RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

A GUIDE FOR TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND AGRI-FOOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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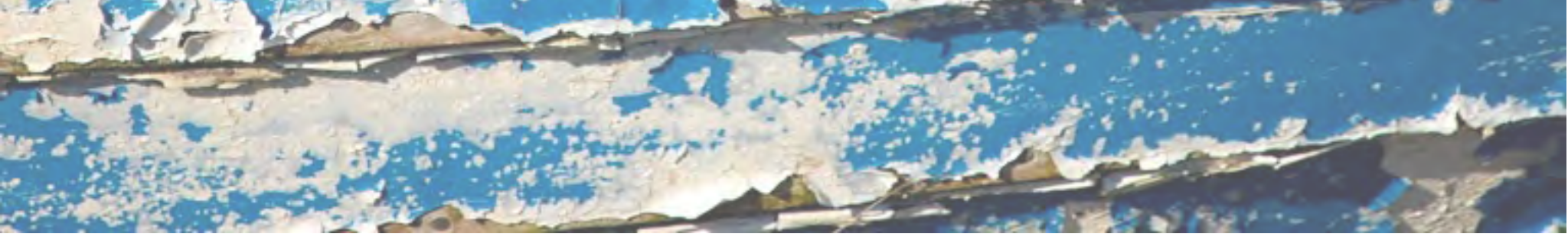
RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

'Responsible Tourism: a guide for tourism and sustainability in small-scale fisheries and agri-food' is a product of *TourFish*, a project funded by the EU INTERREG IVA 2 Seas programme. The aim of *TourFish* was to explore opportunities for coastal areas through developing responsible tourism that draws together food, small-scale inshore fisheries, regional branding and place-based marketing opportunities.

The project involved five partners located in the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, who were new to the idea of responsible tourism. The aim of this guide is to explore the theory and practice of responsible tourism, by drawing upon the experiences of the *TourFish* partners as they engaged with the concept of responsible tourism, combined with current knowledge and thinking surrounding responsible tourism and sustainability.

It aims to inform and inspire the generation of responsible tourism opportunities related to small-scale fishing and agri-food, which are underpinned by local economies, community well-being and sustainable environmental management, whilst contributing to a viable future for sustainable small-scale fishing (SSF) and farming.



... all stakeholders have a responsibility towards delivering sustainability through tourism

Responsible tourism is about people taking responsibility for delivering sustainable development through tourism. It is a process, and a way of thinking and behaving, aimed at reaching a positive outcome for society and the environment. It aims to make tourist destinations better places to live and work, as well as providing tourists with a more enjoyable and meaningful experience through connections with local people. It recognises that all stakeholders have a responsibility towards delivering sustainability through tourism, bringing together a diverse range of sectors including tourism providers, the tourists themselves, as well as other non-tourism sectors (e.g. agriculture, transport etc.) that interact with tourism indirectly.

Economic sustainability has a central focus of supporting local economies and local livelihoods. One of the main economic problems with tourism is leakage, whereby much of the revenue ends up outside of the host destination rather than within it. Some of the ways that responsible tourism can help reduce economic leakage and support economic sustainability include:

Developing the experience economy – in its simplest form this is the selling of experiences. Responsible tourism experiences can be framed in a range of ways; however, connecting tourists in an authentic way with local sustainable food, local livelihoods and culture, and the meaning of place, is particularly relevant in the context of agri-food and small-scale fisheries.

Place branding – this is a process of improving the image of a place, developing a distinct and differentiated identity to attract visitors. Place branding can contribute to responsible tourism development when it connects tourists and visitors to a locality in a meaningful way and improves the area to live in as well as to visit, for instance by drawing upon and improving cultural and natural heritage, public spaces, and sustainable industries of the area (e.g. sustainable SSF).

Creating and capturing value through sustainability – this is a process of creating value-added products through translating sustainable production practices (e.g. sustainable small-scale fishing or organic farming) into increased prices due to its association with ethical production, responsibility and quality. Shortening the supply chain, and effective promotion and marketing, is an important component of linking this to the tourism industry.

Diversification and unlocking livelihood opportunities – this is the creation of new opportunities in responsible tourism alongside another, often primary, source of income (e.g. fishing or farming). The idea is to supplement primary income rather than replace it, acting as a buffer in volatile or seasonal professions, such as fishing and farming.

