STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATOR SYSTEM FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AT DESTINATION LEVEL

RESULTS FROM TASK 1C)

Report on Existing Systems of Indicators for the Sustainable Management of Destinations

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1. Context and Background

The purpose of this project is: i) to investigate the feasibility of a Europe-wide system of tourism indicators for the sustainable management of destinations, and ii) to make recommendations to local/national/European stakeholders for its implementation.

While considerable work has gone into the development of the Tourism Steering Group (TSG) indicators and their piloting in NECSTouR and EDEN destinations, there is no widely accepted process and methodology for the sustainable management of destinations using the indicators. The task of the project team is to develop an inclusive, user-friendly methodology for using indicators in order to enhance the management of tourism destinations across Europe.

In order to do this, five principle task areas have been identified:

1. Review of international sustainable tourism indicators systems
2. Review of the results of NECSTouR and EDEN destinations
3. Adjustment to TSG core set of indicators and development of a guidance toolkit
4. Testing of the indicators and toolkit in number of pilot destinations across Europe
5. Adjustments to indicator set and toolkit, and recommendations shared in a regional conference

This report is the key output of task one. The report provides an analysis of eight sustainable tourism monitoring systems and includes boxed examples of other monitoring systems. It discusses how the systems were built and managed and the reasons behind their success or failure. Through this analysis, lessons learned are used to make recommendations for developing a toolkit that will serve as a guide to policy makers who will implement the TSG system.

The report starts with a detailed explanation of the methodology used to select the case study indicators systems. The case study analysis methods are then explained.

The second section of the report contains a comprehensive review and analysis of each case study.

The final section of the report provides a review of lessons learned from the case studies with recommendations for the EU system of indicators.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the case study review is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of other sustainable tourism indicator programmes so lessons learned may be applied to the EU indicator system.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the case study report are to:

- Analyse in a structured way the pros and cons of a wide range of systems for destination-level sustainable tourism monitoring
- Make recommendations for the European System of indicators based on successful and innovative approaches to sustainable destinations identified in the case studies
2. Methodology

The team researched indicator systems from across the world. Monitoring systems were examined in the South Pacific, Caribbean, Africa, Europe, and North America.\(^1\) Not all identified systems were suitable to be case studies nor were they all applicable to the European context. Three rounds of screening were undertaken to identify the most suitable case study indicator systems for analysis.

2.1. Round one: pre-screening, identification of 35 systems

Drawing on the team’s extensive experience with indicator programmes worldwide combined with extensive desktop research, an initial list of destination monitoring systems was identified and pre-screened.

The pre-screening criteria were kept as broad as possible to capture as many functioning destination-level indicator systems as possible. The basic criteria for inclusion in the list were:

- The existence of a destination-level sustainable tourism indicator/monitoring system
- Pre-defined destination boundaries which have some political jurisdiction, e.g., defined coastal zone, a bay or island, cultural heritage sites, a national park, a city or a town, a defined rural area, parish, district.

As a result of the pre-screening, 35 destination-level sustainable tourism monitoring systems were identified for further research, analysis, and screening.

2.2. Round two: screening to 20

In preparation for the second round of screening, further information was collected about each of the 35 systems. The systems were then sorted by geographic region, management agency, e.g., government, non-profit, and private sector, and destination type, e.g., city, rural, coastal, resort, island, mountain, ski, lakes, parks. The following screening questions were then applied to the sorted systems:

- How applicable is the destination to the European context?
- Is the system in use?
- Has the system been successful?
- Is information about the system readily available?
- Is there a contact person who responds to requests for information?

Based on responses to the screening questions, group process, and expert consensus, the 35 monitoring systems were reduced to the 20 which best fitted the selection criteria. Care was taken to ensure destination types reflected as far as possible the diversity of European tourism destinations and a wide range of management systems.

2.3. Round three: screening to top 8

For round three of the screening process, the expert team developed a research template with the following information requirements:

- Name, location, context, responsible organisation
- Scope of the indicators

\(^1\) NECSTouR and EDEN destinations were excluded from this process as these cases are to be analysed under task 2 of this project.
• Information available (website, toolkit, etc.)
• Use of results (indicates credibility)
• Strengths and weaknesses
• 200-word description explaining the context, purpose, and achievements of the system

The completed template was reviewed and evaluated by the team both individually and as a group until consensus was reached on which were the eight most applicable, broadest, and most useful case studies to analyse further. A recommendation was then made for whether or not to include the case study.

On February 24, 2012, the Project Steering Committee was presented with the results from round two (20 case study narratives and a comparative matrix) and a list of eight recommended cases. Seven of the case studies were agreed on by the Steering Committee. Additional research was then conducted on four other systems: Equalto, EMAS, European Cities Marketing, and British Destinations. Finally, British Destinations was selected as the eighth case study on April 10th, 2012. The eight case studies included are shown in the table below along with the primary reason for their selection.

**Figure 1. Case studies selected**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study Destination or System</th>
<th>Primary reason for selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. UNWTO and Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC)</td>
<td>The only internationally recognised set of standards for sustainability monitoring at destination-level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Travelife Sustainability System</td>
<td>One of the most successful European private sector sustainability systems and the only non-destination level system included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC)</td>
<td>The only regional destination-sustainable tourism monitoring system. Selected for similarity to the European model, simplicity, substantial materials and participatory methodologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pan Parks</td>
<td>The most successful monitoring system for parks and protected areas across Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dublin Institute of Technology ACHIEV Model</td>
<td>One of the most successful academic-sourced systems with a well-developed and easy-to-use toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Whistler2020</td>
<td>A destination ski resort that has decided to make sustainability a core community focus. This is the only fully integrated sustainability monitoring system included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mexico Sustainable Tourism Programme</td>
<td>The world’s widely used and applied national model for sustainable destination assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. British Destinations</td>
<td>One of the few effective local authority benchmarking systems in Europe. This is run by a trade association and based on a simple questionnaire that provides a means to share best practices amongst user regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4. Case study research

To ensure the usefulness and comparability of the case studies, a standardised reporting template was developed for the case studies. This template contains four sections: context and administration of the indicators, technical scope of the indicators, use and communication of the indicators, and strengths and weaknesses of the programmes.

**Desktop Research**

The case study research was completed in two phases. Phase one consisted of a desktop study of materials publicly available about the system. Focus was placed on the collection of the following information:

- Context of the system, e.g., length of time in operation, driving agency, purpose
- Administration of the system, e.g., staff, budget, stakeholder involvement
- Scope of the indicators, e.g., indicator range and type
- Data collection, e.g., frequency, methods used
- Communication of results, e.g., website, publications, public meetings
- Contents, style, format, quality of guidance toolkit/manual/handbook
• Use of results, e.g., planning, policymaking, public meetings

**Interviews**

Phase two was an interview with the system manager, designer, or coordinator. This focused on “Critical tipping points” for the success or failure of particular systems:

• Lessons learned during the development process and subsequent implementation
• Potential pitfalls and how they can be avoided
• Critical components of success will also be noted

Not all the information was available for all of the case studies, but in each case the research and analysis was peer-reviewed and discussed by the team.

**2.5. Recommendations**

In order to facilitate side-by-side comparison, a summary matrix was constructed. Based on analysis of case studies, an evaluation was made of which elements are the most successful in each case and why. Particular attention was paid to:

• Lessons learned about indicator scope
• Elements that make for a successful guidance toolkit
• Potential pitfalls and how they can be avoided
• Critical components of success

Based on detailed review of the case studies and the matrix, a set of 20 recommendations has been highlighted for the Europe-wide system of tourism indicators for the sustainable management of destinations.
3. Case Studies

Case Study 1: The UNWTO and GSTC Indicator Systems

Context and administration of the system

UNWTO
Over the last decade, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has made a significant contribution to the field of sustainable tourism indicator development. Following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, concern for the viability of tourism and destinations worldwide led to the establishment of an international taskforce inside the UNWTO’s Environment Committee to help destinations identify problems and work towards sustainable solutions. The initial results from the group were reported in the publication entitled Indicators for the Sustainable Management of Tourism (World Tourism Organisation, 1993).

This first UNWTO publication discusses the need for indicators and provides a framework for indicator selection. The indicators were divided into national use and ‘hot spot’ use and tested in five locations worldwide: Prince Edward Island, Canada; Los Tuxtlas, Mexico; The Netherlands; Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, USA; and Villa Gesell and Peninsula Valdes in Argentina. A list of 11 core indicators were identified, having proven their usefulness in all the test cases, supplemented by issue-specific indicators relating to the specific destination types.

The next UNWTO publication, What Tourism Managers Need to Know: A Practical Guide to the Development and Use of Indicators of Sustainable Tourism, was released in 1996. Core and supplementary indicators were explained and used for further pilot studies. Regional case workshops were held in destinations including Keszthely, Hungary; Cozumel, Mexico; Peninsula Valdez and Villa Gesell, Argentina; Ugljan and Pasman Croatia; Beruwala, Sri Lanka; Chaguaramas, Trinidad; Lombok, Indonesia; Santa Cruz, Bolivia; Yangshuo, China; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; and Bohol, Philippines. Other workshops were also held using the UNTWO approach and methodology (e.g. Cape Breton 2003; Mexcaltitan, Mexico 2004) and the results made available to UNWTO.

In each destination, participatory processes were used to define key issues of importance. First, a practical assessment of availability of information was assessed by key stakeholders. Workshops and targeted interviews helped provide an assessment of the needs of decision-makers and clarification of who would use the indicators and how they would be used in the overall planning and management of tourism and the destination. The recommended approach involves all tourism stakeholders both in defining and carrying out the programme.

The result of this work was the encyclopaedic Guidebook: Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations. The Guidebook is intended to act both as a resource book and a practical handbook for the development of indicators within a tourism destination. The lead author was Ted Manning of Tourisk Inc., Canada assisted by 62 authors of specific sections who came from all continents. The object of the Guidebook was to create an enhanced suite of processes and tools which could serve as a practical guide for destination managers and destination management organisations.

GSTC
The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world through the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles. The criteria are a set of guiding principles and performance indicators designed to lead destination managers, communities, and businesses on a path to sustainability: maximising social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits while minimising negative impacts. The Destination Criteria complement the existing GSTC Criteria.
for Hotels and Tour Operators, which have become a worldwide standard for tourism sustainability. Erika Harms, Executive Director of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council says: “The GSTC’s Destination Criteria outline 45 specific actions that a destination can take to choose a different future—to make their cultural and natural attractions a source of delight for visitors, and a source of employment for locals, for many generations to come.”

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council does not aim to certify destinations as sustainable but it intends to use the criteria to check existing destination certification standards and acknowledge those that meet the GSTC level.

The criteria were modelled based on experience from the UNWTO destination level indicators initiative, the GSTC for tourism enterprises, Sustainable Travel International’s STEP for Municipalities/Destinations, the ACS Destination Criteria (sectoral and local), the Tourism Sustainability Group Indicators, Earthcheck (Green Globe) the Biosphere Responsible Tourism criteria, and those from National Geographic’s GeoTourism initiative. Many other criteria and indicators programmes in use were also reviewed for specific sectors and issues. A working list of criteria and related indicators is currently undergoing the first of two 60-day periods of public consultation according to the ISEAL Guidelines.

The GSTC Destination Criteria is administered by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and supported by the United Nations Foundation.

Some of the expected uses of the criteria include the following:

- Serve as basic guidelines for destinations which wish to become more sustainable
- Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism destinations
- Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognise destinations and inform the public regarding their sustainability
- Help certification and other voluntary destination level programmes ensure that their standards meet a broadly-accepted international baseline
- Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programmes a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements; and
- Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as hotel schools and universities

The list of criteria, which is currently in the public consultation phase, is designed to be sufficient to allow a destination to claim to be sustainable. The next phase, which is about to commence, is the field testing of the indicators in a range of different destinations to permit fine tuning. No field application has yet occurred for GSTC.

**Technical scope of the indicators**

The UNWTO indicator set includes recommended baseline indicators but it is not prescriptive. It instead suggests a participatory process by which each destination can identify and develop those indicators of greatest use to it. The UNWTO Guidebook includes 12 baseline criteria and 29 indicators that were identified as a reference set likely to be applicable to all destinations. These include:

- Local satisfaction with tourism, e.g., local satisfaction questionnaire
- Effects of tourism on communities, e.g., ratio of tourists to locals
- Sustaining tourist satisfaction, e.g., local satisfaction questionnaire
- Tourism seasonality, e.g., tourist arrivals by month
- Economic benefits of tourism, e.g., number of local people employed in tourism
- Energy management, e.g., per capita consumption of energy
• Water availability and conservation, e.g., water use
• Drinking water quality, e.g., percentage of tourism establishments with potable water
• Sewage treatment, e.g., percentage of sewage from site receiving treatment
• Solid waste management, e.g., waste volume produced by the destination
• Development control, e.g., existence of a land use plan
• Controlling use intensity, e.g., total number of tourist arrivals

Although the above are identified as baseline indicators, UNWTO also stress the importance of using a participatory stakeholder approach to confirm the utility of each of the indicators, and to define the issues most important to the sustainability of each destination. The selected set will likely include most or all of the baseline set as well as others linked to the unique society, economy, or ecology of the destination. In some cases, however, some of the core list will not be used as they are not relevant to the destination circumstance.

The Program also provided workshop training in indicator development methods and a range of case study examples showing application to specific destination types. Additional issues and indicators were identified for specific destination types: coastal zones, beaches, small islands, desert and arid areas, mountain destinations, natural and sensitive ecological sites, ecotourism destinations, parks and protected areas, communities within or adjacent to protected areas, trails and routes, built heritage sites, small and traditional communities, urban tourism, conventions and convention centres, communities seeking tourism development, theme parks, water parks, and cruise ships and their destinations. For each of these, key issues are identified and indicators which respond to them were suggested. The idea of recommending indicators was to promote sharing of information and benchmarking.

The UNWTO Guidebook provides comprehensive guidance on the indicator selection process. This includes a three-phase process: research and organisation, indicator selection, and implementation. The research phase is when the boundaries of the destination are established, stakeholders are identified and key tourism assets and risks are listed along with the destination’s tourism vision.

Phase two is the indicator selection where indicators are screened based on priority issues, feasibility and practicality using five criteria:
1) Relevance to the issues facing the destination
2) Feasibility of obtaining and analysing the needed information
3) Credibility and reliability of the information
4) Clarity regarding what the data or information means, particularly to the end user
5) Comparability to indicators in use in other destinations, permitting benchmarking.

Phase three, implementation, was less developed by UNWTO. It involves identifying data sources, costs, characteristics, frequency of data collection and other technical requirements in order to generate a plan for the implementation of each indicator. The UNWTO did provide considerable advice on approaches to data collection, portrayal, use and maintenance but consciously avoided creating a prescriptive template for each indicator as it was understood that each destination would be unique in its data availability, means and access to information. There was also a concern that overly prescriptive templates and procedures might become a barrier to use.

