relationship with B2B audiences and specifically the tourism stakeholders within your destination. This step includes some key points and overarching principals to keep in mind.
Guidance	• Be consistent, reliable and timely. The biggest issue in stakeholder relationships is often the breakdown in communication caused by sporadic contact with the NTB. If stakeholders see you as proactive, reliable and a genuine partner they are more likely to support the work you do and work together. From the beginning set expectations about frequency and channels of communication and then stick them! • Make personal connections. Whilst some stakeholder communication can be done en masse, it's important to have personal relationships with as many of your key stakeholders as you can manage. If they feel you understand their business/organisation they are more likely to trust you and invest in the relationship. • Ensure buy-in. Just as much as consumers, stakeholders need to buy into and share your views on sustainable tourism. You all need to be on the same page as to how you are defining it and what and how your strategy is working to address it. Don't be afraid to keep re-stating this information in your communications. • Highlight Benefits. Clearly articulate the benefits for businesses. Emphasize how sustainable practices are increasingly expected by consumers and can lead to cost savings, increased customer satisfaction, improved reputation, access to new markets, and long-term business resilience. • Be Transparent. It's important to be transparent and honest with stakeholders about the progress of the strategy. Keep them updated if things are falling behind schedule or if something has occurred which changes how everything will be delivered. Remember in many cases they will be looking to you to lead and there has to be trust in the relationship. • Involve them throughout. If you set up a stakeholder working group (see Module 1) then you have the basis for obtaining feedback and input throughout your marketing activity. Remember you may need to reach out beyond that group at times as well.
Tips	Lead from the front. Ensure your organisation is actively making sustainable choices in how it operates, be an exemplar to others where you can. This can include things such as: • Using local suppliers (photographers, graphic designers) • Using sustainable transport methods • Local recruitment and internships • Making sustainable choices in purchasing, selecting venues etc • Reporting on your organisation's impacts

4.2 Information Sharing

Introduction	Information sharing will sit at the heart of the activity you undertake to communicate with B2B audiences. As your relationship model is one of partnership rather than supplier/consumer that information needs to flow easily both ways. In this step we consider some ideas and guidance to help that happen.
Guidance	As an NTB you should have the full picture of tourism in a destination, this puts you in a key position to be the source of best practice and information on sustainability. You may consider sharing the following kinds of information with B2B stakeholders: • Best practices for sustainable tourism to inspire stakeholders to improve their activities • Real-life case studies and success stories that highlight businesses that have successfully implemented sustainable initiatives • List of certified businesses • Practical tools, guidelines, and resources that businesses can use to implement sustainable tourism practices (e.g. assessment tools) • Latest news and advice concerning research into sustainable tourism and sustainability more broadly • Available funding opportunities or incentives for implementing sustainable practices • Directories of suppliers offering eco-friendly products and services • Data and Impact Assessments for tourism in the destination • Yearly sustainability reports (see Module 7). Further you may need to obtain information from them, in the form of research, feedback and a system for stakeholders to report their sustainable tourism initiatives and outcomes (again see Module 7). Utilize a variety of communication channels to reach different stakeholders effectively. This can include email newsletters, websites, social media platforms, webinars, workshops, and in-person meetings. Consider the preferences and accessibility of your stakeholders when selecting communication channels.
Tips	Provide Actionable Information that stakeholders can implement in their businesses. This may mean some work to simplify and make opportunities practical, but the easier you make things for your stakeholders the more likely that it will be translated into action.

CASE STUDY - Servicio Nacional de Turismo (Sernatur) Chile, North American Tour Operator Free Training
The Servicio Nacional de Turismo (Sernatur) of Chile is responsible for promoting the destinations offerings to both international and domestic markets, aiming to positively grow tourism and contribute to its social, economic, and cultural development. In 2021, Sernatur announced a new, free training offering aimed at 90,000 North American travel agents and tour operators. This training programme aimed to build upon the knowledge and understanding of the destinations sustainable tourism offering amongst this key source market. With the final intention of increase consumer awareness around the different experiences and landscapes that the destination has to offer, moving away from the promotion of key honey pot sights and experiences. For further information and to view the training videos click here.

CASE STUDY - Destination Canada, In-depth Tourism Research
Destination Canada's mission is to build tourism demand aiming to benefit the local communities and visitors. With large investments in tourism research, they can support both international and local tourism stakeholders with research and insights, supporting their journey in increasing their sales in a sustainable way. All this information is available on their website. Find out more here.

