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# BEST PRACTICES REPORT

Best practices in Sustainable Tourism in  
the EU partner countries  
(D2.2)



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# 1. Introduction

The goal of WP2 is to create a framework of the status quo in the target countries (Georgia and Moldova) as well as to provide a reference about the EU countries (Austria, Finland and Italy) involved in [the Enricher hubs project](#). As such, D2.2 focuses on recapping the current status quo of sustainable and responsible tourism within three EU countries by describing inspiring tourism best practices and the impact of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) on the tourism industry. In order to align itself with the other WP2 deliverable (D2.1 – Status quo and GAP analysis), the best practices will be defined in terms of the type of tourism, stakeholder involvement, and UNSDGs to be easily linked to the main practices as described in the target countries.

Thus, the aim of this report is to provide knowledge of the existing practices related to sustainable tourism in Europe and offer examples of the development of new, greener services in the tourism industry in Georgia and Moldova. Data for this report was collected from tourism companies in the Enricher hubs partner countries Italy, Austria, and Finland. These companies serve as forerunners of sustainability in the EU context, and their operations also address the identified gaps in Georgia and Moldova. Comparing practices and the main challenges in the partner countries will be addressed in the other WPs. In this best-practice report, the selected companies and organizations address many of the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) defined by the United Nations. Therefore, this report offers insights into service providers that are excellent examples of sustainability initiatives in Europe. Furthermore, it offers a baseline for the planning of trainings in the Enricher hubs project target countries of Georgia and Moldova.

The report first looks at what sustainability is in general and then continues the discussion from the tourism perspective. Furthermore, it addresses the possibilities and value of sustainability in tourism companies. After that, it offers European regional, and national level examples of sustainability practices, which aim to give an overview of how sustainability can be supported at the governmental level. The report ends with 10 examples of best practices in tourism, which are easy to understand and support the acknowledged analysis of sustainability gaps in Georgian and Moldovan tourism operations.

## 1.1. What is sustainability?

Sustainable development has been defined by the United Nations as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In 2015, the UN came up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals in its Agenda for Sustainable Development. The goals are an urgent call for action for all countries, cities, companies, and organizations around the world to solve the development challenges and be part of the solution. The SDGs define the global sustainable development priorities, e.g., to mitigate the effects of climate change, minimize the negative impacts, and maximize positive impacts. Countries are ranked based on their progress in meeting their goals (Sustainable Development Report 2024) and many companies have singled out a few goals that they work for. That way, they can be part of the UN call to achieve “peace and prosperity for people and planet, now and into the future”. (UNDESA s.a.)

Sustainability is often defined with three levels: economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Economic sustainability has to do with economic growth and regional development, profitable businesses, jobs and employment. Environmental sustainability refers to mitigating climate change and loss of biodiversity, becoming aware of the carbon and material footprints of operations, becoming nature-positive and carbon-neutral as

well as improving infrastructure and rehabilitating historic sites. Usually, interest in sustainability starts with addressing the environmental aspects of business. Social sustainability has risen in prominence in recent years, with companies around the world taking stands on a wide range of issues relating to diversity, equality, and inclusivity, as well as becoming stewards of local culture and customs, taking care of their employees and their wellbeing. Companies that take sustainability in earnest are delivering on all three fronts.

## 1.2. What is sustainability in tourism?

Travel and tourism have been accused of contributing to climate change and loss of biodiversity, using great amounts of energy and water as well as generating waste and pollution, or commercialization of culture and loss of authenticity, as well as offering jobs with low pay, long hours and bad working conditions. These are examples of the negative impacts of tourism, but there are also many positive ones: The tourism industry contributes a lot to the economies of destinations around the world, and it also has the potential to do good for the culture and society as well as the environments it touches. Tourism service providers need to become aware of ways to contribute, have positive impacts, and be a force of good.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable development in tourism as *"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities"*. From the definition, it becomes evident that there are many stakeholders in tourism and their needs should be addressed, while seeking a balance between the three dimensions of sustainability.