The GSTC initiative differs from the UNWTO approach in form and process. The list of criteria and indicators, which is still in development, is more prescriptive than the UNWTO baseline criteria. The GSTC list is intended to be used to define what it takes to be able to use the destination descriptor “sustainable”.
The criteria are organised around four main themes:

- Effective sustainability planning
- Maximising social and economic benefits for the local community
- Management of visitors and attraction sites
- Reducing negative impacts to the environment

Figure 2. GSTC Destination-level Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Sustainable tourism strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2 Tourism management organisation</td>
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<td>A3 Sustainable tourism monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>A4 Tourism seasonality management</td>
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<td>A5 Climate change adaptation</td>
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<td>A6 Inventory of attraction sites</td>
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<td>A7 Design and Construction</td>
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<td>A8 Site accessibility</td>
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<td>A9 Local property rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>A10 Tourist satisfaction monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>A11 Private sector sustainability</td>
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<td>A12 Tourist safety and security</td>
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<tr>
<td>A13 Crisis preparedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>A14 Marketing for sustainable tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>A15 Promotional materials</td>
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<th>B. MAXIMISE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE HOST COMMUNITY AND MINIMISE NEGATIVE IMPACTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>B1 Economic Benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>B2 Local career opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>B3 Public participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>B4 Local satisfaction</td>
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<td>B5 Local access</td>
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<tr>
<td>B6 Tourism awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>B7 Preventing exploitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>B8 Local community support</td>
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<tr>
<td>B9 Fair trade Principles</td>
</tr>
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<td>B10 Tourism enterprise performance</td>
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<tr>
<th>C. MAXIMISE BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES, VISITORS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND MINIMISE NEGATIVE IMPACTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Attraction protection</td>
</tr>
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<td>C2 Visitor management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Visitor behaviour and interpretation in sensitive sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 Cultural heritage protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5 Site interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>C6 Protection of community property and rights</td>
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<td>C7 Travellers Philanthropy</td>
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<tr>
<th>D. MAXIMISE BENEFITS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND MINIMISE NEGATIVE IMPACTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1 Environmental Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>D2 Ecosystem Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3 Energy conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>D4 Greenhouse Gas Reduction</td>
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<td>D5 Water Conservation</td>
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<td>D6 Water Consumption</td>
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<td>D7 Surface and sea water quality</td>
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<td>D8 Waste management</td>
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<td>D9 Solid waste pollution reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>D10 Pollution reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>D11 Local transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>D12 Environmental management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D13 Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The GSTC criteria are designed to indicate what destinations should be measuring. They do not indicate how to measure the indicators or how to report the results. This role will in practice be fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation, all of which will be an indispensable complement to the Destination Level Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, but are currently still in development. The criteria are designed to be used by all types and scales of destinations.

**Use and communication**

The UNWTO Guidebook, which is available in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese) seeks to provide guidance in the selection and development of indicators. It is a 500-page tool kit of approaches and sources covering the entire indicator process from initial definition of the destination and its issues through implementation to evaluation of results.

At the destination level, there has been direct stakeholder communication as part of the case applications. In several of the cases such Cozumel in Mexico and Yangshuo in China, indicators have been incorporated into the local planning process. In many of the UNWTO case studies, destination planners from other destinations in the country and other countries in the region were participants in the study and or workshops. By directly involving the experts and planners from other destinations, the case applications were used as training in the process as well as a means to share expertise. In the applications including Bohol, Philippines; Villa Gesell, Argentina; Yangshuo, China and Cozumel, Mexico; the UNWTO case applications/training workshops were key stimuli for national destination indicators programmes which are now being implemented using adaptations of the UNWTO methodology.

At the global scale, the programme has communicated the methods worldwide through its publications and website. What has been missing except in some “sustainable development observatories” such as Tenerife, and Yangshuo, has been focused follow-up to determine the extent to which the indicators have been implemented. Through the Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (GOST) programme, additional observatories using parts of the UNWTO indicators programme are being established. Examples include Huangshan China, the Basque area of Spain, the Prespa Lakes region of Greece, Albania, and Macedonia. It should be noted that in most cases, the UNWTO indicators have not been put in place as stand-alone programmes, but integrated into the tourism planning and evaluation process for destinations and as part of regional or destination planning programmes like the case of Jasper, Canada.

In the Jasper case, the development of the sustainable development plan for the town within Jasper National Park incorporated the UNWTO approach to indicators from the outset. The participatory process described earlier was used to identify key issues and define shared goals. The indicators became an integral part of the master plan as performance measures. The continuing collection and reporting the data depends on the town planning which renew every five years. Jasper is interested in achieving some form of certification as a sustainable destination based on its planning and implementation process. The GSTC initiative may suit their needs.

The GSTC initiative is not yet at the usage stage. It is currently a vehicle for deliberation and outreach regarding the definition of sustainable destinations and which criteria and indicators need to be measured and reported before a destination can claim to be sustainable. The GSTC is still in the development phase and communication is currently with experts and some destination representatives. The intent is that the system provides a ready set of criteria and indicators for destinations to use to develop their own monitoring systems. The system does not yet have operating guidelines, a manual, methodology for
data collection or instructions for data use. These additions will be considered during the piloting phase scheduled for June 2012.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

The main strength of the UNWTO approach is that it is a universal process which can help any destination identify and put in place the indicators it needs to support sustainable tourism and reduce risks to key tourism assets. The principal weakness of the programme is that the UN funded only the initial phase: the identification of risks and issues and the development of a practical indicators programme. The implementation process received little or no support or follow-up. In some destinations, the UN presence was seen more as an event for politicians to get visibility than as a catalyst for the creation of an on-going programme. Where there was full political support at all levels such as China, the indicators programme has been widely circulated and promoted. It is used in tourism curriculum, it is a focus of three destination-level sustainable tourism laboratories, and it has been integrated into the planning process for Huangshan, Yangshuo, and Zhangjiajie. It has been a stimulus for the establishment of the Monitoring Centre of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories, which was officially established in Sun Yat-Sen University (SYSU), China, in September 2010.

The key lesson from the UNWTO experience is that it is easier to get experts and destinations to work together to define and develop a set of indicators than it is to get them to implement them. If destinations do move to implementation, it is difficult to sustain the data gathering and use programme, particularly if there is not: 1) a clear destination authority in place, 2) strong support at the outset from all key stakeholders (at all levels of government and industry) and 3) a firm and continuing source of funding. Even when there is an initial level of support, if governments or key officials change, the impetus to maintain a programme may wane. It appears that the maintenance of a data collection system needs to be linked to some benefits to the community and to those who must supply and analyse the information. Where this does not exist, the programme tends to fade away. The lead authority must have a budget and mandate; where the lead actor is an academic institution there has generally been only written product with little on the ground use and little continuity.

The GSTC initiative has yet to be tested on the ground. Its strengths come from its participatory development process which draws strongly on the UNWTO indicators experience and other destination level initiatives. The issues found to be most important in the UNWTO work correspond in most cases to the criteria currently under international review. The GSTC process follows ISEAL and as such is inclusive of all stakeholders. The indicators which have been recommended for piloting draw on the experience of UNWTO and several other destination level certification or classification procedures and on committees of experts.

The main weakness of the GSTC destination level criteria and indicators is that they are still in development, no field applications have yet occurred and no implementation tools have been developed. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for destinations are an effort to come to a common understanding of what sustainable tourism means at destination level. They represent the minimum that any destination which wishes to be sustainable should aspire to reach. If the lessons learned from UNWTO are to be applied, GSTC will need to carefully consider the demand for monitoring, the use of the results, and how the systems are integrated into existing planning and policy frameworks. At the moment, without a manual or any clear guidelines on how or why destinations should adopt the system, the tool is at risk of remaining just a tool.
Figure 3. UNWTO/GSTC Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>UNWTO/GSTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>Madrid and Washington D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>UNWTO and GSTC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| STRENGTHS  | • Universal process to identify relevant indicators (UNWTO)  
|            | • List of possible indicator for many different types of destinations (UNWTO)  
|            | • Comprehensive Guidebook (UNWTO) |
| WEAKNESSES | • Focus on indicator development rather than indicator use (UNWTO)  
|            | • Only funded in development not implementation (UNWTO)  
|            | • Little or no follow up on pilot destinations (UNWTO)  
|            | • GSTC has not yet been proved through implementation |
| CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS | • Backing of international organisations  
|            | • Global credibility  
|            | • Need for community benefits  
|            | • Lead organisation needs budget and mandate |

Figure 4. EMAS Example

The European Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a voluntary European Union (EU) initiative developed in 1993 and put into practice in 1995. It was designed for companies engaged in heavy industry. Since 2001, the scheme has been open to all public and private sector businesses. EMAS’s objective is to promote continuous environmental performance improvements by committing businesses to evaluate and improve their own environmental performance and communicate relevant information to the public.

EMAS is a technical environmental management system that is compatible with ISO 14001. However, EMAS goes a bit further than ISO 14001. For example, it requires a stronger commitment to external communication. Other differences between the two schemes are mostly concerned with the EMAS environmental review and personnel involvement. It does not adopt a triple bottom line approach to sustainability, but is instead focused on the reduction of environmental impacts related specifically to water, energy, and chemical use.

Although EMAS is most popular with heavy industry sectors (the waste disposal sector has 455 registered businesses), there are 254 registered accommodation businesses in 2012, up from 217 in 2006. The scheme is also designed for use by tour operators, food and beverage providers, and activity/entertainment providers.
Case Study 2: The Travelife Sustainability System

**Context and administration of the system**

The Travelife Sustainability System is the only non-destination–level system included in the Case study report. It is included because as the system championed by some of the largest European Tour Operators, it has a close connection with the private sector, it is an example of a successful system and benefits from effective consumer interface which could provide useful lessons for the European system of indicators. The Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) Sustainable Tourism Committee conceived the idea for the Travelife Sustainability System in 2005. The FTO launched the scheme in 2007 prior to its merger with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) in late 2009.

In order to coordinate efforts to improve tourism sustainability, employees from the ‘Big Four’ British outbound tour operators (First Choice, Thompson, Mytravel and Thomas Cook), together with two smaller companies: Virgin Holidays and Cosmos, met regularly with the FTO Sustainable Tourism Manager to utilise their collective might to achieve positive change. In addition to greening their own business operations, operators recognised the need to address the sustainability issues their accommodation supply chain, and reward those who enhanced their sustainability performance. The FTO Sustainable Tourism Committee members worked together over a period of about 18 months, to develop a set of sustainability indicators for tourism accommodation providers. As part of this process they consulted with a range of stakeholders, such as Tourism Concern, the International Labour Organisation, the Hoteliers and Restaurateurs Association and academics from Leeds Metropolitan University.

The development of the Travelife Sustainability System received a boost through a small amount of funding from the EU, via a partnership with The European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism (ECEAT). ECEAT were developing a separate set of sustainability indicators for tour operators at the time, called TOURLINK. The funding provided the opportunity to dovetail with the TOURLINK initiative. Travelife focused on indicators for accommodation providers and TOURLINK focused on tour operators, while both systems collaborated with other European trade associations, such as ANVR and Forum Anders Reisen, helping to ensure anything developed would be widely used.

Members of the FTO Sustainable Tourism Committee (STC) felt the system should have a direct link to consumers, to allow customers the option to base their holiday choice on the sustainability of the accommodation. Consequently, bronze, silver and gold award levels were developed and displayed in tour operator brochures and on websites. From the outset, the scheme was intended to encourage uptake by hoteliers, so it was deliberately made low cost and non-profit making.

The Travelife Sustainability System grew slowly but steadily between 2007 to 2010. Most of the hotel audits were carried out by Travelife-trained tour operator staff. During this time, the web portal was still in development. The portal was designed to allow accommodation providers the opportunity to self-check and view results. Although the Travelife system had been launched and was in regular use since 2007, funds and staff time were limited, so the development of the online system was fairly slow and did not progress much beyond the basics until 2010, when the merger with ABTA bought a renewed focus and a refreshed funding model. Standards were also tightened to ensure all audits were carried out by independent third party auditors in place of tour operator staff.

ABTA now run the Travelife System from their base in London. A team of five ABTA staff work on it full time. Revenue is generated through the sale of licences to those businesses starting their sustainability journey and those winning awards. Under the new funding model, businesses winning awards have to purchase a licence in order to display them. EU
funding is received as part of the INTOUR initiative (running 2010-2013) and the scheme is still heavily subsidised by ABTA, but is projected to break even within the next few years. In March 2012, Travelife began to conduct a wide-ranging review and update of its indicators. As part of this process, organisers are consulting with a diverse range of stakeholders including destinations, accommodation providers, auditors, tourism experts and bodies such as Tourism Concern and The Travel Foundation. This process is due to be complete by summer 2012 and the results will be integrated into operations over the next year.

**Technical scope of the indicators**

The Travelife System consists of one hundred indicators, set out as a series of questions, which are broadly divided into three categories:

**Environmental Management**

This covers organisation and reporting, energy management, use of renewables, water management, wastewater management, waste reduction and management, nature conservation and biodiversity, and nurturing understanding. A typical indicator question within this section is; ‘Does the business minimise waste by buying in bulk?’

**Staff Management**

This includes organisation, reporting and management, employee welfare, equal opportunities and child labour. A typical indicator question in this section is; ‘If there is a trade union or similar organisation for the tourism and hospitality industry in this country, are employees allowed to join if they wish?’

**Community Integration**

This incorporates procurement, level of community support and involvement, protection of vulnerable groups, consultation with stakeholders and communication with customers. A representative question from this section is ‘Where facilities (e.g. beaches) were in public ownership prior to the establishment of the business, do local people still have access?’

Since January 2012, auditing has only been conducted by Travelife’s international network of self-employed auditors, who are paid a set amount for each audit carried out. To qualify, the auditors have to attend a two-day training course, pass an exam and conduct an audit shadowed by a trained auditor. Although suppliers can self-check online, results are only ‘officially valid’ following a verification visit from a trained auditor. A 120-page Travelife handbook serves as technical guide for use by auditors. Results are then entered into the web portal, which generates a score and if appropriate, an award and also a list of suggestions for improvements. Each audit is valid for two years from completion.

**Use and communication**

The Travelife System consists of a website, a web portal for tour operators and accommodation suppliers, an online product collection, a detailed sustainability handbook for accommodation suppliers, and an auditors technical guide. All materials are designed and produced to a high quality and are intended to be simple and accessible to lay people. The Travelife website (www.travelife.org) has gradually been refined over time. The site provides the opportunity for businesses to conduct a self-assessment. It also offers a downloadable handbook giving detailed practical advice on improving sustainability and web-based advice for those new to sustainability and wanting help on where to start. Travelife certified properties, i.e., those who have purchased a licence and therefore demonstrated a commitment to improving sustainability, are showcased online as 'The Travelife Collection'. 

To enable the scheme to gain momentum and to encourage uptake amongst hoteliers, tour operator brochures and websites offered free promotion of bronze, silver and gold awards. Buying a licence gave accommodation providers an additional opportunity to promote the award through their own material and display a plaque at their premises. To help sustain the programme, any promotional use of the logo now requires purchase of the annual licence. Licenses are deliberately affordable and scaled depending on the number of beds. Prices range from €150 to €300 per year.

