VISTAwards – Examples of Unsustainable Tourism: Submission Form

In the VISTAwards, bad practice as well as good practice is being showcased - a spotlight will highlight nominated tourism-related unsustainable and irresponsible stakeholder actions related to any given destination. Examples might be: a piece of unjust government policy, poor governance, inappropriate property or destination development, corporate greed, harmful environmental business services/practices, oppressive and unfair social behaviour, unsustainable use of technology, etc...

Submit Your Own Example

In order to submit an example of irresponsible or unsustainable tourism activity to the *VISTAwards* you have to fill in the following information form. The form asks you questions that cover an *Agenda 21*-based analysis of the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional processes of sustainable development in general. The questions focus this broad *Agenda 21 Sustainable Consumption and Production* framework through the lens of the tourism sector-specific *Global Sustainable Tourism Council's* criteria for sustainable tourism, and are formulated according to knowledge needed for preparation of a case for the purposes an EU impact assessment (IA) /, national environmental impact assessments (EIAs), national/regional strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and territorial planning decision support.

Legal Notice

When you submit an Unsustainable Tourism Development Form you should avoid publishing any material which is abusive, vulgar, defamatory, inaccurate, harassing, hateful, threatening, invading of others privacy, or violates any EU or national law.

DestiNet does not accept any responsibility for the content of your information, and you agree to indemnify and hold the Portal and its agents harmless with respect to any legal or financial claim based upon your submission.

Please note that the structure of the form allows for a short summary (Qu11 A and 11B) or more detailed description of the issue (Qu 12 onwards). Therefore allow 20 minutes to 2 hours to fill in the form once you have the information. Read all the questions first, then fill in the form. It is likely that you will not have all the information to hand, but you should answer all compulsory questions (marked with an *asterisk).

A: IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

Hurghada, Egypt

1.TITLE OF REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE OR UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY/BUSINESS:*

Irresponsible mass development of tourism construction and service activities that are causing habitat destruction to protected areas of the Red Sea shoreline and coral beds

2. DATE OF SUBMISSION:*   **UPDATED:**
01.03.2014

3. INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY:*
Gordon SIllence

4. REPRESENTATIVE OF (IF APPLICABLE):*
Ecotrans – DestiNet

5. CONTACT EMAIL:*
Gordon.destinet@ecotrans.de

6. NAME OF PROJECT/BUSINESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITY:*

Egyptian tourism authority, Environmetnla Minisitry, regional council and local businesses, park authorities, Red Sea Governor,

7. ADDRESS:*
Hurghada, Egypt

8. LOCATION:*

9. WEB ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE):*

http://en.egypt.travel/attraction/index/hurghada-beach

10. CONTACT PERSON (IF KNOWN):*

B SUMMARY:*

11A. NATURE OF UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY (-IES)* (*Please state nature and extent of the problem(s)*)

I am reporting following a family holiday about the eco-horror story that he Egyptian coral diving destination Hurghada has become. The entire destination has been developed by both government and private sector once-lers (those not thinking long term and sustainably or responsibly) whose legacy is the trashing of paradise through nature tourism. From the under-construction airport onwards, Hurghada appears at first as one endless unfinished building site, full of wind-blown rubbish. Our centrally-located hotel was surrounded by more plastic debris and unfinished hotel constructions (not seen from its website) all the way to alleged beach front, which has been completely artificially remodelled, privatized and segmented, with no public access and no beach worth accessing anyway, with the water-line defined by floating rubbish, and a flotsam flotilla of dive boats cluttering the coastline view. Snorkelling from the coast line was a joke.

11B. HOW DOES THE ACTION/PROJECT/ACTIVITY DEMONSTRATE IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, ACTIONS OR EFFECTS?*

Over 700 dive boats ferry thousands of tourists on day trips promising underwater ecotourism adventure, but in fact they have completely devastated the coral reefs in the region, their propellers too close to the corals, mooring their anchors directly on the reef, and massing in ridiculous numbers. Giftun Island, once a Red Sea snorkelling paradise, now sees hundreds of unsuspecting tourists dumped on a windswept un-shaded desert island shoreline awash with smaller ferry boats, again churning the corals that used to be the islands' key attraction. I don't even want to mention the idiotic antics of the ignorant crew that replaced no attempt to provide environmental information to the luckless snorkelers on board.

The worrying aspect of this manifestation of irresponsible and unsustainable tourism is that reflects a southern drift of mass tourism, heading towards the Wadi el Gemal in the south and trashing the rest of this otherwise pristine desert coastal habitat.

This Destination was reported to Quality Coast who have independently developed a low sustainability rating for the destination.

C FURTHER DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

12A WHO ARE THE (OTHER) STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED?*

The national tourism authority, the ministry of environment, the army, the ministry of economy, the Red Sea governate, regional and local council, the parks authority, the private sector businesses (especially hotels and marine activities)

12B WHAT PART ARE THEY PLAYING? *Please provide details of the issue in the table below. Please describe positive and negative Impacts according to different stakeholders relationship to the issue. If negative, please describe potential mitigating actions.*

