The Naples declaration in sustainable tourism project management

The Naples Declaration is the result of the First High Level Summer School in Leadership and Management in Sustainable Tourism, held in Naples between the 8th and the 12th of July.

The Declaration is a call to all stakeholders involved in the design, commissioning, delivery and receivership of sustainable tourism related projects to:

Deliver and demonstrate impactful benefits for sustainable development

- We, representatives of intergovernmental organisations, European Institutions, all spheres of government and public sector agencies, development agencies and investment banks, project donors and funders, private sector, non-governmental organisations, civil society and professionals and academia, all involved in the shared purpose of sustainable development through tourism, having come together to Naples to consider the issue of professionalising project management in the context of the conference "Leadership and management in sustainable tourism".
- Accepting that in a time of a deep crisis in Europe, tourism has proven to be one of the few economic sectors able to resist. Its contribution to the European economy makes it the third largest industry, yet it is hardly regarded as a strategic priority,
- Acknowledging that tourism has the capacity to make a greater contribution to sustainable development of communities and their human rights, heritage and natural resources while improving business and destination competitiveness,
- Aware of the challenges in cross cultural interdisciplinary stakeholder management,
- Accepting that too often satisfactory completion of a project means timely expenditure and reporting, rather than taking into account the beneficiaries,
- Considering that it is important to implement sustainable tourism indicators, such as the ones developed by the European Commission – ETIS - in order to measure the sustainability performances at destination level;
- Conscious that project management and evaluation should focus not on the outputs (what is funded) but the benefits (the change achieved),
- Acutely aware of the necessity to develop learning organisations, which requires acknowledging failure as well as celebrating success,
- Accepting that regrettably some institutions and individuals have used sustainability terminology to gain access to funds and to legitimise activities,

The main goal of the Declaration is to serve as the basis to make concrete changes in managing projects with success and sustainability. It aims to represent a framework for project funders, implementers and beneficiaries that have the power to apply the key principles in their daily work.

We call project funders to:
1. Fund projects for which there is a clear business case, market demand and financial feasibility,
2. Apply more robust project management methodologies, including transparency of benefits achieved from the outputs,
3. Require more meaningful stakeholder engagement (particularly beneficiaries) in the design, management and evaluation of projects,

We call implementation agencies, consultants and NGOs to:
1. Apply detailed project management methodologies tailored for sustainable development to design and manage tourism projects with success,
2. Develop better internal management systems and external reporting systems geared towards that external accountability of how they meet benefit, scope, quality and risks, as well as expenditure and timing,
3. Have clear benefit realisation plans and identify benefit owners with capability to take responsibility for the long term exploitation of the project products,

We call beneficiaries to:
1. Engage in the opportunities tourism funded projects offer for sustainable development proportionally to the benefits gained,
2. Raise awareness of the instances where project objectives are unrealistic, or benefits are unsatisfactory,
3. Demand capacity building and the transfer of expertise and project outputs,

With this document, we want to inspire tourism stakeholders and professionals to pursue sustainability in everything they do.

About the Declaration

The Europe 2020 strategy aims at "addressing the shortcomings of our growth model and creating the conditions for a different type of growth that is smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive". Tourism has, by nature, the power to contribute to that growth. In an effort to make tourism projects more sustainable and successful, but also to create long terms benefits for the local communities, the PM4SD™ methodology was created. PM4SD™ aims to be the new methodology and qualification for designing and managing tourism projects with success.

It was within this pioneering initiative, funded by the European Commission, that the first Annual European Summer School in Leadership and Management in Sustainable Tourism took place in Naples, Italy, from the 8th to the 12th of July, where representatives from the tourism industry gathered to discuss how PM4SD™ can contribute to sustainable tourism, and therefore to sustainable development, in all its spheres. The partners in this event include the United Nations, the APM Group, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the Leeds Metropolitan University, George Washington University, among others. The Summer School in Leadership and Management in Sustainable Tourism aims to be an annual event, where knowledge and best practices are exchanged.

This Declaration will be revised in July 2014, when the second edition of the Annual European Summer School in Leadership and Management in Sustainable Tourism will take place.

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