Tour operators are keen to promote understanding and awareness of Travelife amongst customers. They provide additional brochure and web space for explanations of the scheme and disseminate information through their own PR teams. Some companies have gone further than others, particularly First Choice (now TUI), who carried out an extensive staff training programme particularly targeted at encouraging retail agents to integrate Travelife into their sales technique. The system is also widely promoted to accommodation suppliers and destination authorities through the network of communication channels that individual tour operators have with their suppliers and at trade shows such as WTM and ITB. A Sales and Development Manager was recruited in 2011 to promote the benefits of the System to accommodation business and generate increased licence sales. According to Lead Travelife Consultant, Chris Thompson, who spearheaded the development of the System from 2004 to 2011, the demand for audits is steadily increasing. A recent development is the interest from some destination authorities in having their entire accommodation sector Travelife certified.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

Both Chris Thompson and Travelife Business Manager, Sören Stöber, point to the level of engagement with the travel industry and in particular some of Europe's largest tour operators as a significant indicator of success. Companies such as TUI and First Choice carry considerable weight with suppliers. TUI have even begun writing the need to be ‘Travelife certified’ into supplier contracts.

Another key strength, as Chris Thompson comments, is that 'Travelife was not an external organisation coming in to sell a product, it was a system created by the industry. So although it has required buy-in, it has always had a huge advantage over anything else, in terms of levels of trust and support'. Ownership of the creation and development of the system was essential in engaging the key stakeholders necessary to make this scheme a success. The System has also clearly benefitted from the resources and level of follow-up that an industry initiative typically affords.

Another strong point identified by both those interviewed is the Travelife System's accessibility. As Sören Stöber points out, 'it is very achievable for hoteliers. The System works for them if they are starting from scratch, but is also challenging and stretching for those already involved in sustainable tourism'. A strong suite of supporting materials facilitates Travelife’s accessibility. These materials use simple terminology, are clear and easy to follow, (colour photos and illustrations add interest and break up the text) and are provided in several languages. They also provide information and suggestions for making both basic improvements, and suggestions as to best practice. Additionally, pricing of the System is very affordable and compares particularly well with similar schemes aimed at hoteliers.

A further advantage is the direct link established between consumers and hotels taking action to improve sustainability. It is notable that Travelife is the only scheme in tourism to have achieved this at scale.

The audit training and process is now fairly robust and has an effective network of international auditors that have been able to be recruited and trained. Consequently, the geographical spread of the System is fairly broad. Several thousand accommodations have
now been audited across Europe, The Caribbean, North and Central America, The Indian Ocean and South East Asia.

Travelife captures the actions an accommodation provider needs to take to manage and improve sustainability at a certain point in time. It also encourages providers to take further actions. It does not measure participant’s sustainability against a baseline and track progress over time.

Most of the weaknesses of the Travelife System, have been identified by the scheme organisers and should be addressed by the forthcoming review. Chris Thompson, who is leading the review, made several comments on where he sees a definite need for improvement. He feels that significant problems are caused by Travelife’s over-complicated scoring system. Hoteliers apparently struggle to understand it and NGO’s have criticised the lack of transparency. It is intended that the revisions will lead to the system being 100% transparent.

Another issue to be addressed in the review is that many of the indicators are fairly passive. For example, they are concerned with the production of statements and policies, instead of measuring the impact of specific actions. This approach was designed to encourage uptake, making Bronze relatively easy to achieve. Adding more specific indicators will help give the smaller accommodation providers greater opportunity to succeed.

Sören Stöber sees the ability to regularly review and refresh indicators as crucial to enabling systems to keep pace with new initiatives (such as The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria) and voluntary instruments (such as the EU Eco label) as they develop and become relevant. It is an expensive and resource intensive process, and in Travelife is planned to take place only once every five years.

An additional weakness is that the reliance on auditor visits can be slow. Travelife try to guarantee a visit by an auditor within six months, but this can be longer for remote destinations where the travel costs of an auditing visit are particularly expensive.

The Travelife process is owned by ABTA and does not encourage self-governance or sustainability management amongst groups of suppliers. Stakeholders are not involved in the assessment or awards process. They are, however, widely consulted as part of the revision process currently underway.

Finally, despite its wide geographical reach amongst tourism accommodation businesses, public awareness of Travelife is still low. The anticipated desire of mainstream holidaymakers to factor sustainability into vacation planning has failed to materialise. This has partially been hampered by the recession, as the economic crisis has pushed environmental issues down the agenda. It is also the case however, that there have been few serious attempts to embed the scheme in the public consciousness. ABTA have scant resources for promotion and individual tour operators have not invested heavily in promoting the scheme publically.

Figure 5. Travelife Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TRAVELIFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>ABTA (The Travel Association)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STRENGTHS
- High level of tourism industry support and ownership
- Good quality supporting materials/downloadable handbook
- Easy-to-use web portal for self-assessment, analysis, and recommendations
- Robust auditing process
- Applicable worldwide

WEAKNESSES
- Auditing process is labour intensive and slow
- Many indicators are not specific enough
- Ownership and control are central to the scheme, rather than being locally owned.
- Lack of transparency and low public awareness

CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS
- Buy in from key stakeholders
- Award system
Case Study 3: The Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean

**Context and administration of the system**

In recognition of the need to ensure the long-term social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the Caribbean, The Sustainable Tourism Zone of The Greater Caribbean (STZC) was established by Heads of States and Governments of the Associated Caribbean States (ACS) in 2001.

In 2005, ACS appointed Dr Murray Simpson, The University of Oxford, and Sustainable Solutions Worldwide to develop specific criteria, indicators, parameters, and a methodology for assessing sustainable tourism in the STZC. The object of the project was to create a set of indicators to measure the level of tourism sustainability in destinations and to benchmark sustainability across thematic areas in destinations.

Sustainable Solutions Worldwide developed a system of indicators, based on extensive research and evaluation of existing destination indicator systems and relevant literature such as the UNWTO’s publications *Guidebook on Indicators of Sustainable Development* (2004), and *Making Tourism More Sustainable* (2005), Eurostat’s draft *Handbook on Sustainable Tourism Indicators*, Chaguaramas Indicators Report (Trinidad), The Caribbean Regional Tourism Sustainable Development Programme (Performance Indicators and Sustainability for The Caribbean Tourism Sector) and materials produced by The Travel Foundation, Green Tourism Business Scheme, Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa and others.

During Phase I the indicators developed were tested in five pilot destinations across the Caribbean (Roseau in Dominica, Bayahibe in the Dominican Republic, Ocho Rios in Jamaica, Cozumel in Mexico and Portobelo in Panama). In Phase II, in 2007, the indicators were piloted in a further seven destinations throughout the Caribbean region.

The total budget for the project was US$200,000, funded through ACS and its member countries. The ACS contains members with very different levels of GDP. So, to ensure the indicator system would be viable across the region, it was essential that local management at destination level was not overly expensive or time-consuming. The system was therefore designed to integrate the collection of sustainability data into the day-to-day jobs of the members of a multi-disciplinary team established in each participating destination. The core group of stakeholders, which included representatives from a range of government departments, NGOs and private sector organisations, were brought together in one-day workshops, coordinated by destination managers. At each workshop, the objective and concept was outlined, the indicators were examined and their relevance was discussed, before agreement on data collection and collation was reached. The group was then given a few months to complete a Tourism Sustainability Evaluation Form.

The project created a successful system for assessing the level of sustainability in tourism destinations in the STZC. Based upon their compound score, referred to as the Tourism Sustainability Index (TSI), a banding system was developed to place each destination into one of four pre-defined sustainability categories. The four separate bands were defined as 1. Committed Tourist Destination (striving to achieve sustainability) 2. Tourist Destination with a Minimum Degree of Sustainability, 3. Tourism Destination with an Intermediate Level of Sustainability and 4. Tourism Destination with a Superior Degree of Sustainability.

**Technical scope of the indicators**

The STZC indicators are divided into three sections. The first section includes the collection of contextual baseline statistics such as information about the number of tourists, tourism establishments and visitor nights, and environmental measures such as energy and water consumption, use of renewables, the amount of waste collected and the proportion recycled. Baseline data on social factors such as average income, unemployment and
percentage of women in the workforce was gathered as part of this section. A sub-section on climate change adaptation and mitigation was also included.

The second and third sections, made up of *Generic and Specific Indicators* both contain three subsections:

**Natural and Cultural Heritage Dimension**

This covers policy and planning, environmental management systems, energy, water, waste, air quality and pollution and also culture. Example Generic indicators in this section are: 'Number of international arrivals in the destination per year', 'Annual amount of solid waste recycled', 'Percentage of women in the workforce' and 'Has an assessment of the destination's adaptive capacity to climate change been completed'?

**Economic Dimension**

This incorporates equity and employment and includes indicators such as; 'Percentage of tourism businesses wholly owned by destination nationals' and 'Percentage of products fabricated or grown in the destination purchased by tourism businesses'.

**Social and Ethical Dimension**

This incorporates community, crime and hospitality and includes indicators such as 'Recorded drug offences last year' (separated for locals and tourists) and 'Inclusion of community groups in the decision making process'.

The Generic and Specific Indicators are separated. The Generic Indicators are those that apply to all destinations and the Specific Indicators are those that only apply to particular destinations, including for example, coastal regions and/or protected areas. There are 200 indicators in total. **The 18 Baseline Indicators** are principally quantitative, but also include two questions on the existence of national standards for construction, e.g., risks from earthquakes, hurricanes, and sea level change.

**The 71 Generic Indicators** are again principally quantitative. They focus on criteria such as tourist arrivals, energy use, water consumption, recycling rates and employment statistics. Some metrics also refer to the existence of policies or strategies, such as destination planning and policy incentives to encourage local ownership of tourism businesses. There is also a requirement for feedback from tourists on the visitor experience, which it is suggested can be collected via a standardised survey, generating quantitative data.

**The 111 Specific Indicators** are also principally quantitative, but include normative indicators related to the existence of and adherence to, various standards, e.g. 'number of regulatory measures implemented as a result of co-ordination with other Caribbean states', 'existence of a policy that provides equitable access for the disadvantaged members of the population to tourism opportunities' and 'existence of legislation and regulations to preserve structures or sites'.

The multi-disciplinary working group was typically be made up of members from a broad cross section of the tourism industry in the destination, including for example, ministers of tourism, representatives of national tourism organisation, transport, planning, health, environment and utility management departments, tourism associations, NGO's, Chamber of Commerce representatives, relevant academics, local producers and other stakeholders. **Members of the working group undertook collection of the data relevant to their respective roles.** One person representing each destination took responsibility for collation of data and completion of the evaluation form. Once the evaluation form is completed, the destination representative responsible for collation is given a secure login to enter data on the portal attached to the STZC website. The data is analysed via a complex, custom-made Excel programme. The software quantifies all indicators using an exponential scoring system to give more weight to the highest categories of sustainability. Indicators within each dimension are combined into a single dimension sustainability index by taking an average score for their component indicators.
Each category of indicator (Generic and Specific) is combined into a single index by taking an average score for their component dimension indices. The combined **Tourism Sustainability Index (TSI)** is calculated by averaging the scores for the Generic Indicator Index and the Specific Indicator Index. The TSI is then rescaled from 0-10 for ease of use and understanding.

Given the early stages of tourism development in many destinations in the Caribbean, and the difficulties in obtaining data, in all three components of the evaluation form the opportunity is provided for destinations to select the response; 'Insufficient Data (ID)'. Selecting this option is a valid response and also subject to the quantification process.

**Use and communication**

An 11-page **Indicative Guide** produced as part of the project, provided suggestions as to the possible source of data for each indicator. The suggestions included 'collate official statistics', 'consult archive records', 'solicit expert opinion' and 'conduct surveys'. There is also a 23-page document entitled **Information for Destinations Wishing to Enter the STZC**. This outlines the background, basic principles, methodology and definitions. The only template is the Evaluation Form itself.

A separate document, the **Dynamic Action Plan**, which provides colour coded feedback on results, highlighting areas requiring action, provides estimates as to the length of time needed to collect data, generally between three to eighteen months, recommends actions to improve results, and highlights risks.

In addition to the tabular Dynamic Action Plan, each participating destination received a detailed narrative report, which summarised findings and suggested areas for improvement in an illustrated 20-25 page report. In the STZC Evaluation of Curaçao for example, the destination's performance in collecting data for all indicator dimensions was reported, as was an examination of indicator results. The report also contained a summary of major actions required, which included:

- Missing information to be urgently collected
- Sustainability of current infrastructures and future developments to be improved
- Curaçao population and politicians' awareness must be raised
- Existing policies, regulations, legislation and enforcement must be improved and future ones must take into account sustainability criteria
- A high priority must be given to assessing vulnerabilities to climate change and to developing adaptation strategy.

Throughout the life of the project and following completion of each of the various phases, information was disseminated through a number of presentations, based around both the evaluation of the pilot results and the system itself. One-page destination profiles were developed and used by the project team to build a picture of the sustainability of the destination. Workshops were organised for ACS members in participating destinations and were attended by multi-sectoral stakeholders, including those at ministerial level, to enable the outcomes to be factored into planning and policy decisions, both nationally and regionally. Final conferences were also held to share results from each phase, in Trinidad, Guadeloupe and Curacao. These were attended by members of the multi-disciplinary working groups in destinations and representatives of Governments and organisations across the Caribbean. The 'Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean' website was also established to facilitate data analysis, provide information to interested destinations, raise awareness and encourage uptake.

A final report summarising the project was put together for the Association of Caribbean States. ACS disseminated the results of the STZC project to all 32-member states and
continues to encourage its adoption. The ACS has now ratified the STZC as a declaration so the system’s use is embedded in its core strategy.

Despite having agreed on a system of banded sustainability ratings, ACS members decided that the banding results for each destination should not be publicly shared, as they were intended to be a tool to facilitate benchmarking within destinations, rather than encourage comparisons.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

The STZC system comprises a well-researched and very comprehensive set of indicators. The system has the flexibility to make the indicators specific to each destination, which encourages a greater level of support and buy-in amongst stakeholders. In addition, the system and associated process is fair, transparent, cost effective and able to be operated by non-experts.

The participatory process through which the indicators were rolled-out, is an additional strength. It was clear from the start that a high level of local ownership of the process and results was an essential component to ensuring success. The importance of ensuring inter-sector involvement was also vital.

The tools developed as part of the system management are another of its strengths. The language is simple and easy to understand. The website, although basic, due to budget constraints, acts as an information source and has the functionality to process the indicator data and return the results together with the rating, allowing destinations to assess their sustainability performance.

Another strength of the system is the exhaustive indicator piloting process that took place. Testing was undertaken in numerous destinations across the various phases of the project, allowing the system to be refined over time, based on stakeholder feedback.