Social sustainability is about achieving a positive social state in a community – i.e. improving community well-being - which can include increased equity, social cohesion, social inclusion, local empowerment and building of social capital, both for the current generation and for future generations.

There are many ways to contribute to social sustainability in tourism, including providing skills development for employees, providing opportunities for marginalised or disadvantaged groups, increasing wages, and supporting local businesses and the local economy. Strengthening sense of place and stakeholder participation are both particularly important for ensuring that tourism benefits the wider community:

Strengthening sense of place and place identity – sense of place relates to human connection to a place, and is often used to describe the place itself i.e. it is an attribute that the place has or does not have. The connection people make to places is often described as 'place attachment'. A strong sense of place (and the cultural and natural assets that contribute to that sense of place) can help the local economy through attracting tourists, and is linked with the idea of place branding where a place becomes known for a distinctive quality or feature. It can also lead to greater valuing and protection of cultural and natural assets, and can contribute to social cohesion through strengthening 'place identity', which is a process by which people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place.

Stakeholder participation in decision-making – this is the process of involving people in decisions that can affect them (or that they can affect), and is an underlying principle of

responsible tourism. There are many potential benefits of involving local people in decision-making, including identification of alternative solutions to problems, inclusion of additional values and perspectives, incorporation of local knowledge and skills, improved trust, reduction in conflicts, fairer, more equitable decisions, and creating empowerment and sense of ownership in the local community. Involving a diverse range of local people throughout the tourism development process can help ensure that the development is appropriate and that it benefits the wider community.

Responsible tourism can help minimize trade-offs between economic growth and environmental protection

Environmental sustainability is about sustainable and equitable use of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity (including protection of vulnerable and threatened species), and the safeguarding of ecosystem processes and functions that support the different ecosystem services (i.e. the benefits from nature) which humans rely upon. Responsible tourism can help minimise trade-offs between economic growth and environmental protection, and help to create synergies in which tourism development can contribute to nature conservation. Approaches that contribute towards environmental sustainability in tourism include:

- Supporting well-managed tourism in protected and/or other conservation areas
- Environmental certification or accreditation
- Supporting sustainable tourism-based livelihoods as an alternative to environmentally destructive activities
- Offering low-impact tourism activity choices
- Reducing the impact of tourism infrastructure on habitats
- Minimising waste and pollution
- Improving resource efficiency (e.g. water and energy)
- Awareness raising in tourists about environmentally responsible choices and behaviour
- Awareness raising in host communities of the value of their local natural environment and the ecosystem services it provides

There is increasing recognition that the agri-food and fisheries sectors can and should become more environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. Although there are various ways for the agri-food and fisheries sectors to become more sustainable, an important avenue is through supporting small-scale, less intensive fishing and farming practices. Small-scale fishing (SSF) makes an important contribution to sustainable livelihoods, poverty alleviation, nutrition and food security, and although there is the potential for SSF to be environmentally unsustainable, the sector typically has lower ecological impact than larger fishing operations.

The full potential for SSF to contribute to sustainable development is yet to be fully realised. There are multiple ways that SSF can be important to coastal communities beyond the income derived from catch, including a range of socio-cultural benefits, which can be captured through responsible SSF-tourism. Key arguments for linking responsible tourism and the SSF sector include:

There are multiple ways that SSF can be important to coastal communities beyond the income derived from catch, including a range of socio-cultural benefits, which can be captured through responsible SSF-tourism.

Responsible SSF-tourism can contribute towards economic growth in coastal places. Coastal tourism is an important sector globally, and is identified by the European Commission as one of five key avenues for contributing to the E.U. Blue Growth strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors. Supporting and rebuilding fishing communities through tourism offers the potential to not only support the SSF sector itself but also to be an important avenue for improving coastal communities and regional economies more broadly.

SSF can contribute to responsible tourism through offering local, sustainable seafood. Food is a significant part of a tourism experience and therefore provides an obvious path for creating responsible tourism offers based around local, sustainable food production. As well as having environmental benefits (e.g. a reduced carbon footprint, conservation of biodiversity and delivery of other ecosystem services), offering local, sustainable food to tourists can benefit the host destination by supporting local economies and attracting tourists to the region. SSF can tap into this responsible tourism opportunity through choosing sustainable fishing practices combined with effective promotion of the seafood produce as a responsible, ethical choice, and even as part of the local identity of the area.