Impact analysis	Qualitative assessment/+-	Quantitative assessment/+-	Alternatives/ Options	Comments
How does the action/project/activity effect socio-economic processes in the local community, alongside other potential economic impacts?	Onshore, a government land giveaway policy has led to a construction boom that was bust when it started - the land grab leaving unsightly blocks of aging first phase construction sites that will allegedly boost red sea bed capacity from 200,000 to 300,000 by 2020. Yet many of those hotels that are finished are operating at very low occupancy rates, turning to the low-cost budget markets of Russia and other eastern European states.	This needlessly greedy behaviour starts at the airport where a currency trap ($15/!5 Euro/ £15/150 Egyptian Pound!) visa tax is sprung on unsuspecting international arrivals (you don't pay it at Cairo, *Sharm-el Shiek* or *El Gouna* airports).		**There needs to be a moratorium on tourism in the destination and the development of an alternative regional plan.**
How does the action/project/activity effect cultural heritage and have other potential socio-cultural impacts?	These poorly-informed tourists have a reputation for snorkelling with vodka bottles and using *Hurghada* as a cheap exotic shopping destination – buying Egyptian-looking artefacts	Some tourists may even notice the almost complete lack of Egyptian women and children here. You might see middle-eastern families with female members on holiday, but this is a classic tourism		**Corruption needs to be dealt with in all areas of governance.**

	and fake luxury goods that are in fact mass-produced in China. Mass tourism has given rise to a garrison of tourist shops and street vendor militias fleecing trapped tourists, hustling to make desperate sales using a bargaining system that starts at three times the real asking price and finishes with the most negative of inter-cultural market exchanges any inter-personal tourism experience can offer. The new-built section of *Hurghada* does have its streets swept yet is as *ersatz* as it comes, a concrete high street void of any character and far from the coastline, whereas the downtown so-called beachfront area is at least coloured by Egyptian traders and the buzz of the street vendor hassle.	dormitory town, with male migrant workers coming from *Luxor* and *Cairo* to compete for the scarce tourism services jobs that do exist, then ganging up for their sidewalk sales scams. This creates an even darker undercurrent to the problematic, and it must be asked what will happen once the *Hurghada* tourist bubble bursts, as it surely must as the tourism industry itself migrates further south, then finally exits Egypt altogether (cf the rise of mass tourism in Dubai, Abu Dabai, Turkey, Tunisia, etc, on the horizon). Low paid labour – from construction to services - is the base of the entire tourism edifice, and it's clear that this is nowhere near the path of sustainability and responsible development that the People's Revolution requires.		
How does the action/project/activity	There used to be a visitor fee collected by the park	The entire town – old and new – is reliant on water		**Environmetnal legislaton needs to be re evaluate**

effect the environment and have other potential **environmental** impacts.	authorities, but since the revolution the army has stopped the marine park rangers collecting fees from the dive companies, and the dive boat crews have violently rebuffed ranger interventions in reef infringement incidents, so the under-resourced rangers have retreated, and corruption-ridden free enterprise rules the waves. HEPCA, the lone NGO in the area, is similarly ineffective here, though elsewhere it has introduced buoy mooring systems and supports coral reef research.	deliveries and sewage collection by lorry, leaving a defining backdrop stench to the tourism visitor experience.		**and then properly enforced.**

13. CAN YOU REFER TO ANY MONITORING/CERTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT THIS EXAMPLE IS COVERED BY OR IS RELATED TO? (See www.destinet.eu to check if your example is listed in relationship to any certificates or awards)

This Destination was reported to Quality Coast who have independently developed a low sustainability rating for the destination.   The Green Start Certification Progamme in Egypt should be informed of the Hurghada situation,

14. GOOD GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

14A CAN YOU ESTABLISH ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL OR SOCIAL DRIVERS AND UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THIS SITUATION? (IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE DRIVING FORCE, PRESSURE, STATE, IMPACT, RESPONSE (DPSIR) MODEL, PLEASE APPLY)

This information should be given as part of further research and monitoring of the destination.

14B CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE GOVERNANCE CHAIN AND FINANCING PROCESSES BEHIND THE ACTIVITY? *(STATE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS ESTABLISHED AT A NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AND DEPARTMENTS)*

This information should be given as part of further research and monitoring of the destination by the Egyptian environment, toruism and economics ministries.

14C CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICY CONTEXT OR PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING GOVERNANCE MEASURES ON THIS ISSUE? *(STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT CORRESPOND TO THE PROBLEM/ROOT CAUSES OR SOLUTIONS)*

This information should be given as part of further research and monitoring of the destination by the Egyptian Tourism Authority and Environment ministry.

14D ARE YOU AWARE OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN OR UN MEMBER STATES?
Other destination such as Sharm el Shiek in Egypt have followed a similar model

14E HOW CAN THIS PROJECT/ACTIVITY/DESTINATION BE IMPROVED?
This information should be given as part of further research and monitoring of the destination.

14F WHAT OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVE WERE POSSIBLE?*(COMPARE THE OPTIONS, WEIGHING-UP POSITIVE/ NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PREFERRED OPTION IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES)*

This information should be given as part of further research and monitoring of the destination. The NGO HEPCA have some alternative ideas, as do the park authorities. The Green Star Certification programme offers guidance eon how local businesses can do better.

15. UPDATES AND PROGRESS:

Update Date:

Author:

16. SUBMIT IMAGES RELATED TO REPORTED ISSUE HERE:

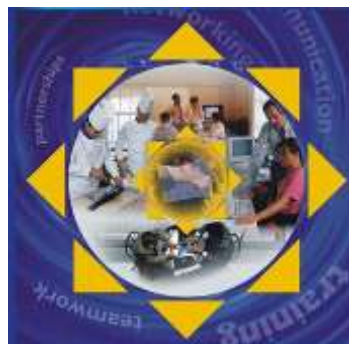*Giftun Island - Torture by mass nature tourism*

Tourists and construction side by side

END OF SUBMISSION FORM:

YOUR SUBMISSION WILL BE UPLOADED AT: WWW.DESTINET.EU (SEE The VISTAwards SECTION)

MAIL TO: Gordon.destinet@ecotrans.de

(This form was created for the VISTAs by Gordon Sillence in his capacity as Executive Director of UN Type II Partnership – the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal – Training, Education and Development Services 2014)