In terms of crucial tipping points, Dr Simpson advised that ‘it was essential to have a champion in each destination’. He said ‘personalities were very important, but weren’t enough on their own to ensure long term sustainability - so it was essential to continue to drive things at a regional and national level too’.

A challenge inherent in a system that relies on stakeholder management, is securing the necessary engagement and capacity across destinations. In the STZC, some destinations were far more effective than others due to capacity constraints. Another weakness of the system was its reliance on external sources of funding. Although monitoring systems have limited revenue-generating potential, there needs to be a plan to finance on-going management, development and promotion of the systems once they are developed.

When asked about lessons learnt, Dr Simpson commented that in hindsight, ACS could have allocated more resources to the management of the indicators system. Significant resources were being used for the STZC and indicator development, but there was no budget for the continued maintenance, management and on-going administration of, for example, the monitoring website.

A further weakness was that ACS did not communicate results outside the region or to the wider stakeholders, such as tour operators, who could perhaps have helped encourage members to adopt the system in other destinations.

While little has been overlooked within the 200 indicators making up the STZC Evaluation Form, it is worth noting that there are no measures concerning the responsible marketing and promotion of the destination to tourists. The extent to which destinations capitalise on their natural and cultural heritage to encourage visitors (e.g. Dominica), is relevant to assess. The extent to which promotion of unsustainable activities, such as excessive food and alcohol consumption (e.g. Dominican Republic), gambling (e.g. Aruba) sex tourism (e.g. Jamaica) big game fishing (e.g. The Bahamas) and golf tourism (most Caribbean Islands)
takes place also needs to be explored. Given the frequent disconnect in activities and understanding, between those managing operations in destinations and those tasked with promotion, this is perhaps something worth considering.

Finally, commenting on potential pitfalls, Dr Simpson felt that it was important that both indicators and toolkit should be open to on-going development, to respond to the changing regional, national and international environment.

**Figure 6. STZC Summary**

| NAME | STZC
|------|------
| LOCATION | Caribbean Region
| ORGANISATION | The Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
| STRENGTHS | • Comprehensive indicators with flexibility to create 'bespoke' versions for each destination  
• Local ownership through multi-disciplinary working groups  
• Tools, including a website that are simple and easy to use  
• Extensive testing undertaken
| WEAKNESSES | • Outcomes affected by differing levels of resources and commitment in destinations  
• Management infrastructure lacked funding for on-going administration and development  
• Insufficient communication to private sector, particularly tour operators
| CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS | • Extensive pilot testing to improve the system  
• Having the flexibility to continually adapt and improve the system  
• A network of champions at various levels within each destination and region  
• Continued pressure at the highest levels to maintain momentum  
• Existence of destination champions

**Figure 7. EqualTo Example**

EqualTo is a digital tool that has been created and developed in France under the programme “Pole d’Excellence Rurale”, in partnership with la Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable. The programme originally receiving public funding from the EU, PACA Region, and French State authorities. The purpose of the tool is to analyse the “sustainability positioning” of destinations, businesses, and tourism products and generate a report which delivers recommendations. It is designed for use by for enterprises, heritage sites, cultural routes, protected areas, mobility means, and tailored for public/private decision-makers. The system incorporates a triple bottom line approach to sustainability. It involves a self-assessment, based on 45 to 150 international criteria (derived from UNWTO, EU, NECSTouR, ECSTPA, etc.). The indicators are selected by local authorities and institutions and tailored to local conditions. EqualTo involves a three-step process: registration/qualification, assessment/scoring, and report/certification. The idea is that destinations can use the tool internally, for management purposes or externally, as a qualifications tool to guide choices based on how sustainable one project is compared to another.
Case Study 4: PAN Parks Certification Initiative

Context and Administration of the System

PAN (Protected Area Network) Parks Foundation is an independent organisation that is actively working to protect and preserve Europe’s wilderness areas through the promotion of sustainable tourism development. PAN Parks Foundation (PPF) was established in 1997 by World Wide Fund for Nature-Netherlands and the Molecaten Group, a Dutch leisure company which develops holiday villages throughout Europe. The object of PPF is to “to create a network of parks with an international reputation for outstanding access to wildlife and excellent tourist facilities, combined with effective habitat protection and the minimal environmental impact possible” (WWF 1998).

The PAN Certification Initiative was established in order to enhance the protection, public understanding, and public appreciation of wilderness areas. The initiative certifies large wilderness protected areas and their surrounding tourism industry based on the PAN Parks Quality Standard. The Quality Standard consists of a set of principles, criteria, and indicators that measure the management effectiveness of protected areas, and the sustainable tourism effectiveness in the park buffer zones. The PPF has developed a rigorous, independent system to verify compliance with the PAN Parks Quality Standard. This system has been described as the world’s first operational, third party certification system under the World Commission of Protected Areas Framework for Management Effectiveness. Certified PAN Parks can use the PAN Parks trademark for marketing, and can access technical resources, training, and networking opportunities through the network of PAN Parks.

The PPF spent their first four years (1997 to 2001) on development and field-testing, mainly organising internal structures, developing compliance assessment systems, and initiating outreach with potential candidates. The first PAN Parks were certified in 2002 and the current network includes 12 Certified PAN Parks from 10 European countries from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean. The cost of verification is shared between the applicant and PPF since PPF offers verification grants to potential candidates. The PPF aspires to have applicants cover full costs of verification over time in order to allow for support to new protected wilderness areas.

The PPF team that manages the Pan Parks certification programme is comprised of a Conservation Manager who oversees the overall verification process, Business Development Manager, Tourism Development Manager, Brand Manager, and Communications Manager that provide important support to the certification programme. WWF Netherlands remains the PPF’s main funding partner. The PPF’s Annual Report 2009 underscored the need to diversify funding sources since most of their current short- and mid-term funding comes from private donations. The PPF reported total revenue of 173,375 euros and retained profit totalling 6,982 euros for 2009 (2009 Annual Report). For 2010, the PPF reported total revenue 117,586 euros and retained loss of 301 euros (2010 Annual Report).

One effort to diversify funding sources, hotels and resorts that are business partners of PAN Parks now ask their guests to add one euro to their bill as a voluntary donation to the PPF. There are about five parks currently participating in this programme. Another new funding source that is being tested with local business partners that provide accommodation services in buffer zones of the PAN Parks, is the ‘PAN Parks Bed’. This involves the development of accommodation facilities within or adjacent to the parks. The initiative is being led by PAN Parks Accommodation BV which is a LLC that was established by the Molecaten Group to identify investors and develop accommodation facilities at approved PAN Parks. The PPF envisions that this company will provide a portion of its profits as a key source of long-term financing for the PPF’s operation.
Technical scope of the indicators

The PAN Parks Standard includes five guiding principles and 26 criteria that cover park management, visitor management, sustainable tourism development in region around parks, and engagement of business partners. Each criterion is measured by a set of detailed indicators; there are about 136 indicators.

The principles, criteria and indicators were developed and field-tested over a period of three years (1999 to 2002). The development process involved a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The team included representatives of all major international conservation NGOs, experts from the government, the tourism industry and academic sector among others.

The indicators have been improved over time. Over the last six years, the PPF reports that they have revised the indicators several times. Revisions are made based upon the experiences gathered during field tests.

Figure 8. PAN Parks Guiding Principles

PAN Parks Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Natural Values
PAN Parks are large protected areas and prime examples of Europe’s natural heritage that conserve international important wildlife and ecosystems.

Principle 2: Habitat Management
Design and management of the PAN Park aims to maintain and, if necessary, restore the area’s natural ecological processes and biodiversity.

Principle 3: Visitor management
Visitor management safeguards the natural values of the PAN Park and aims to provide visitors with a high-quality experience based on the appreciation of nature.

Principle 4: Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy
The Protected Area administration and its relevant partners in the PAN Parks region aim at achieving a synergy between the conservation of natural values and sustainable tourism by jointly developing and implementing a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (STDS).

Principle 5: Business Partners
PAN Parks’ tourism-related business partners are legal enterprises that are committed to sustainable tourism and support the goals of certified PAN Parks. They actively cooperate with the Local PAN Park Group to implement the PAN Park region’s STDS and ensure their businesses to comply with a high national/international standard of environment management.

Source: PAN Parks Verification Manual 2008

The PAN Parks certification approach involves the direct engagement of not only park management, but also stakeholders and the tourism industry in the park’s surroundings. The first three principles of the certification scheme measure performance and management under the control of the park’s management unit. The fourth and fifth principles recognise the important connections between the park and its surroundings, and the need for the park to engage key stakeholder groups in planning and monitoring of sustainable tourism development. A key requirement under principles four and five is that park management works with tourism stakeholder to determine limits of acceptable change for tourism, develop a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (STDS) through a multi-stakeholder planning process, and formalise a Local PAN Parks Group.

Any European protected area that wishes to achieve PAN Parks certification may apply for verification. Application instructions, forms, and the Verification Manual which includes the principles, criteria and indicators are available on-line at http://www.panparks.org/learn/partnerships-for-protected-areas/apply-for-verification.
The PAN Parks certification process includes a self-assessment questionnaire, a desk evaluation, and an on-site verification by independent auditors. It also includes annual monitoring and renewal verification every five years. After an internal, first party assessment of performance against the indicators, the candidate parks are assessed externally. Verification involves a site visit and a review of desk evidence such as plans, minutes of meetings, procedures, surveys, and assessments. The PAN Parks verification process focuses on three distinct areas:

1. Protected Areas (conservation partners),
2. PAN Parks Regions (around verified protected areas), and
3. Local Business Partners

International independent verifiers carry out verification of the first two areas which correspond to Principles 1 to 4, and local verifiers carry out verification of the local business partners which corresponds to Principle five. The International verifiers are responsible for checking the STDS process, the transparency of local verification process, and the quality standard for local business partners. The verification team includes: a lead verifier, verifier, and a local expert. The lead verifier is responsible for submitting a final report to the PPF. The final report recommends whether or not the PPF should award the PAN Parks Certificate to an applicant, and if so under which conditions.

Certified PAN Parks use the PAN Park trademark for five years subject to the terms of an agreement signed between PPF and the wilderness protected area. The PAN Parks Verification Manual provides a comprehensive overview of the PAN Parks Quality Standard and the verification methodology.

**Use and communication**

PAN Parks Certification Initiative provides policy makers and protected area authorities with comprehensive information about trends in management effectiveness and identifies priority issues that need to be addressed. The PAN Parks Lessons Learned Series which includes seven publications on a wide range of topics, such as park management, visitor management, product development, sustainable tourism development, and independent audits. These publications are intended to serve as resources for the network of certified PAN Parks. In addition, the PPF has established a network-wide research programme that publishes a wide array of studies on an on-going basis.

The PPF uses the results from the certification programme to encourage decision-makers to support conservation goals. In particular, it has made significant contributions to the integration of the topic of wilderness in the European Union’s political agenda. The PPF has also documented its achievements in areas of influencing policy-making and conservation activities in the publication, Benefits for European Wilderness: PAN Parks Achievements.

The PPF connects certified partners through its quality brand and provides marketing and communications support to promote the PAN Parks concepts and certified PAN Parks. The PPF also actively engages international tour operators to increase visitation to certified PAN Parks and enhance economic benefits to local economies from sustainable tourism.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

One of the main strengths of the PAN Parks certification initiative is that it provides incentives that motivate certified parks to keep engaged over time. Certified park have expressed that the most compelling incentives include opportunities for increasing tourism business, networking and research opportunities, and closer cooperation with the communities surrounding the park. The PPF works diligently to deliver on incentives. For instance, it has staff and programmes dedicated to promoting the PAN Parks quality brand.
and network of PAN Parks, and also engaging international tour operators to increase business to PAN Parks.

Another strength of the certification initiative is that it links protected area management effectiveness with regional development and local economy. Local tourism businesses can become certified as part of the PAN Parks scheme. Business partners commit to comply with a high standard of environmental operation as guided by the PAN Parks Standard. The Local PAN Parks Group has the option of tailoring the standard for business partners to meet local needs, and also to design its own label for it business partners.

One of the main weaknesses of the PAN Parks certification initiative is that its long-term viability is not yet proven. The costs of operating PAN Parks are much higher than the fees paid by members. The PPF must therefore raise external funding on an on-going basis. Short-term funding has been difficult to secure in recent years due to the global economic downturn. There is as yet no clear indication of how effective the PAN Park Village and PAN Parks Bed schemes are/will be as reliable sources of long-term financing.

Figure 9. PAN Parks Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Pan Parks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>PAN Parks Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Incentives to motivate parks to be certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Significant private sector stakeholder engagement in the programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has promoted close links between protected area and local businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Many publications and lessons learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality brand has achieved significant marketing value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Indicators have been revised and improved over time based on experience in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAKNESSES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Financing is problematic and may be unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Close cooperation with local communities in surrounding the park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impact on EU policy makers in helping to increase the integration of wilderness in the EU’s political agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The PPF connects certified partners through its quality brand and provides marketing and communications support to promote the PAN Parks concepts and certified PAN Parks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. European Charter for Sustainable Tourism Example

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism resulted from a report by the EUROPARC Federation in 1993, which highlighted the sensitive relationship between tourism and protected areas. The Charter was also one of the priorities defined in the IUCN’s “Parks for Life” in 1994. It is an indicator based management tool to help protected areas of any size, continuously improve standards of sustainable tourism development and management. It was established in 1995 by EUROPARC, who commissioned the Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France to undertake the initiative. A steering committee of 10 European pilot parks, tourism industry partners and environmental NGOs were involved in the development and creation of the Charter. It was funded through the EU’s LIFE programme.

The principles and approach were rationalised in 1999/2000 and a verification process was established, with the first award being made to 7 protected areas from 5 different countries in 2001. Initial criteria focused on management and visitor education, however in 2005 an additional level (level II) was developed to encourage sustainability of local businesses. It is currently being used in 88 protected areas across Europe. Mourne AONB, in Northern Ireland, which is managed by Mourne Heritage Trust was the first area in the UK to achieve the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in 2003. Recently, Mourne was also awarded part II of the Charter, as it is working directly with local businesses to develop a destination-wide approach to sustainable tourism.
Case Study 5: DIT-ACHIEV

Context and administration of the system

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Administration-Community-Heritage-Infrastructure-Enterprise-Visitor (ACHIEV) Model was established by Dr Kevin Griffin and Dr Sheila Flanagan, as part of a research project: “Sustainable Tourism Development: Toward the Mitigation of Tourism Destination Impacts.” The first phase of the work was funded by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency through the Environmental RTDI Programme from 2000 to 2006. The second, practical phase of the project was co-funded by the National Tourism Development Agency, Fáilte Ireland. DIT has been fine-tuning this system for almost a decade.

The goal of the DIT-ACHIEV Model is: i) to develop and test methodologies for stakeholder engagement and empowerment in local tourism development (Dublin Institute of Technology, 2011a) and ii) provide the Irish tourism industry with a tool to make its product and management more sustainable. “While all stakeholders in the tourism sector at the national, regional, and local level have a part to play in preserving environmental, social and economic quality, the DIT-ACHIEV Model aims to facilitate local actors to undertake research specific to their area which will enable maximisation of the tourism product on offer while preserving the integrity of the destination in a holistic and all-encompassing manner.” (Dublin Institute of Technology, 2011b). The Environmental Protection Agency and Fáilte Ireland fully endorse the model and its use to promote sustainable tourism.