SSF has an important role in environmental stewardship, which is a core component of responsible tourism. SSF is closely connected to the natural environment, and therefore the sector has a responsibility to manage marine resources in a sustainable way (which might take into account fishing methods/gear, species, waste/discards, seasons, and fishing locations etc.). Linking sustainably managed fisheries with tourism therefore resonates with the environmental objectives of responsible tourism. Moreover, small-scale fishers in many coastal communities have an extensive knowledge of the marine ecosystem in which they operate. This can be brought together with scientifically generated knowledge to help develop policy that brings about positive changes for both marine ecosystems and fishers. Through acting as a bridge between land and the sea, small-scale fishers therefore have a potentially important role in strategic coastal and marine planning in a way which creates synergies between tourism, conservation and fishing.

KEY ARGUMENTS FOR LINKING SMALL-SCALE FISHING WITH RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

SSF are multifunctional – they can strengthen 'sense of place' and place image, which can attract tourists and benefit local economies. Although a considerable part of SSF activities occurs at sea and therefore often out-of-sight, the SSF sector still can have substantial impact on the physical environment back on land and affect the look of a coastal place (e.g. fish landing activities, boats, gear etc.) – i.e. fishing can provide more than just food, by delivering cultural ecosystem services (including recreational, aesthetic and inspirational benefits) and a 'sense of place' – i.e. they are multifunctional. Drawing upon and enhancing the contemporary practice and cultural heritage of the SSF sector through responsible tourism initiatives can therefore offer new opportunities for increasing the multifunctionality of SSF. This includes contributing to destination image-making, attracting tourists who are seeking an authentic coastal experience, and through this, benefiting local economies.

Responsible SSF-tourism can help maintain personal and community identity in fishing communities. SSF is not just a commercial industry - it often makes a considerable contribution to the identity of communities, adding to social cohesion through

continued fishing practices, and to cultural heritage through traditions and historical connections. Fishing is also often a way of life, and is a profession that is often passed down through generations within a family. Fishing is therefore often an important part of the personal identity of fishing families. Maintaining the right and ability of fishers to carry on fishing is of great importance to many fishers and their families. Developing responsible tourism practices that support the long-term viability of SSF therefore helps to sustain these personal and community identities, and also acts as a way of raising the social value of the sector.

Furthermore, by increasing people's awareness and understanding of SSF, it can help to increase the sector's social value and visibility...

Fishers often possess a wealth of local ecological knowledge, specialised skills, and cultural heritage, which can contribute to responsible SSF-tourism through educational experiences. Educational experiences linked with SSF can help to reconnect people with food production and the marine environment, which can be important for gaining support for sustainable approaches more broadly. Furthermore, by increasing people's awareness and understanding of SSF, it can help to increase the sector's social value and visibility, strengthening their influence in decision-making, as well as potentially encouraging young people into the profession.

Responsible SSF-tourism can enhance livelihoods through diversification that supplements sustainable fishing activities. The SSF sector faces numerous ecological and socio-economic challenges, including its seasonal nature and policy-imposed fishing restrictions, which have made it difficult in some places to achieve sufficient livelihoods based solely on the production of seafood. Diversification of small-scale fishers into responsible tourism can potentially help support fishers by supplementing their primary fishing income, as well as having socio-economic benefits to the broader coastal community in which they are based.

Case studies based on the tourism initiatives of the *TourFish* partners demonstrate responsible tourism in action in the context of fisheries and agri-food (see figure on page 12). The *TourFish* partners include *Sidmouth Drill Hall Hub CIC, Middelburg Municipality, Flanders House of Food* (who have also been working with *South East Food Group Partnership Ltd*), *Haliotika* and the *University of Brighton*. The *TourFish* project was led by the *University of Greenwich*.