4.3 Boosting sustainable activity

Introduction	Beyond simply sharing information, you should consider some practical business support and marketing activities you can undertake with your B2B stakeholders. Afterall the more businesses and organisations involved and the more visible the activity, the bigger impact it can have with consumers.
Guidance	Encouraging your stakeholders to enter recognised sustainable certification schemes is a useful tool to not only improve practices but to give a marketing edge to your stakeholders as well. This could mean: • Joining an existing scheme (e.g. Fair Trade Tourism, Green Key, Green Tourism, Good Travel Program, Travellife) • Obtain certification through specific platform schemes (e.g. Booking.com Travel Sustainable program) • Training and incentivising tourism businesses to become certified • Development of your own scheme for your destination. Note – you can also gain destination level sustainability certification schemes, (e.g. Green Destinations). Another example of leading from the front! Sustainability Awards can also be used to both promote the destination's good practice and commitment to sustainability, alongside providing confidence to both local stakeholders and consumers. You can: • Apply for sustainability awards such as: Green Destinations Top 100 Stories.

	• Influence and support stakeholders to apply for awards themselves • Develop your own award programme for sustainable stakeholders. You can also consider developing marketing opportunities either for or with your stakeholders. This might include: • Seasonal campaigns showcasing the destination offering off-season • Themed campaigns highlighting elements of the product offer • Sustainable transportation campaigns • Campaigns to drive commitment to sustainable practices. With any of these activities make sure it's clearly laid out what you want the stakeholder to do, in what format and by when. Be specific and provide help and guidance to help them through the process.
Tips	Before you can support and guide your tourism businesses and stakeholders, you will need to ensure your staff have the appropriate knowledge and training. You can check the list of standards and certifications recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council at their website Collaborate with local influencers who have a passion for sustainability and align with the activities' message. Their endorsement and engagement can extend the campaign's reach, build credibility, and inspire action. To find an appropriate influencer, use an agency that specialises in travel bloggers and knows their special interests and audiences. E.g. www.Blogilicious.com

CASE STUDY - Bonaire
In 2019, the 'Blue Destination Certification' was developed. The Blue Destination Certification is a way to inform, guide and reward companies on their way to a more sustainable and social business strategy. Find out more here.

Next Steps

This module has provided some guidance and inspiration for how you actually communicate sustainability through your various marketing activities. However, do not feel constrained by these, be open to trying new and different things IF they align with your strategy and will help you reach your intended audience.

The final module in this toolkit looks at how you can effectively monitor and evaluate your activity to help understand what worked (or didn't work) and what difference that made to your overall goals.

Module 7 – Monitor, Manage and Improve

Introduction

Understanding how successful your marketing and communication efforts are, is extremely difficult without also planning a consistent and robust approach to monitoring its impact. Equally, if you cannot attribute success to your specific marketing activities, you will not know which activities are effective and which are not.

All of these points specifically matter when it comes to sustainability. In many cases you are influencing behaviour change or exposing people to new ideas or concepts. Being able to show real change and highlighting the role specific activities played can be vital when you need to share progress, engage stakeholders for future work and plan your next phase of activity.

This module will help NTBs with the following tools to:

- Setting effective measures and metrics
- How to collect data
- Assess the effectiveness of your marketing activity
- Identify areas where adjustments to your plans may be required
- Reporting effectively

Step 1: Measuring performance

Setting indicators is possibly the most important stage in measuring and understanding your impact. It's often tempting to reach for top-line indicators like growth in visitor arrivals but these generally do not provide you with any insights into the effectiveness of your activity towards goals relating to sustainability. Instead you need to use more specific indicators or metrics that measure **attributable change**. Setting indicators and measures can take time and certainly requires thought.

1.1: Setting effective indicators

Introduction	A standard approach is to take an activity and then ask "how can we measure it?". This runs the risk of measuring only "what you do" not "what difference it makes". The steps below focus your measures and indicators on how they contribute to improving sustainability in your destination.
Guidance	You can set indicators or measures at any level in your strategy, but they should all follow the same approach which ensures they are indicative of success. • Be clear about the success state • Consider how you would "know" if it has been achieved • Consider how you can quantify that change • Write it SMARTLY For example, you are looking for an indicator on whether your educational programme to reduce plastic waste by accommodation businesses has succeeded. • The success state Reduction in plastic waste sent to landfill by accommodation businesses • Change that indicates success Plastic waste takes up a lower proportion of accommodation business waste in landfill • Measure that illustrates the change Percentage of plastic within each tonne of waste arriving at landfill • Written SMARTLY Reduce the percentage of plastic per tonne of waste produced by accommodation businesses that is sent to landfill annually by 20% by the end of 2030. You can of course also measure against the effort level achieved by the activity, which shows whether you did everything necessary to make it a success but remember this only shows what YOU did NOT whether it made a difference. You could look at: • Was it delivered on time and on budget? • Is there a specific measure you have control of? (Number of people reached or number of instances created etc).
Tips	In some cases, you may need to use indirect indicators (proxies) – for instance visitor perception of something rather than an actual measure of it. This is perfectly acceptable but do be careful to consider any potential bias and make sure you measure before and after, so you have a baseline control. Do not try and measure everything - focus instead on what can really show that a goal has been achieved.