The project has been implemented in three communities with very different challenges: Killarney, Carlingford, and Temple Bar. Killarney is a popular tourist destination in south western County Kerry rich in natural heritage and history. Carlingford is a small, coastal medieval village in northern County Louth and is a European Destination of Excellence (EDEN). Temple Bar is known as Dublin’s ‘cultural quarter’, home to many Irish cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, and arts institutes. It also features a lively nightlife with tourist-focused nightclubs and pubs. Both Killarney and Carlingford have to work at maintaining visitation levels but in Temple Bar, visitors flock in large numbers.

Killarney and Carlingford were selected as DIT-ACHIEV test destinations in December 2008. In both instances, DIT was partners in each of the steering committees and their role varied from lead partner to a less prominent and advisory role. The research is on-going in Temple Bar where the Model is currently being implemented.

The leadership and implementation of the system in each of the three communities is quite varied. Located in the smallest county in Ireland, Carlingford is totally volunteer-driven and community-led, with no one staff member responsible for the implementation of the system. Yet, it has worked extraordinarily well despite the fact that nobody is exclusively making their living from tourism there. Killarney, on the other hand, which has the second-highest concentration of hotels in the country, has a Chamber of Tourism and Commerce where tourism is clearly a priority. A dedicated staff member has been the local champion of the monitoring system. Although the testing phase is complete, both destinations have committed to continue monitoring on their own.

The purpose of the test in Temple Bar was to assess community involvement, so DIT attempted to take a less active role. Temple Bar has been more difficult to implement as there is no strong community identity. For example, hotel owners are purely property owners- they are not part of the fabric of the community. The other issue is that there is a consortium of interested parties but no one has taken ownership. It has been difficult in finding a ‘champion’; a key individual who is enthusiastic and will take action as a lead on the project in the community.
Key findings from DIT indicate that for successful implementation, monitoring has to be part of somebody's job. It should also be community-led; it should be a collective responsibility. Ideally, those who use the Model will assemble a multi interest stakeholder group crossing all sectors of tourism and local development that will work together to ensure the future success of their destination.

**Technical scope of the indicators**

The original set of DIT indicators included 218 indicators of sustainability, but was reduced to 33 measurable, relevant, meaningful and comparable parameters. The DIT-ACHIEV Model is designed to be universally applicable.

The toolkit states that the Model uses the 3 pillars of sustainability, as defined by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), which are then shaped into six specific “Fields of Interest”. The initials of each “Field of Interest” lead to the name of the Model (See Figure 1):

- A: Administration;
- C: Community;
- H: Heritage;
- I : Infrastructure;
- E: Enterprise;
- V: Visitor

As explained in the toolkit, “Field of Interest” is composed of a number of “Sub Fields”, identified by the letters a) to f). The “Sub Fields” are divided into a total of 33 Indicators numbered using square brackets (see Figure 2), (Griffin et al., 2012).

These indicators are used primarily to identify:

- Stresses on an area (e.g. traffic congestion, water shortage, visitor dissatisfaction)
- The impact of tourism (e.g. seasonality, rate of habitat damage, quality of local employment)
- Management action (e.g. pollution clean-up, traffic management)
- The effect of management actions (e.g. number of returning tourists)

**Figure 11. DIT-ACHIEV Model: 6 Fields of Interest**
The purpose of the DIT-ACHIEV Model is to serve as a management tool to identify key sustainability issues and to address them. It uses indicators to gauge both positive and negative changes over time. The indicator results can provide an early warning when a policy change or new action may be needed, as well as providing the basis for sustainable tourism planning (Griffin et al., 2012). Key steps in implementing the Model are shown below.

**Figure 13. DIT-ACHIEV steps**

| Step 1: | Create a Local Implementation Group (LIG) which is a multi-interest working group and will lead the project from initiation to end. This group must facilitate the involvement of as broad a range of local groups, organisations and interests as possible. |
| Step 2: | Develop and implement an integrated Project Marketing and Communication Plan |
| Step 3: | Identify and develop destination specific indicators |
| Step 4: | Collect/Collate existing data |
| Step 5: | Collect new data |
| | • A Business Survey |
| | • A Community/Resident Survey |
| | • A Visitor Survey |
| | • Interviews with key policy / planning professionals and relevant stakeholders. |
| Step 6: | Implement the DIT-ACHIEV Model |
| | • Analysis of data |
| | • Identification of Issues |
| Step 7: | Manage, evaluate and monitor |
| | • Planning for the Future |

The Heritage and Infrastructure components of the Model are derived from existing data sources and the Community, Enterprise, Visitor and Administration data are collected from new data, primarily in the form of surveys. DIT recommends that the visitor survey is an ongoing process as visitor satisfaction is the most fluid and dynamic element of the equation. They found that community and business views do not really change dramatically without a
trigger. For instance, if a local hotel closes down, that might elicit a different viewpoint. DIT found that those surveys could be extended every two to five years.

Once the data are collected, a vital milestone in the project is Step 6: the analysis and classification of the issues in the local area. The DIT-ACHIEV model uses a ‘Traffic Light Analysis’ for analysing findings. While some models use complex algorithms and weightings to identify key pressure points, from experience and broad investigation of related models, the “traffic light system” has proved to be straightforward and highly useful in this regard. This methodology classifies the findings of each indicator as: Stable (Green); Some Issues (Orange); Issues (Red). These classifications thereby identify indicators which require attention (Red) or close monitoring (Orange) going forward. If an indicator is classified as stable (green) it does not need any immediate attention but its status must be monitored so that it does not develop into an orange or red issue at some future point in time (Griffin et al., 2012).

**Use and communication**

Key achievements of the project include the development of a user-friendly and comprehensive toolkit for Destination Management Organisations. The toolkit walks the destination through the entire process of using the Model: creating a multi-interest working group, developing and implementing an integrated project marketing and communication plan, identifying destination-specific indicators, how to collate existing data (Heritage and Infrastructure), how to collect new data (Community, Enterprise, Visitor and Administration), actually implementing the Model by analysing results, and finally how to manage, evaluate, and monitor for success.

Killarney was able to utilise the results of their findings to secure funding from the Department of Transport. One of the ‘Red Traffic Light’ issues for Killarney indicated that there was a lack of cycling or pedestrian routes in the national park and surrounding area. In partnership with an engineer, they were able to develop a proposal based on the analysis of their local findings and received €500,000 to create a cycle route.

One way to maintain local motivation is to publish the findings of the various surveys. The communication of the results between Carlingford and Killarney inspired friendly but competitive comparisons between the two different destinations on areas such as visitor satisfaction. Pride was certainly a factor in the successful implementation of the DIT-ACHIEV models in these two communities.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

A critical component of success is ensuring local buy-in and ownership. The role of the multi-interest working group and the role of the ‘champion’ are vital. Best practice suggests a core group of up to three ‘champions’ are needed to drive, manage, and implement the DIT-ACHIEV Model. Many local projects hinge on the energy and enthusiasm of a small number of key people. The role of a manager and project coordinator is critical.

Another strength of this project is that the analysis on the data is driven by consensus. By attempting to automate the analysis, a destination would not be able to evaluate the importance of qualitative cultural indicators. While there is merit in tracking how many festivals a city has hosted, it is more meaningful to have a discussion about the result and develop consensus around actions that can be taken to improve outcomes. Once a community goes through the process once with some guidance, they can repeat on an annual basis.

The other critical component for success is for destinations to have what Fáilte Ireland calls ‘A National Touchstone’. It is essentially a resource that destinations can call upon for support, leadership and guidance in implementing the system. This is a support person
who can provide technical backstopping and validate the process. DIT also found that this helps with boosting the confidence of the on-the-ground destination manager. For someone new to research, this can appear to be a daunting task.

Once the initial testing phase was complete in Killarney and Carlingford, the communities were asked if they could conduct the research on their own. They both responded that they thought they could, but that they would not want to. They were concerned about the validation of the results. Having the assessment externally validated makes a difference. Without this, the destinations worried that tourism entities could essentially make up their own results. The external validation process lends more credibility to results, and therefore lends confidence in the users. Having access to a key resource, whether it is a designated staff member, an academic agreeing to answer a phone call, or another type of support, there needs to be some port of call for destinations to make system’s implementation seem attainable. There needs to be some sort of group or ‘touchstone’ serving as a resource, to give external advice, to provide expertise. However, it was noted that since local buy-in is so hugely important, DIT was sensitive being the ‘external expert’ and was careful to not just tell people what to do or to do it for them.

Both the toolkit and the findings need to be presented in ordinary language. It has to be understood by non-experts. Technical data needs to be translated into practical and achievable objectives. While it cannot be too simple, it also cannot be too technical. A fine balance needs to be struck between being scientifically valid, verifiable and being sensible.

Figure 14. DIT-ACHIEV Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DIT-ACHIEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>• Ireland: Carlingford; Killarney; Temple Bar, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>• Dublin Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td>• Comprehensive Toolkit for destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong local-level buy-in and ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local participation is high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy-to-understand traffic light system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAKNESS</td>
<td>• If there is no champion, it is very difficult to get off the ground. An outside monitoring group cannot do this on their own for long-term success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS</td>
<td>• Must have a ‘champion’ or key person who is enthusiastic and takes ownership of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Must have adequate resources or ‘touchstone’ in place so destinations feel that they are supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• External validation process lends credibility to the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One size does not fit all. Be sure to be flexible in the administration of system. But if that system can provide a universal yet adaptable framework to validate results, then the impact of monitoring could gain the momentum that it needs for long-range recognition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For nearly two decades, the New Forest District Council (NFDC) has worked to resolve the many tensions between local stakeholders and establish a common ownership and sustainable approach to tourism throughout the District.

To help deliver collective, destination wide action, NFDC developed the VICE (Visitors, Industry, Community, Environment) model. The model identifies tourism development as the management of the interaction between visitors, the industry that serves them, the community that hosts them and their collective impact on, and response to, the environment where it all takes place.

The project is currently in use in the New Forest and is the basis for many other models of sustainable tourism: such as the “Sustainable Tourism in England: A framework for action” document for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK; the DIT-ACHIEV Model and for VERB (Visitors-Environment-Residents-Businesses) stakeholder model being integrated into VisitEngland’s current development of sustainable tourism indicators, with “Wise Tourism” being the ultimate goal.

In 2007, the New Forest District Council was recognised for excellence at the internationally recognised Responsible Tourism Awards: Best Destination, Best Personal Contribution and Overall Winner awards.

Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded to beaches and marinas, based on compliance with 32 criteria, covering environmental education and management, water quality, safety and services. It is run by the Danish non-profit, Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), which is an international umbrella organisation, with 74 members in 64 countries worldwide.

The programme originated in France in 1985, with coastal municipalities who were concerned about the impact of sewage pollution on tourism and public health. The organisation aims to promote improved sustainability, public safety and education in marine recreation.

It has grown gradually over the past 25 years. In 1987, FEE presented the French concept to the European Commission, and was successful in receiving funding. The Blue Flag was then awarded to 244 beaches and 208 marinas in 10 European countries. With the expansion of the program, the criteria have become more rigorous and unified. As of 2006, an international set of criteria is being used with some variation to reflect the specific environmental conditions of certain regions.

The programme is widely known worldwide with over 3,550 beaches and marinas in 41 countries currently holding Blue Flag status. Recently the programme has expanded to offer awards for individual boaters and whale-watching boats.
Case Study 6: Whistler2020

Context and administration of the system

The Centre for Sustainability Whistler (CSW), a mission-based non-profit consulting organisation, is the driving force behind Whistler 2020, the community’s comprehensive long-range sustainability plan involving 50 resort partners and close to 200 task force members. CSW shares management responsibilities with the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW).

Whistler is quite different from a traditional ski village because it was designed specifically as a destination resort and has many specialised tourism amenities. Whistler recognises that economic activity such as forestry and mining, that reduce the aesthetic appeal of the landscape and natural surroundings, could irreversibly destroy their tourism economic base. The resort’s tourism focus provides them with a strong incentive to protect the environment and community health, and sustain the vibrancy that both residents and visitors enjoy.

Initiated in 1994 and aligned with Whistler2020 in 2005, the annual monitoring plan tracks a wide range of performance and baseline data (Whistler2020, 2011e). It is an action-oriented, community-led process designed to drive the community vision and monitor success. The plan comprises a vision, four sustainability objectives, five community priorities, seventeen specific strategy areas, and 96 performance indicators. The plan is regularly updated and continually shaped by community task forces.

The objective of the programme is to achieve social and environmental sustainability and a healthy economy for Whistler through the monitoring of long-range goals. Whistler2020’s vision is ‘Whistler will be the premier mountain resort community as we move toward sustainability’ (Whistler2020, 2011b). The four sustainability objectives of Whistler2020 are to reduce, and eventually eliminate Whistler’s contribution to: (1) on-going build-up of substances taken from the earth’s crust; (2) on-going build-up of substances produced by society; (3) on-going degradation of natural systems by physical means; (4) undermining the ability of other people to meet their needs (Whistler 2020, 2007) . These objectives guide all levels of decision-making and present four science-based, concrete and non-overlapping conditions for achieving a sustainable society. The community priorities, strategy areas, and indicators are discussed in the following section.

The programme was developed in four phases over three years of consultation and community collaboration before it was adopted in 2005. The initiative originally received start-up funding from a hotel tax, but is now is supported by the CSW through fee-for-service arrangements. The process is on-going and is constantly evolving. It is part of a larger vision to see Whistler as an entirely sustainable community by 2060.

Technical scope of the indicators

Whistler2020’s Monitoring Programme tracks and reports progress toward the Whistler2020 Vision through core indicators, strategy indicators as well as other contextual community indicators (http://www.whistler2020.ca/whistler/site/explorer.acds).

Core indicators provide a high-level snapshot of community progress toward the vision, priorities and sustainability objectives. Strategy indicators provide more detailed information and measure progress toward the strategy descriptions of success. Contextual indicators provide other important information about the resort community and are not directly linked to Whistler2020 performance. The monitoring programme assesses progress, informs decision-making, and ensures accountability while educating and engaging community members and stakeholders. Progress is reported on an annual basis through the website (Whistler2020, 2007).
Every year, the 96 strategy indicators are monitored to indicate progress towards the community’s vision. The indicators include baseline data such as visitor numbers and visitor satisfaction but they also include specific community wellbeing indicators like income, energy use, and community decision input. Where trends are found going in the wrong direction, actions are designed to reverse these trends (Whistler2020, 2011c). The monitoring programme is embedded into the community’s strategic plan and informs action and corrective planning where necessary. It is a vital component of policy development.

