

The Seinäjoki Declaration in Sustainable Tourism Project Management

The Seinäjoki Declaration is a revision of the Naples Declaration. The declaration was produced during the Summer School in Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Tourism, held at the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, in Seinäjoki (Finland), between the 1st and the 3rd July 2014.

The Seinäjoki Declaration aims to reinforce the principles established by the Naples Declaration, calling all stakeholders involved in the planning, management, delivery and receivership of tourism projects to:

Deliver and demonstrate a benefit oriented approach for sustainable development

The Declaration's goal is to act as the foundation for concrete changes in managing projects with success and sustainability. It is to be regarded as the framework for project funders, implementers and beneficiaries, who primarily have the power to apply the key sustainability principles in their daily work.

- A. **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, professionals and academia and civil society, all involved in the shared purpose of sustainable development through tourism, having come together for the first time in 2013, in Naples, to consider the issue of professionalising project management in the context of the conference “Leadership and Management in Sustainable Tourism”;
- B. Accepting that during a period of deep crisis in Europe, tourism proved 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;
- C. 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;
- D. Aware of the importance of tourism as driver for social and economic inclusion, as it is crucial to the employment of women and youth;
- E. Aware of the increasing need for an accessible and responsible tourism that addresses the needs of special groups of tourists, such as seniors, people with disabilities and people facing financial difficulties,
- F. Aware of the challenges in cross cultural interdisciplinary stakeholder management;
- G. Accepting that, too often, satisfactory completion of a project means timely expenditure and reporting, rather than taking into account the beneficiaries and the impact at destination level;
- H. 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.;
- I. Conscious that project management and evaluation should focus not on the outputs - what is funded - but on the benefits - the changes achieved;
- J. Acutely aware of the necessity to develop learning organisations, which requires acknowledging failure as well as celebrating success;

- K. Accepting that, regrettably, some institutions and individuals have used sustainability terminology to gain access to funds and to legitimise activities.

Call **project funders** to:

1. Fund projects for which there is a clear and sound business case, market demand and financial feasibility that ultimately solve an existing problem;
2. Apply more robust project management and implementation methodologies, including transparency of benefits achieved from the outputs;
3. Require more meaningful stakeholder engagement (particularly beneficiaries) in the design, management, evaluation and benefits' management and ownership of projects;
4. Raise political awareness to the cause of sustainable tourism.

Call **implementation agencies, consultants and NGOs** to:

1. Create strong partnerships, with highly committed stakeholders and to ensure that there is no collision, no contradiction and no duplication of efforts amongst the partners;
2. Clearly define, document and articulate roles and responsibilities within the project management context;
3. Ensure that projects are in line with the tourism policy set by the relevant institutions and organisations;
4. Engage with the beneficiaries before the start of the project and involve them in all stages of the project design, implementation and management;
5. Apply detailed project management methodologies tailored for sustainable development to design and manage tourism projects with success;
6. Develop better internal management systems and external reporting systems geared towards that external accountability of how they meet the benefits, scope, quality and risks, as well as expenditure and timing;
7. Have clear benefit realisation plans and identify benefit owners with the capability to take responsibility for the long term exploitation of the project products.

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 relevant 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 and, in the wake of the economic crisis, it was tourism that proved to be Europe’s most resilient sector. It is regarded as the main driver for recovery. In an effort to implement sustainable tourism projects, but also to create long term benefits for the local communities, the PM4SD™ methodology was created. PM4SD™ aspires to be the *de facto* methodology 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, at the Suor Orsola Benincasa University, Italy, from the 8th to the 12th July 2013, 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 of 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, the George Washington University, among others.

The Summer School in Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Tourism is an annual event created to exchange knowledge and best practices in Leadership and management for sustainable tourism.

The Declaration will be revised during the third edition of the event, to take place in July 2015.

“Good governance is required for constructive dialogue, information sharing, communication and shared decision making about common issues and interests.” (Foundation for European Sustainable Tourism, 2013)