Case study 1 - Sidmouth, UK

- Exemplifies community-led tourism and regeneration emerging from grass-roots community action
- Demonstrates enhancement of sense of place through creativity and heritage-orientated entertainment, including an annual community festival (*Sidmouth Sea Fest*) which celebrates fishing heritage and the sea
- Includes a shared vision to create an educational community space (in Sidmouth Drill Hall) for tourists and locals, to encourage sustainable economic growth and socio-cultural benefits for the community

Case study 2 – Arnemuiden, The Netherlands

- Example of a traditional town that has lost its active fishing fleet but maintains a fishing identity
- Demonstrates the development of a locally-owned business centred around fishermen's sweater knitting patterns
- Highlights the role of regional authorities in facilitating communities to generate their own tourism ideas and opportunities that are meaningful and appropriate for the community
- Illustrates how responsible tourism initiatives can contribute to place identity and sense of place through business innovation and improvements to local public places

Case Study 3 – Mid-West-Flanders, Belgium

- Example of a regional branding initiative based around agri-food; a collaborative shared vision between regional authorities, businesses and research institutes
- Branding strategy focuses on education, enhancing sense of place, and encouraging careers in the agri-food sector
- A bike-and-dine tour, "*Smoefeltoer*", developed by *Flanders House of Food*, illustrates how responsible tourism principles can underpin place branding and enhance destination image, by linking food, health and tourism

Case Study 4 - Le Guilvinec, France

- Based around a fishing discovery centre '*Haliotika– La Cite de la Peche*', developed by the local authorities through working with local fishermen
- Exemplifies the 'experience economy' linked to fishing activities, through livelihood–based educational experiences including pesca-tourism, a viewing platform for fishing activities and a 'living heritage' fishing discovery centre (which explains the life of fishers and the fish supply chain)

Case Study 5 – Hastings, UK

- *Classroom on the Coast* is based around the concept of a flexible education and cookery demonstration facility that links local fishers, chefs and artists with tourists and the community
- Demonstrates collaborative and participatory processes for developing a hybrid socio-economic business model (for forming a Community Interest Company) grounded in the principles of responsible tourism
- Aims to help create meaningful tourism experiences, raise public awareness and the social value of the SSF sector, encourage consumption of local sustainable seafood and create new local supply chain networks

Case study 6 – South East England, UK

- Based around creating and capturing value through sustainability, by making new links and networks between suppliers and buyers of locally-caught seafood in the South East of England
- The *Local Catch* app and website demonstrates how networks can be developed through online resources combined with public education on sustainability

The case studies illustrate some of the opportunities and challenges encountered when taking the concept of responsible tourism and putting it into practice in a variety of contexts and with a diversity of stakeholders. These experiences of the *TourFish* partners have helped to inform a 'Responsible Tourism Development Model' for responsible SSF-tourism (see figure below).

*THE '**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MODEL**' FOR RESPONSIBLE SSF-TOURISM*

This model highlights the range of tourism products that exist in responsible SSF-tourism and the different pathways for realizing these opportunities, along with the key processes and principles that underpin responsible tourism development.

The principles of responsible tourism, relating to the three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and the principles of the 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism, form the core of the model. Basing tourism development on the idea of sustainability is not only a responsible and ethical approach, but it also opens up many new market opportunities that draw upon those principles. When developing new responsible tourism initiatives, these core principles need to be revisited to ensure that the tourism initiative continues to contribute benefits for both people and the environment.

The model also depicts a set of processes that are important for translating the underlying principles of responsible tourism into responsible tourism products. A critical process is stakeholder participation, which can underpin a range of other processes that all contribute to the realisation of responsible tourism initiatives. Stakeholder participation is a continued process that varies in terms of objectives, approaches and the level of involvement of the different stakeholders. Effective stakeholder participation can be challenging, and needs to consider stakeholder representation, the appropriateness of engagement methods, logistics (including timings and costs), and facilitation and management of the process. Although it can be challenging, it is a highly valuable process that is a fundamental part of responsible tourism. Other processes that can facilitate the development of responsible tourism initiatives include:

Network building to develop new market opportunities and improve social cohesion and integration.

Visitor/consumer education to raise understanding and awareness of responsibility and sustainability.

Formulation of shared visions of what the tourism product will be, how it will benefit society, and how to get there.

Continued dialogue between stakeholders, including about how the project connects with the principles of responsible tourism.

Planning for multi-functional use of place and resources - appreciating that places can support different values and uses, and seeking to reduce conflict between these different uses, identifying synergies where possible.

Collaboration and facilitation between different sectors, including business, education, community, and government, and recognising the role that different sectors can have in facilitating the tourism development process e.g. through expertise or resources.

Skills development and capacity building in the community, particularly for projects involving livelihood diversification, and those that are community managed.

Impact assessment - social, economic and environmental - both in terms of potential negative impacts, and the benefits the project can bring.

Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats e.g. SWOT analysis, including assessment of the legislative frameworks, to ensure project viability and longevity.

Knowledge creation and exchange, including of local/traditional and scientific knowledge that is needed to underpin or bring added value to the project.

Marketing and visibility to promote the tourism offer, particularly by drawing upon its sustainability/responsibility credentials to attract responsible consumers and visitors.

Business planning to ensure that the tourism initiative will have longevity and be economically viable into the future.

Three key pathways that emerged in the *TourFish* project for producing responsible tourism products (by the term 'product' we mean to include goods, services, activities and attractions etc.) are:

1. *Creating and capturing value through sustainability to enhance primary income and support local livelihoods.* This pathway focuses predominantly on increasing the value of existing produce. The produce therefore needs to have some differential quality to attract consumers and raise its value. For SSF or agri-food linked to responsible tourism, this added value can be based around food that is local and sustainable. Therefore, for seafood or agricultural produce to contribute to a responsible tourism experience, the food needs to be sustainably produced, and there also needs to be confidence amongst consumers that it is produced in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Creating (or integration with existing) *alternative food networks*, combined with effective marketing and promotion, can complement this approach. This involves emphasis of the 'local' through shortening supply chains e.g. selling through local fish or farmers markets or selling directly to tourists or hotels and restaurants.

2. *Strengthening sense of place and delivery of ecosystem services to improve the local area and attract tourists.* Developing a strong sense of place and destination image, and the delivery of multiple ecosystem services (i.e. the benefits people derive from nature), can be supported through enhancements to local assets and public space. This will involve non-fishers (e.g. local councils, businesses, artists and conservation organisations) as well as fishers. It involves *improvements to cultural and natural attractions*. For fishing communities this might include, for example, appropriate renovations to fishing harbours (that complement the fishing activities and are in keeping with the area), conservation strategies that improve the marine and coastal environment, creation of coastal trails and viewing points and promotion of fishing heritage. Sense of place and cultural ecosystem services may also be strengthened through *cultural innovation* within the community, which might include cultural events such as sea/seafood or farming festivals that can increase the visibility of the destination, and can also create direct economic gains, increase trade for the local economy, develop social cohesion and help to build networks in a community. Supporting local cultural innovation, such as art inspired by fishing or farming, can also help strengthen sense of place.

3. Diversification into tourism to supplement primary income and increase the social value of the sector. Fishers and farmers may diversify their livelihoods (i.e. gain additional income to fishing or farming, as opposed to replacing their primary profession) through developing new products and activities. This might include *complementary tourism packages* in addition to their primary fishing/farming activities (e.g. for SSF, this might include wildlife tours, sea angling, accommodation and catering) or through new product innovation (e.g. fishing by-products or crafts based on fishing skills, knowledge and heritage), which could be directly linked to fishing or farming activities, or linked to fishing, coastal or rural heritage. Fishers and farmers may also 'diversify', or contribute, to tourism through educational experiences. This might supplement fishers'/farmers' primary income directly (e.g. charging for pesca-tourism experiences or skills workshops), however much of the

benefit of educational experiences to their livelihoods may be indirect. In particular, educational experiences can be an important avenue for raising public awareness and understanding of the SSF and agri-food sectors, thereby increasing their social value. For SSF, this may potentially help to raise the influence of the SSF sector in marine and coastal decision-making. Educational experiences linked to SSF and agri-food can be based around *the environment* (e.g. sustainability, fishing/farming practices, biodiversity and conservation), *skills of fishers and farmers* (e.g. fishing/farming, processing, cooking), and/or *culture and livelihoods* (e.g. the life of a fisher or farmer).

Responsible SSF-tourism cannot be a solution for all of the challenges facing the SSF sector and coastal towns. However, the theory, case studies and Responsible Tourism Development Model presented in this guide provide a starting point for thinking about and generating new responsible tourism opportunities linked to SSF and agri-food more broadly. Through striving towards environmental, social and economic sustainability, and encouraging people to think about their responsibility and role for achieving this, it provides an opportunity to support the SSF sector and fishing communities in a way that can bring real benefits to communities and coastal areas.

'*Responsible Tourism: a guide for tourism and sustainability in small-scale fisheries and agri-food*' is freely available in full, as an ebook and as a pdf, through following the appropriate links at:

www.gre.ac.uk/gmi/tourfish

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