The Whistler2020 Monitoring Programme was developed through expert research, dialogue with data users, data providers, and the Whistler2020 task forces (Whistler2020, 2011d). The Vision and Strategies were defined first and then the appropriate indicators were identified. The Whistler2020 team researched within their own jurisdiction to have a full understanding of what was currently being reported within Whistler. In addition to this they also conducted research externally, in order to identify best practice in other areas. Various users and data providers were then consulted to review this research and add their own ideas. The list of potential indicators produced through this process was then prioritised using specific criteria, including reliability, validity, information availability, comparability and resource intensity.

The second step in the development of the monitoring system was to collect the initial baseline indicator data. In some cases this was simply a matter of using existing data gathering systems. In others, the data collection systems had to be improved or started from scratch. The third step was to pass the data to task forces and stakeholders for their analysis. This was followed by the preparation and distribution of the Whistler2020 Monitoring Report, through many channels including the Whistler2020 website. The second and third steps of this process are repeated annually (Whistler 2020, 2011d).
The sources of data used in the system are varied, and come from State and National sources (e.g. BC Hydro, Statistics Canada) as well as local sources within Whistler (e.g. Tourism Whistler). As mentioned above, in some cases data collection tools had to be developed from previously non-existent or insufficiently rigorous systems. In 2005, an annual Whistler community survey was started, and in 2006 the Whistler affordability report was compiled (Whistler2020, 2011d).

**Use and communication**

Whistler2020 results are reported on an annual overview scorecard. Every year, over 200 resort and community members and stakeholders on various Whistler2020 task forces review the monitoring results and recommend actions to be implemented by a variety of organisations and businesses. The actions are then reviewed by potential implementing organisations throughout the community—each commenting on whether or not they are able to carry out the action, and provide regular progress reports on the Whistler2020 website. Over the past five years, through the Whistler stakeholder involvement process, 607 sustainability actions and initiatives have been recommended to community organisations, and to date, approximately 489 actions have been completed, resulting in substantial progress toward the vision (Whistler2020, 2011c).

**Whistler2020 informs and guides decision-making in Whistler.** It also provides a framework for individuals and organisations to align their activities with the resort community’s shared vision, strategies, and sustainability objectives. Aligned decision-making can happen informally through simple awareness of Whistler2020 or formally by integrating the Whistler2020 framework into business and government policies and systems. Communication is key for educating and engaging Whistler businesses, residents, and visitors. Whistler2020 results demonstrate transparency and accountability. Both positive and negative trends in the progress towards Whistler’s vision are reported in a meaningful and engaging way to help illustrate connections between policy, actions and resort community health. Whistler2020 also identifies trends relevant to decision making for community organisations, individuals, potential investors, and researchers.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

Whistler2020’s biggest strength is that it is part of a broader strategic action plan for the community. It is a vital tool for community action planning and policy making. It is an entrenched and fully integrated model and not a stand-alone piece as many other indicator systems appear to be. While there is merit in monitoring and measuring in order to raise awareness, if the indicator project is not integrated into the rest of the community fabric it is unlikely to achieve its sustainability goals. Whistler2020 has found that the monitoring is most effective if the indicators are embedded in policy making, development and action planning, and decision making. It has been critical that the local residents and businesses were connected to the entire collaborative process.

**The accessibility and transparency of information** available is another strength of the system. The information is updated annually on the Whistler2020 website and strategic results are posted in real time, when objectives are met. The data management system enables a variety of users to upload data using simple Excel spreadsheets and for the data to be analysed and converted to attractive graphics with an engaging user interface is another strength. This streamlined system helps maintain the integrity and historical context of the data, regardless of who is actually inputting the information. This tool also allows info to be updated in real time for the public.
Whistler is unique in that it has a history of monitoring and reporting, that there is a culture of capturing, tracking, analysing, and reporting for making continuous improvements. It has built a supportive policy environment for this type of monitoring programme.

Striking a balance between budgetary constraints and system robustness has proved to be a challenge for Whistler. The CSW acknowledges that *some of the data are utilised because of their availability rather than absolute suitability for purpose*. About 25% to 30% of the indicators they have are there because they can monitor it. They feel that it is a decent proxy for attempting to measure the desired outcomes, but they recognise that there are probably better ways of monitoring if more resources were available. The availability of the metrics in connection to the community outcome statements are not as good as they could be.

The other on-going challenge has been to *make the findings meaningful for the average person*. While it is one of the system’s greatest strengths, it’s also its greatest weakness. Generally, the results have been used heavily by those who have been deeply involved in the process. But trying to get them to take on a life of their own outside of those processes has been a challenge.

**Figure 18. Whistler2020 Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Whistler2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>Canada : Whistler, British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>Centre for Sustainability Whistler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td>Clear vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear understanding of sustainability and solid set of objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fully integrated in policy and decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessible and transparent reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection is undertaken by a network of organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement of community in identifying actions as a result of indicator results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of community responsibility to deliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAKNESS</td>
<td>Funding is a challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data is often used because it is available rather than because it is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenge to make the system meaningful to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS</td>
<td>Clear vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration in planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual community meetings to discuss the results and identify actions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study 7: Mexico’s Sustainable Tourism Programme

Context and Administration of the System

Mexico’s Sustainable Tourism Programme (formerly known as Agenda 21) was established by the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in 2002. The objective of the programme is to assist municipalities to develop tourism in a more sustainable manner in order to enhance the well-being of the community by preserving Mexico’s natural and cultural heritage. The programme consists of three main components: 1) the monitoring and evaluation of the sustainability of tourism destinations using sustainable tourism indicators, the Destination Sustainability Diagnostic, 2) a federal-level inter-sectoral agenda for sustainability, Intersectoral Sustainability Agenda, and 3) the promotion of environmental good practices in tourism businesses. SECTUR works in close collaboration with the municipalities, state level government, and other federal-level government agencies, such as the Attorney General’s Office for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA), and EarthCheck to implement the programme.

SECTUR’s monitoring tool, the Destination Sustainability Diagnostic is designed to assess the destination’s performance around key environmental planning and socioeconomic indicators. To date, SECTUR has conducted more than 100 destination sustainability assessments. SECTUR covers the consulting team’s costs. SECTUR has used the results of the diagnostic assessments to shape policy and programmes. A federal-level Intersectoral Sustainability Agenda has been developed to respond to the priority issues identified in the destination assessments. As a result of the monitoring, the Agenda’s main strategic lines of action are: solid and liquid waste management, urban planning, and environmental certification for tourism businesses.

As part of the Intersectoral Sustainability Agenda recommendations, SECTUR partnered with PROFEPA and the Mexican Association of Hotels and Motels to establish a voluntary environmental compliance programme for hotels and tourism facilities in 2003. To date, 1,250 tourism businesses have received the Tourism Environmental Quality certification. In 2008, this programme was scaled up to begin to certify destinations where a minimum of 70% of businesses have the Tourism Environmental Quality certification. The destination level certification programme is called Clean Tourism Destination, and it will certify its first destination in 2012.

SECTUR has taken a further step to endorse EarthCheck as its preferred international certification programme for tourism businesses and destinations. SECTUR and EarthCheck are now actively promoting this international certification scheme in parallel to the national system in order to increase the total number of international certified businesses in Mexico.

Technical Scope of the Indicators

Destination Assessment

Mexico’s destination sustainability indicator system is used to monitor and track changes occurring in destinations and tourism businesses over time.

Mexico’s tourism destination sustainability indicator system covers four main themes:

- Natural environment
- Socioeconomic environment
- Tourism trends
- Urban development
The system also has 12 sub-themes:

- Water
- Energy
- Air
- Waste
- Environmental education
- Economic benefits of tourism
- Social impact of tourism
- Demand trends, supply trends
- Environmental and urban planning
- Integrated urban development
- Urban image

The performance of themes is measured by 27 indicators. Each indicator is evaluated using the traffic light system in which ‘green’ indicates a favourable condition, ‘yellow’ indicates the need for preventative attention, and ‘red’ indicates priority action.

The assessment is conducted by SECTUR consultants. The state and municipal-level government agencies support the process by convening stakeholders and providing technical inputs and logistical support. Data collection consists mainly of desk research and extensive one-on-one interviews with destination leaders for key stakeholder groups. SECTUR has a special unit in charge of the monitoring and evaluation of destination-level sustainability. This unit supervises the consultants that conduct the destination assessments. In addition, each destination/municipality establishes a multi-sector Sustainable Tourism Committee to guide the destination’s work.

The destination diagnostic was pilot tested in five destinations, including Huatulco and Cozumel, over a four-month period in early 2003. Between 2003 and 2011, 108 destination assessments have been carried out in several phases. The destinations were selected based on their importance to Mexico’s product offering and specific destination types: beach, medium-size cities, magical pueblos, nature, World Heritage cities. Mexico’s Tourism Board actively promotes destinations that have been through the assessment process.

Each destination receives an Assessment Report that can be used to develop an action plan for tackling identified priorities. The Sustainable Tourism Committee established in each destination not only provides important inputs and guidance to the assessment process, but also ensures follow-up post diagnostic. SECTUR reports that there are about 79 active Sustainable Tourism Committees throughout Mexico.

SECTUR consolidates the results of the destination level assessments and the reports main outcomes, and trends by destination type. SECTUR uses the summary reports to inform decision-making. For example, the Intersectoral Sustainability Agenda was developed to respond to the priority issues that emerged from the analysis of collective results.

**Hotel Assessment**

PROFEPA’s Tourism Environmental Quality programme for hotels and tourism facilities verifies that businesses are complying with all applicable local environmental legislation, international conventions and agreements that Mexico has ratified. The audit covers a wide range of themes, including electricity, water, solid waste management, and emission of contaminants.

The audits are conducted by more than 128 environmental auditors approved by PROFEPA. A complete listing of all approved auditors, the terms of reference for auditors, the criteria which consists of a listing of legislation to be covered by the audit, manual for use of
tradesmark, self-evaluation guide and other guidance documents for auditors and applicants are found on-line.²

Businesses contract PROFEPA–approved auditors directly to carry out the compliance audit. The auditing team’s composition varies by the complexity of audits. The lead auditor is responsible for developing the audit plan, overseeing the field work, preparing final report and guiding development of an action plan. Either an independent auditor or PROFEPA follows-up with the applicant some time after the Report and Action Plan have been completed to verify that the applicant is implementing recommended practices as part of its environmental management system. Once the applicant is confirmed as complying, PROFEPA awards the business the Tourism Environmental Quality certification.

PROFEPA reports that 1,250 businesses have been certified up to February 2012. PROFEPA also monitors on-the-ground impacts of the environmental compliance programme. In an interview earlier this year, PROFEPA’s Director for the State of Quintana Roo shared that in 2010, the certification programme helped to conserve 843,412 cubic meters of water and 28,318,659 kilowatts of electricity.

PROFEPA’s certification programme for businesses was scaled up in 2008 to encourage widespread adoption of good environmental operational practices at a destination level. The Clean Tourism Destination certification is awarded to municipalities/destinations that have at least 70% of total hotel rooms participating in the Tourism Environmental Quality certification programme. Once a destination enters the destination certification programme, it must meet the 70% threshold within two years. This destination certification programme is in its infancy; it expects to certify its first destination in 2012.

Use and Communication

There is extensive information available on SECTUR and PROFEPA’s websites about the objectives, scope, and results of Mexico’s tourism destination sustainability assessment, monitoring and certification schemes. The format and style of the forms and guidance documents are however, dense and not user-friendly.

Nevertheless, Mexico has used the results of the sustainable destination diagnostics to inform its national Intersectoral Sustainability Agenda. The Agenda has helped to shape, and secure funding for, several major programmes that are helping municipalities tackle the priority issues, such as improved solid waste management and promotion of good practices among tourism businesses and destinations.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Mexico’s Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP) is one of the only sustainable tourism monitoring programmes that connects destination sustainability assessment and certification with environmental certification for businesses. Furthermore, the scale of the programme is impressive. Mexico has conducted the sustainability diagnostics in 108 destinations over nine years.

Despite the widespread use, the Mexican system also has its shortfalls. The toolkit and materials are not user-friendly, the benefits for participating in these programmes are not documented or fully understood. Further, it is not clear to what extent the destinations are tracking changes occurring over time or to what extent the destination sustainability diagnostic is repeated. Responsibility for overseeing and financing destination sustainability monitoring activities over time is also unclear. While it is evident how the outcomes of the destination sustainability assessments have informed decision-making at a federal-level, the use of results in local policy and decision-making is not so clear. Finally, it is important to

² http://www.profepa.gob.mx/innovaportal/v/3946/1/mx/material_tecnico_y_juridico.html.
more effectively communicate the linkages between the national certification programmes and EarthCheck.

**Figure 19. Mexico Sustainable Tourism Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Mexico’s Sustainable Tourism Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>• Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>• Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| STRENGTHS | • Incorporates destination and tourism business assessments  
• More destinations have been assessed than in any other country worldwide  
• Assessment results are used to inform Federal Sustainability planning |
| WEAKNESS | • Tool kit and information about the system and unclear and not user-friendly  
• Benefits of the programme at the local level is unclear  
• Oversight and financial management of the system is top-down |
| CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS | • Fostering greater collaboration between federal and municipal-level government to certify tourism businesses and destinations  
• Ensuring the diagnostic produces information and results that stakeholder groups value, and hence, are motivated to support monitoring activities over time  
• Providing incentives and benefits for keeping stakeholders engaged in the certification scheme |

**Figure 20. European Cities Example**

The European Cities Marketing (ECM) programme is a member-based organisation for the exchange of knowledge and information about marketing-related convention and tourism activities. It links over 100 cities in 32 countries. The purpose of the programme is to be the preferred instrument of information exchange on best practice in city marketing.

ECM has a number of different programmes including its benchmarking report. The Benchmarking Report focuses on the strategic and competitive position of European city destinations. Based on statistical data compiled by the cities, it measures the number of overnight stays by tourists utilising commercial accommodation units. The report utilises TourMIS, an online database for city tourism managers and researchers, which forms the statistical basis for the ECM Benchmarking Report and other monitoring exercises (e.g. shopping barometer). It does not include sustainability related indicators.
Case Study 8: British Destinations

Context and administration of the system

British Destinations was formed in April 2011 to offer enhanced services and a unified voice on tourism at a national level. Like a trade association, the work of British Destinations covers a wide range of activities including lobbying for and promoting the interests of the visitor, the tourism industry and that of the host community. It combines the existing memberships of Destination Performance UK (DP UK) and British Resorts and Destinations Association (BRADA).

Over the last decade, DP UK administered an annual benchmarking survey to assess the performance and identify best practice in local tourism authorities, public and private partnerships, and destination management organisations (DMOs). This research is undertaken by Tourism South East (a regional tourist board) and is known as ‘Destination Intelligence’. As part of the survey, local organisations complete a Local Authorities Questionnaire and a Counties Group Questionnaire. The survey makes it possible for members to compare their management operations with similar destinations in their category group: city, coastal or rural. Tourism South East is contracted by British Destinations to support member organisations while engaging in the data collection process.