	Area to set targets for, to show improvement in your destination's sustainability, include: • Tourism seasonality • Local Satisfaction • Employment and Economic benefits for the destination • Management of Energy, Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste • Climate action • Accessibility • Governance Think about how you can collect data before setting an objective (see following steps for additional advice)
Resource	UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatory Tools Travel Foundation Optimal Value Framework for Destinations ETC Monitoring Evaluation

1.2: Collecting data

Introduction	Setting indicators tells you what data you need to collect but there are a few specific things to consider in collecting the data which can have a big impact on how useful it is and how much work you need to do to obtain it. This step includes guidance on how to effectively collect data to measure your indicators
Guidance	You need to remain consistent in your methods and processes of data collection. You must ensure data is comparable and that you are able to draw conclusions. This also means a regular routine of data collection so that equal time periods can be compared. You should set baselines and a before-and-after measurement. This means measuring the indicator before and after the activity is undertaken. This can help to identify any changes that can be attributed to the activity. If you need to rely on others to collect data (e.g. from tourism businesses within your destination), you need to treat them very carefully. This means: • Involving them in designing the indicators and data collection methodology (your stakeholder working group are ideal for this). This means they can tell you what is feasible to collect and share what isn't from the beginning • Being very clear about what data you need, in what format and by when (the clearer and easier you make the process the more likely they are to comply) • Decide where the minimum response levels are that allow you to draw significant conclusions. If you find responses dwindling, take action to address it. Finally, if data collection on a specific indicator looks complex or time-consuming you can consider sampling (taking a representative section of a larger population to infer from). Again, this is a completely valid method and can save time and effort. Survey Monkey explain more about it here.

Tips	Do check what other stakeholders might be collecting that you can draw on. However, do always analyse secondary data carefully and question if they were collecting it for the same reason as you and how they have collected it. Just because data is easily available doesn't always mean it is the right data to prove something has worked.
Resource	Survey Monkey

Step 2: Evaluating and improving

If you have set, clear indicators and collected robust data you are 90% of the way to being able to evaluate your activity and identify where improvements and changes are needed. This step helps you pinpoint whether something does need changing and looks at how to implement it.

2.1: Assessing Performance

Introduction	If you have created SMART objectives and indicators, you have a natural timeframe built in to review and ascertain performance over that period. At his point you need to ask whether you achieved what you needed to and why (or why not) and use that to ascertain whether change or improvement is needed
Guidance	Firstly, it sounds obvious, but does the data show whether your objective or indicator was met? • If it was, was it exceeded and by how much? • If it wasn't met, what was the gap? Being able to pinpoint the over or under shoot helps you set new goals for the future. Secondly, ask why? Try and pinpoint the critical success or failure factors that led to the result. Knowing why something did or didn't work is essential in revising it. Here you need to look at: • Your own processes in delivery • What wider factors may have contributed (e.g. changes in the market or the economy). Thirdly, get feedback from stakeholders or (if you can) people from your target audience who were exposed to the activity on what they thought of it. Did they find it engaging? Their feedback can help you decide if the activity is worth repeating. Lastly, consider the context and environment. Is the situation and any assumptions you built your strategy on still valid. Is the market, product offer and your audience the same? Put together these steps help you analyse performance and understand whether you should a) Repeat the activity b) Revise and improve the activity c) Drop the activity and focus elsewhere
Tips	Don't be afraid to try something again that wasn't successful, especially if you cannot specifically pinpoint why. But be pragmatic and vigilant with it. Do get feedback from your stakeholders and businesses within the destination, invite their thoughts on how an activity worked and what they would like to see change.

2.2: Reporting

Introduction	If you are undertaking robust monitoring and evaluation, consistent and transparent reporting should also be built in. This is your opportunity to showcase your success, your sustainable credentials and extend your engagement with stakeholders to keep them onboard for future phases of activity.
Guidance	Effective reporting is the process of assembling and analysing data to help stakeholders and other readers focus on the metrics that matter most. The following points will help keep your reporting on track: • Distil your findings and evaluation into its salient points, you need to convey the important facts do not overwhelm your audience with data • Write for your audience, placing things in language and terminology they will understand easily • Format it to suit the needs of your audience, how will they most easily be able to consume, understand and learn from it • Make the key "takeaways" for the audience very obvious Collate overall performance reports and share with stakeholders and local businesses regularly. This is a good opportunity to ask for specific feedback and thoughts to improve activity next time. It also increases the likelihood of sustaining support and encouraging their use of tools and key messages to help you. If you are publishing reporting on sustainability, publicly be careful about how you do so (the WTTC guide below can help advise).
Tips	Remember that you are on a journey to improve the destination's sustainability. No destination is perfect. Be open and honest about what you report. That includes explaining some issues you face and why they are a problem. Keep these points in mind: • Do not report anything you cannot evidence • Explain your methodology transparently • Be open about any concerns or wider trends impacting on your destination.
Resource	Environmental, Social, & Governance Reporting in Travel & Tourism: 4. Reporting Guidance For Travel & Tourism Businesses