The Destination Intelligence questionnaire has been refined over the last ten years. The data it collects are relevant, useful, usable, comparable and measurable. It includes satisfaction indicators, economic indicators, sustainability indicators, and organisational indicators. The emergence of the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) indicators has led to further evolution of the British Destinations indicators. It is anticipated that the data collected from the annual Destination Intelligence survey will form a key part of the data warehouse project being developed by English Tourism Intelligence Partnership (ETIP). The results of the Destination Intelligence surveys are available to members only, via secure login on the britishdestinations.co.uk website.

Membership of British Destinations is open to all local tourism entities in the UK. There are currently just over 100 member organisations represented. Annual membership fees for British Destinations start at £500 based on the type and size of destination. Destinations are categorised as ‘Principal Destination’, ‘Major Destination’, and ‘Destination’. The fee covers the administration of the annual Destination Intelligence survey, national advocacy and representation, and marketing and networking opportunities exclusive to members.

Member stakeholders are split in three category groups: coastal, city, and rural. They meet individually and independently to compare notes, data, and share best practice. British Destinations also provides members with up-to-date information from VisitEngland and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and information from the EU. There is a board of elected representatives and an executive group, so members can have direct communication through their chair of their category group to the executive. The executive group, which is representative of all members and category groups, is responsible for managing Destination Intelligence.

Technical scope of the indicators

The annual Destination Intelligence Local Authority Questionnaire includes both core and optional questions based on finances, resources, outcomes, service quality, and performance indicators. The 35 performance indicators fall under four sub headings:

- Satisfaction Indicators
- Economic Indicators
- Sustainability Indicators
- Organisational Indicators
### Figure 21. British Destination Intelligence Performance Indicators

#### 1. Satisfaction Indicators
1a) % of visitors who rate the overall visitor experience as good or excellent
1b) % of customers who consider the overall impression of the TIC service to be good or excellent
1c) % of stakeholders who consider the general promotion of the destination to be good
1d) % of stakeholders who consider the tourist information service to be good or excellent
1e) % of stakeholders who consider the destination website overall to be good or excellent
1f) % of users who consider the destination website overall to be good or excellent

#### 2. Economic Indicators
2a) Number of day visitors (or trips) (+ % increase/decrease)
2b) Number of overnight visitors (or trips) (+ % increase/decrease)
2c) Value of staying visitor spend (+ % increase/decrease)
2d) Value of day visitor spend (+ % increase/decrease)
2e) Staying visitor spend per head (+ % increase/decrease)
2f) Day visitor spend per head (+ % increase/decrease) Net Local Authority spend on tourism per staying visitor
2g) Net Local Authority spend on tourism per day visitor
2h) Net LA spend on tourism per head of population
2i) Net cost per user of stand-alone TIC (through-the-door, phone, email)
2j) Number of unique weekly visitors to the main destination website
2k) Number of bookings generated by the local Destination Management System
2l) % of DMS bookings made online
2m) Value of bookings generated by the local Destination Management System
2n) Value of the online bookings
2o) Return on investment for marketing campaigns (as a ratio)
2p) Annual average % bed space and bedroom occupancy of accommodation
2q) No of FTE tourism related jobs

#### 3. Sustainability Indicators
3a) Existence of an agreed and monitored sustainable tourism and action plan
3b) % of residents indicating that they are satisfied with the local impact of tourism
3c) Number of bed spaces per 1000 population
3d) Ratio of number of visitors in one year to local population
3e) Ratio of number of visitors in each quarter to local population
3f) % of visitors arriving by means of train, coach or bus
3g) % of tourism enterprises (accommodation, attractions, activities) participating in quality accreditation schemes
3h) % of tourism enterprises (accommodation, attractions, activities) participating in green tourism accreditation schemes
3i) % of tourism enterprises (accommodation, attractions, activities) with a recognised environmental certification
3j) % of tourism enterprises (accommodation, attractions, activities) that have commissioned an accessibility audit from an accredited assessor with a view to enhancing provision for disabled visitors
3k) FTE Tourism related jobs as a percentage of total local FTE jobs

#### 4. Organisational Indicators
4a) % of local businesses that belong to a local tourism association/partnership

*Source: Destination Performance, 2010*

**Use and communication**

Each member of the category groups receives a tabulated results report specific to their destination category: city, rural or coastal. This enables destinations to benchmark their own performance against others in their category. Category results are only communicated internally to members. However, British Destinations is looking to make the system more visual, interactive and public as part of the ETIP “data warehousing project”. The long-term aim is to improve the quality of information at the local level, and, ultimately, at national
level. Although British Destinations does not have a specific toolkit, it publishes advice sheets for their members on topical issues resulting from the annual survey.

While some destinations just file the results of the survey, there are some members who use the results as a vital component of their management process. They utilise the data to support arguments for policy changes and policy development with stakeholder groups and beyond.

**Strengths and weaknesses**

Critical tipping points for the success of British Destinations’ Destination Intelligence annual benchmarking survey include **members’ sense of engagement and the reasons for engagement**. A high importance was placed on attaching credibility to the data. Convincing people to collect data just for the sake of collecting data is not likely to engage anyone. **If there are compelling reasons to collect the data, then more people will participate in the process.** Monitoring results in better management processes, which is essential for improving competitiveness and sustainability. The indicators are just one barometer of measuring and encouraging this.

Lessons learned during the indicator development process and subsequent implementation of the system suggests that a destination monitoring system must have four key components: **simplicity, clarity, comparability, and collectability.** While there is definite value in assessing the current situation in a destination, there also needs to be an aspirational element to the indicators, by setting targets and goals for the future.

Potential pitfalls include **a lack of integration in current management processes and policies.** The destinations with cohesive management processes and clear tourism development and sustainability policies in place, typically have far better stakeholder engagement and are therefore more successful with implementing and making the most of the system. It must also be very clear what the indicator process is, what the objectives are in engaging that process, and **what human support systems are in place to help.** A system that is solely managed by an outside entity is unlikely to be successful. There needs to be local adoption, ownership and integration of the system in order for the indicators to provide lasting value and impact.

**Figure 22. British Destinations Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>British Destinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>• UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>• Membership-based national trade organisation. Primary focus is advocating for local tourism authorities, public and private partnerships and DMOs in the UK by encouraging performance management and best practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| STRENGTHS   | • Consistency  
• Comparability  
• Simplicity  
• Provides a mechanism for destination managers to share knowledge and best practice  
• Provides advice and guidance material  
• Provides key information to measure and monitor destination performance |
| WEAKNESS    | • No individual destination reports are produced  
• Lack of clear benefits from participation  
• Does not engage with all or the majority of destinations  
• The reluctance of destination managers to engage in meaningful performance management (scared that the results might reflect badly on them)  
• Data and intelligence recognised as important but not given the support and profile needed from national organisations |
| CRITICAL TIPING POINTS | • Members’ sense of engagement and the reasons for engagement is vital for success  
• Attach credibility to the data collected  
• Have clear and compelling reasons to collect the data- i.e. managerial implications in terms of competitiveness, sustainability, etc. |
4. Recommendations

This section of the report summarises the lessons learned from the eight case studies and makes recommendations for consideration in the European System of Indicators.

4.1. Lessons learned about indicator scope

Indicator categories/layers

One of the key lessons learned about indicator scope is that overthinking indicators and indicator categories may not help implementation. DIT-ACHIEV, driven by academic research, has six fields of interest, each encompassing three pillars of sustainability, resulting in 26 dimensions. Travelife, on the other hand, has been industry-driven and uses three very simple categories: environmental management, staff management, and community integration. The Mexico Sustainable Tourism Programme was government-driven and has four obvious categories: natural environment, socio-economic environment, tourism trends, and urban development. Whistler2020 uses five goal-driven categories designed to resonate with residents whilst also being inclusive of sustainability principles: enriching community life, enhancing resort experience, protecting the environment, ensuring economic viability, and partnering for success. The Pan Parks model stresses the importance of revising and improving indicators over time.

Recommendation: Keep categories simple to maximise resonance and accessibility, but revise and improve the indicators over time.

Indicator quantity and resonance

Not all destinations need all indicators. Quality and resonance is far more important than quantity. Ensuring some flexibility to allow for the development of a certain number of customised indicators by destination stakeholders is a useful way to encourage buy-in and also ensure local relevance. UNWTO created a set of baseline indicators, but the emphasis of the programme was on the process for identifying destination-specific indicators closely related to key sustainability risks and challenges. STZC adopted a similar approach. There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to sustainable tourism; ensuring indicators have local resonance is essential. It is also important to note that too many indicators can make a monitoring system inaccessible and too time-consuming to implement. The STZC has three simple categories but 18 baseline, 71 generic, and 111 specific indicators. Whistler2020 has over 100 indicators. PAN Parks has 26 criteria but 126 indicators. GSTC has 45 criteria and countless indicators. Experience suggests twenty indicators may just be the magic number.

Recommendation: Indicators should include some standard baseline/core indicators and others that are selected to monitor specific destination challenges. Fewer indicators, preferably less than twenty, will be more manageable. Adopt an incremental approach so that skills develop first with a few indicators; expand later.

Monitoring scope

Getting the conceptual boundaries right is essential. Whilst all the initiatives examined here were focused on sustainable tourism, EMAS, STZC and Whistler2020 adopt a general sustainability approach. Some, such as British Destinations, integrated sustainability monitoring with traditional tourism trend monitoring, and others, such as GSTC, focus clearly on sustainable tourism. British Destinations has 36 indicators but only 11 relate to sustainability. GSTC, in contrast has 45 specific actions that encourage destinations to become more sustainable. None of these incorporate tourism trends such as arrivals, length of stay, occupancy rates. By dividing data collection into three sections, STZC manages an even more comprehensive approach. The first section is used to collect baseline tourism and sustainability data. The second and third sections collect generic and specific information about the destination. Adopting an integrated approach to monitoring, without falling into the trap of being too broad, can increase the usefulness of monitoring.

Recommendation:
Develop a monitoring system that is integrated with tourism economic trend monitoring to increase the usefulness of the results and avoid having parallel systems. Ensure the scope is integrated but not so comprehensive that it becomes unmanageable.

Participation

The importance of local buy-in and ownership at multiple levels in destinations cannot be overstated. In practice, this means support from the ministerial level, from technicians, and from policy makers at regional, sectoral, and destination levels. Many of the case studies reviewed adopted a participatory methodology for the identification of indicators. While this is important, it is much more important that stakeholders be involved in data collection, analysis of results, and data use. PAN Parks model involves the direct engagement of not only park managers but also stakeholders and the tourism industry in the park surroundings. The DIT-ACHIEV model puts more focus on facilitating local actors to undertake research in their own area and on engaging them in the monitoring process. Whistler2020 goes further and engages community members and stakeholders in an annual review of the results. To enhance awareness and participation, consideration should be given to naming the system with something relatively easy to remember and refer to.

Recommendation: Engage stakeholders, particularly those expected to gather data, use and act on the results, at all stages in the process, particularly analysis of results. Use a memorable and accessible name for the system.

Data collection

Most of the case studies attempt to monitor destination sustainability by gathering destination-wide information such as energy usage, water conservation, waste disposal, and employment. It is worth noting that Mexico and Travelife are proposing a slightly different approach whereby specific data from certified businesses is combined to provide destination monitoring. While this approach is still in development, it provides a partial solution to the difficulties of generalising results for large destinations. In each case, care should be taken to assess monitoring already being undertaken so that new systems are closely integrated and build off pre-existing systems. Care is also needed to reduce the need for costly new surveys which will reduce the ability of smaller destinations to participate.

Recommendation: Examine the role of certified businesses and pre-existing in destination data collection. Don’t reinvent monitoring systems or plan costly surveys.

Data collection

The ability to collect data seems to be one of the barriers to effective destination monitoring. This is principally due to the time, cost, and skills required to do it. UNWTO and GSTC provide indicators but no template for data collection. The British Destinations programme solved this problem by relying on one simple questionnaire which destinations complete and submit. DIT-ACHIEV had a comprehensive set of templates included in this toolkit. Travelife uses a simple portal for data uploads. EqualTo has developed an innovative three-step online process for registration, assessment and certification that is worth considering. Most other programmes require a destination ‘champion’ or lead auditor to collate and analyse the data.

Recommendation: Consider developing an accessible online system with pre-set templates for data collection and analysis.

4.2. Lessons learned about communication

Analysis

Several of the case studies (STZC and Whistler2020) examined use a destination scorecard system for reporting results. This can be useful for comparing one destination against another. The “traffic light” system is a popular method of conveying areas of concern. DIT-ACHIEV uses this: green indicating stable, orange indicating issues to be addressed, and red
indicating issues requiring attention. Having a website where results are posted, preferably linked to the DMOs site, provides a central point of reference for public information on the results. PAN Parks have been particularly effective in sharing information about monitoring results by publishing a PAN Parks ‘lessons learned’ series.

**Recommendation:** Analysis should be informed by the needs and capacity of user groups. Straightforward, easy-to-visualise results such as a traffic light system can help raise the profile of the project.

**Results sharing**

One potential stumbling block for some destinations is results sharing. Publishing results is easy enough when they are good news, but not so popular when they show poor performance. The Mexico Sustainable Tourism Programme, Travelife, and British Destinations all restrict access to results. British Destinations highlighted the reluctance of destination managers to engage in meaningful performance management when results reflect badly on them. Whistler2020, however, has exemplary online results presentation with a dynamic sustainability tracking system. Providing a transparent reporting system helps engage stakeholders in taking action based on results. The results are meaningful for Whistler2020 residents; the more areas that are highlighted for action, the greater progress is likely to be. Transparency is essential to ensure both clear understanding by destinations using the tool and by those organisations seeking to examine and establish the credibility of results.

**Recommendation:** The more transparent the process of data analysis and reporting, the greater credibility of the system.

**Toolkits**

The development of a user-friendly toolkit is essential and the importance of clear communications tools cannot be overstated. The language used needs to be suitable for the public to understand, with everyday language rather than academic terms or business jargon. Few of the case studies have effective implementation toolkits. UNWTO and GSTC have not developed toolkits but are rather a process for developing indicators. The UNWTO was concerned that overly prescriptive templates and procedures might become a barrier to use. The Mexican handbooks are unclear and not user-friendly. DIT-ACHIEV and Travelife seem to have been the most effective in this area. Both toolkits are user-friendly. DIT-ACHIEV toolkit walks the destination through the entire process of using the Model, creating a working group, developing marketing and communication plans, selecting destination-specific indicators, collecting and analysing data, and managing and evaluating results. The Travelife web portal for tour operators and accommodation suppliers provides an online collection of products including a sustainability handbook and auditors’ technical guide.

**Recommendation:** To be useful, toolkits need to be clear to those who will use them; they need to be inclusive and accessible but not so prescriptive that they become a barrier to use.

### 4.3. Potential pitfalls and how they can be avoided

**Forgetting the user**

Many monitoring systems have not been successfully implemented because too much effort was put into identifying and sorting indicators and not enough in to understanding users’ needs. UNWTO and STZC are examples of this. As the STZC initiative has demonstrated, to ensure the sustainability of both the indicator system and the destination, financial resources need to be allocated from the outset for administration and on-going management. It is often far easier to find funding to develop a tool than it is to use the tool. Planning for usage rather than development can help address this problem at the outset.
Recommendation: Design for use. Start from the end of the project. Think about use, financial sustainability, then data, then indicators. Survey pilot destinations needs in advance of toolkit development.

Top-down approach

Key lessons learned from STZC, Whistler2020, Travelife Sustainability System and others suggest that a crucial factor of success is ensuring key stakeholders have ownership and control of decision making and development. Although the support of Europe’s biggest tour operators is less crucial in encouraging destination buy-in to the EU Indicators Project, it would be worth engaging them in the process, as their influence may encourage adoption by destinations. Mexico’s programme has been widely implemented mainly because trained consultants have been paid by the federal government to undertake the assessments across different destinations. However, it has not been widely used at the local level because local stakeholders have no involvement in the data collection. British Destinations and Travelife have similar difficulties because ownership and control are centralised rather than being locally owned.

Recommendation: Be inclusive at all stages in monitoring; engage the large-scale tour operators in particular; develop a name that resonates with users

Finding then losing a ‘champion’

If there is no specific project ‘champion’, as DIT-ACHIEV and STZC found, it is difficult to get a monitoring project off the ground. If there is a project champion, and the person moves on, the project also risks collapse.

Recommendation: Encourage the establishment of a taskforce where roles and engagement are shared and not focused on one champion.

When results have no meaning

Complex algorithms, weightings, and indices may not resonate with those whose behaviour is expected to change due to the results. Ensuring accessibility has been vital in encouraging users to engage with the Travelife System rather than scaring them off by making them feel that success is unachievable. In the EU system, consideration will be given to ensuring that what is developed is relevant for destinations new to sustainability as well as to those destinations well versed in its concepts. Even a table of percentage scores may mean nothing to observers if it does not include clear interpretation. STZC found a solution for this by ‘banding’ its results (committed, minimum, intermediate, superior). British Destination compares results across similar types of destinations (coastal, rural, city) but does not provide individual destination results. Manipulating a more complex approach to produce a more simple publicly accessible indicator may be the best approach to simplicity without compromising accountability. For example, few people understand what contaminant parts per million mean but all recognize the Blue Flag which is in part based on this measure.

Recommendation: Have a clear purpose for the results and design the analysis to meet this purpose. Benchmarking across destinations can create meaning, motivation, and marketing value.

Low return on investment (ROI)

DMOs are under increasing budgetary pressure worldwide. Surveys are costly to undertake and if there is no immediate reward, or return from the investment of time and human resources required to collect the data, it will be difficult for destination managers to prioritise the monitoring programme. Both PAN Parks and Whistler2020 face challenging financial times. Travelife has used the sale of marketing benefits to sustain their programme. The PAN Parks case presents several progressive financing concepts, i.e., the PAN Park Village and PAN Parks Bed schemes, that demonstrate how the private sector may help to provide long-term financing for certification. Identifying a user cost may also be an option to
explore but will need to be accompanied by clear incentives such as marketing or policy benefits for use.

**Recommendation:** Implement a regional system or network of systems so results can be benchmarked to provide marketing benefits to destinations. Identify sustainable sources of funding for the monitoring and explore user willingness to pay.

### 4.4. Critical components of success

**Demand for information**

To have a chance of sustained implementation, monitoring systems have to produce results and information that are in demand—someone needs to need the information. The results must be indispensable in some manner, shape, or form.

Monitoring systems seem to have the best chance at being in demand when they are integrated as a central part of destination planning, policy, or funding processes. Whistler2020 and Mexico have both managed to integrate monitoring into their government planning; Whistler2020 at local level and Mexico at national level. PAN Parks has used its results to influence regional policy. DIT-ACHIEV in Killarney was able to utilise the results of their monitoring to secure funding to develop cycling routes. Including tourism economic trend indicators in the monitoring can help DMOs build the case for greater funding allocations.

**Recommendation:** Ensure monitoring produces results that are integral to the tourism policy and planning process so that results are used to influence spending and to prioritise investments.

**Recognition of achievement**

Several of the case studies reviewed created an incentive structure for destination monitoring. The PAN Parks programme offers a compelling blend of benefits, in particular networking opportunities and marketing and communications support, that has kept parks engaged over time. STZC created four bands/destination levels. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism also has an award system. Recognition, by way of an award, is widely used in tourism business certification life Travelife, but still new to destinations. A regional monitoring is particularly well positioned for awards. Awards have market value and can be a source of pride for a destination. Integrating a tiered award system encourages destinations to progress through different levels and use their awards marketing materials. However, awards also require centralised administration or portal, combined with third party verification. The GSTC recognition system may be a useful step for EU destination monitoring systems as it adds international recognition to destination-specific systems that meet the criteria without creating separate monitoring protocol.

**Recommendation:** Consider an EU regional award system for destinations that are doing sustainable tourism monitoring. Ensure TSG Indicators are in line with GSTC to allow for recognition.

**Robust and credible information**

If monitoring results are to lead to action for enhanced sustainability, the results need to be meaningful, robust, and credible for those who are going to use them. Data collection systems will need to be verified and those involved in analysis will need training and a system of technical support. Extensive testing of the indicators system and the associated management process is essential to ensure that the final version is practical, useable, and ultimately a good fit for the purpose—providing sufficient detail for action, but not so much that it become unmanageable. It should also be recognised that no version is 'final' and that
flexibility needs to be built in to allow room for revising indicators over time, as external factors change.

Recommendation: Pilot-test all indicators and data collection methodology; provide training and on-going support for regional monitoring.
4.5. Summary of Recommendations

Indicators
1. Keep categories simple to maximise resonance and accessibility, but revise and improve the indicators over time.
2. Indicators should include some standard baseline/core indicators and others that are selected to monitor specific destination challenges.
3. Fewer indicators, preferably less than twenty, will be more manageable. Adopt an incremental approach so that skills develop first with a few indicators; expand later.
4. Develop a monitoring system that is integrated with existing destination monitoring systems and tourism economic trend monitoring to increase the usefulness of the results and avoid having parallel systems.
5. Ensure the scope is integrated but not so comprehensive that it becomes unmanageable.

Piloting
6. Engage stakeholders, particularly those expected to gather data, use and act on the results, at all stages in the process, particularly analysis of results. Use a memorable and accessible name for the system.
7. Encourage the establishment of a taskforce where roles and engagement are shared and not focused on one champion.
8. Examine the role of certified businesses and pre-existing destination data collection. Don’t reinvent monitoring systems or plan costly surveys.
9. Consider developing an accessible online system with pre-set templates for data collection and analysis.
10. Analysis should be informed by the needs and capacity of user groups. Straightforward, easy-to-visualise results such as a traffic light system can help raise the profile of the project. The more transparent the process of data analysis and reporting, the greater credibility of the system.

Toolkits
11. To be useful, toolkits need to be clear to those who will use them; they need to be inclusive and accessible but not so prescriptive that they become a barrier to use.
12. Design for use. Start from the end of the project. Think about use, financial sustainability, then data, then indicators. Survey pilot destinations needs in advance of toolkit development.
13. Be inclusive at all stages in monitoring; engage the large scale tour operators in particular.
14. Invent a memorable and accessible name for the system.

Reporting
15. Have a clear purpose for the results and design the analysis to meet this purpose. Benchmarking across destinations can create meaning, motivation, and marketing value.
16. Implement a regional system or network of systems so results can be benchmarked to provide marketing benefits to destinations. Identify sustainable sources of funding for the monitoring and explore user willingness to pay.
17. Ensure monitoring produces results that are integral to the tourism policy and planning process so that results are used to influence spending and to prioritise investments.
18. Consider an EU regional award system for destinations that are doing sustainable tourism monitoring. Ensure TSG Indicators are in line with GSTC to allow for recognition.

19. Pilot-test all indicators and data collection methodology; provide training and ongoing support for regional monitoring.

5. Conclusion

Each of the systems analysed in this report has had some degree of success and each has faced its challenges. Despite the good progress that has been made, there is no fully functioning universally applicable sustainable indicator system. There are many reasons for including differing political motivations, diverse regulatory frameworks, varied sustainability concerns, and inconsistent availability of funding. The primary reason, however, is that return on investment has not been clearly demonstrated to DMOs.

It is easier to justify funding for the development of an indicator system than it is to justify continued funding for monitoring over time. Rigorous monitoring is time and labour intensive and needs to show clear returns.

The case studies presented in this report demonstrate examples of indicators in use. The case studies show how monitoring can improve the information available to policymakers, assist destinations develop tourism in a more sustainable manner, raise the profile of a destination, increase visitor satisfaction, and enhance long-term economic benefits of tourism for the destination. It is difficult to put a Euro value on these benefits. In order to encourage the uptake of the TSG indicators, the piloting process will need to clearly demonstrate the value, costs, and benefits of using indicators for the sustainable management of destinations.
6. References


Vancura, V. (undated) PAN Parks in World Database on Protected Areas: Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Methodologies


VisitBritain (2005) LA Tourism Group Launches New Performance Management Tool, Available From:


Whistler2020 (2011a) 2020 Explorer, Available From:


Whistler2020 (2011b) Our Whistler2020 Vision, Available From:


Whistler2020 (2011c) Whistler2020- Frequently Asked Questions, Available From:


Whistler2020 (2011d) Whistler2020 Monitoring Program Overview, Available From:


Whistler2020 (2011e) Whistler2020 Performance, Available From:


## 7. Case Study Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>CASE 1</th>
<th>CASE 2</th>
<th>CASE 3</th>
<th>CASE 4</th>
<th>CASE 5</th>
<th>CASE 6</th>
<th>CASE 7</th>
<th>CASE 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>GSTC/UNWTO</td>
<td>TRAVELIFE</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean</td>
<td>Pan Parks</td>
<td>DIT-Achiev</td>
<td>Whistler2020</td>
<td>Mexico Sustainable Tourism Programme</td>
<td>British Destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>Madrid and Washington D.C.</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Caribbean Region</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Ireland: Carlingford; Killarney; Temple Bar, Dublin</td>
<td>Canada: Whistler, British Columbia</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>UNWTO and GSTC</td>
<td>ABTA (The Travel Association)</td>
<td>The Association of Caribbean States (ACS)</td>
<td>PAN Parks Foundation</td>
<td>Dublin Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Centre for Sustainability Whistler</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources</td>
<td>Membership-based national trade organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td>• Universal process to identify relevant indicators (UNWTO)</td>
<td>• High level of tourism industry support and ownership</td>
<td>• Comprehensive indicators with flexibility to create ‘bespoke’ versions for each destination</td>
<td>• Incentives to motivate parks to be certified</td>
<td>• Comprehensive Toolkit for destinations</td>
<td>• Clear vision</td>
<td>• Incorporates destination and tourism business assessments</td>
<td>• Consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• List of possible indicator for many different types of destinations (UNWTO)</td>
<td>• Good quality supporting materials/downloadable handbook</td>
<td>• Local ownership through multi-disciplinary working groups</td>
<td>• Significant private sector stakeholder engagement in the programme</td>
<td>• Strong local-level buy-in and ownership</td>
<td>• Clear understanding of sustainability and solid set of objectives</td>
<td>• Comparability</td>
<td>• Simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comprehensive Guidebook (UNWTO)</td>
<td>• Easy-to-use web portal for self-assessment, analysis, and recommendations</td>
<td>• Tools, including a website that are simple and easy to use</td>
<td>• Has promoted close links between protected area and local businesses</td>
<td>• Local participation is high</td>
<td>• Fully integrated in policy and decision-making</td>
<td>• Provides a mechanism for destination managers to share knowledge and best practice</td>
<td>• Provides advice and guidance material</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Robust auditing process</td>
<td>• Extensive testing undertaken</td>
<td>• Many publications and lessons learned</td>
<td>• Quality brand has achieved significant marketing value</td>
<td>• Accessible and transparent reporting</td>
<td>• Provides key information to measure and monitor destination performance</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Data collection is undertaken by a network of organisations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The reluctance of destination managers to engage</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEAKNESSES</td>
<td>• Focus on indicator development rather than indicator use (UNWTO)</td>
<td>• Limited scope</td>
<td>• Auditing process is labour intensive and slow</td>
<td>• Outcomes affected by differing levels of resources and commitment in destinations</td>
<td>• If there is no champion, it is very difficult to get off the ground. An outside monitoring group cannot do this on their own for long-term success</td>
<td>• Funding is a challenge</td>
<td>• No individual destination reports are produced</td>
<td>• Only funded in development not implementation (UNWTO)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Only funded in development not implementation (UNWTO)</td>
<td>• Many indicators are not specific enough</td>
<td>• Management infrastructure lacked budget for on-going administration and development</td>
<td>• Few sustainability indicators</td>
<td>• Funding is a challenge</td>
<td>• Lack of clear benefits from participation</td>
<td>• Does not engage with all or the majority of destinations</td>
<td>• Little or no follow up on pilot destinations (UNWTO)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ownership and control are central to the scheme, rather than being locally owned.</td>
<td>• Funding is problematic and unsustainable</td>
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<td>• Oversight and financial management of the system is top down</td>
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<td>• Few sustainability indicators</td>
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### CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Backing of international organisations</th>
<th>Movement towards a destination-level monitoring system</th>
<th>Extensive pilot testing to improve the system</th>
<th>Close cooperation with local communities in surrounding the park</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Having the flexibility to continually adapt and improve the system</td>
<td>Impact on EU policy makers in helping to increase the integration of wilderness in the EU’s political agenda</td>
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<td>Need for community benefits</td>
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<td>A network of champions at various levels within each destination and region</td>
<td>The PPF connects certified partners through its quality brand and provides marketing and communications support to promote the PAN Parks concepts and certified PAN Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead organisation needs budget and mandate</td>
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<td>Continued pressure at the highest levels to maintain momentum</td>
<td>Must have a ‘champion’ or key person who is enthusiastic and takes ownership of project</td>
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</table>

- Must have adequate resources or ‘touchstone’ in place so destinations feel that they are supported
- External validation process lends credibility to the results
- One size does not fit all. Be sure to be flexible in the administration of system. But if that system can provide a universal yet adaptable framework to validate results, then the impact of monitoring could gain the momentum that it needs for long-range recognition.

- Engaged stakeholder task force
- Annual reporting
- Transparency

- Fostering greater collaboration between federal and municipal-level government to certify tourism businesses and destinations
- Ensuring the diagnostic produces information and results that stakeholder groups value, and hence, are motivated to support monitoring activities over time
- Providing incentives and benefits for keeping stakeholders engaged in the certification scheme

- Members’ sense of engagement and the reasons for engagement is vital for success
- Attach credibility to the data collected
- Have clear and compelling reasons to collect the data—i.e. managerial implications in terms of competitiveness, sustainability, etc.

- Must have a ‘champion’ or key person who is enthusiastic and takes ownership of project
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