Economic sustainability in tourism refers to generating profitable businesses, quality jobs, and increased income for destinations. Environmental sustainability is all about becoming aware of the importance of conserving and taking care of the local environment, engaging with environmental programs and volunteering, restoring old buildings, and taking part in carbon offsetting programs or herding sheep to maintain traditional landscapes. Social sustainability can be about many great things, e.g., revitalizing local traditions and festivals, increasing pride in local handicrafts and ways of life, taking care of employee wellbeing, and taking part in international efforts to end human trafficking and sex tourism.

There are many ways companies can tackle sustainability. This best practice report collects examples from three EU countries—Austria, Finland, and Italy—that can inspire businesses in the Enricher hubs project's target countries to find ways to address sustainability issues in their own operations.

## 1.3. Why should tourism companies implement sustainability actions in their operations?

The main reason why companies should take sustainability seriously is the fact that customers demand action from companies. People want to contribute to sustainability even in their leisure time, and thus, companies in the Experience Economy should follow the principles of sustainable development to become and remain attractive to the sustainability-conscious clientele. The pressure to be sustainable comes from the customer side. Also, the legislation encourages sustainability practices, e.g., the so-called EU Greenwashing Directive (European Parliament 19.9.2023), which aims to put a stop to false sustainability claims made by companies. Generation Z (those born around 1996-2010), especially, does not trust companies' sustainability claims. They are the most

sustainability-conscious generation and are ready to stop buying from brands that are not sustainable (McKinsey & Company, 20.3.2023).

According to Euromonitor (2023) and Booking.com (2024), most consumers continue to take positive environmental actions but have increasingly started to demand that companies do their share and disclose openly what they are doing on the sustainability front. That is why communicating about sustainability and being transparent about sustainability deeds is important. With the following best practice examples, we hope to share inspiring ways to embark on a more sustainable tourism path!

#### 1.4. Examples of national or regional programs enhancing sustainable tourism

In the following section, all three European partner countries and their national and regional tourism policy structures will be explained more in detail. All three European countries are ranked in the Top 20, Finland being the No. 1 with a score of 86.35 points in the Sustainable Development Report (2024) followed by Austria in 6th (82.55) and Italy in 23rd place (79.29).

##### **Austria**

The legislative and executive competencies for tourism in Austria lie within the nine federal states. On the national level, the Ministry of Labour and Economy, together with the State Secretary for Tourism, is responsible for developing the industry further. This includes a national-wide strategy called "Plan T", which was published in 2019. It lays the guidelines for the sustainable development of the industry, serves as a baseline for all political decisions, and includes an action plan with concrete measures and activities. The plan is based on a culture of cooperation and tries to achieve a new quality of tourism policy.

On the regional level, Tirol is the leading federal state when it comes to the share of overnights and turnover. Tirol has one of the oldest tourism laws. The Tyrolean Tourism Act was introduced in 1911, and important amendments were made in 1932. Further, guiding principles were introduced with the Tyrolean Tourism Concepts I in 1972 and the second version in 1982. Further strategies followed in 1991 with a clear prioritization of quality over quantity. The latest version of the tourism strategy is called "The Tyrolean Way" and has led to a change in tourism laws. The strategy is based on the triple bottom line and, for the first time, tries to include also social and ecological aspects into the monitoring and, thus, the question of how we measure success in tourism. From a historical rather one-dimensional consideration of economic success factors such as overnight stays, arrivals, duration of stay, occupancy rates, seasonality or touristic turnover, also aspects like tourism awareness of local people, the attractiveness of the sector for staff, greenhouse gas emissions, (waste) water and waste management, land use, or accessibility need to be considered. Besides this newly installed multi-dimensional monitoring approach, sustainability managers are introduced in each of the 34 regional DMOs (destination management organizations). They are responsible for the introduction of regional strategies on how to implement the Tyrolean Way in their region and to yearly monitor the whole development process. Sustainability managers must complete a general training program on sustainability and specifically for the tourism industry. This course took place at the beginning of 2024 for the first time, and participants thus became „Certified Sustainability Experts in Tourism“. Some destinations have already successfully initiated their own path towards more sustainability. The region of Seefeld, for example, is the first destination to receive the [Austrian Eco-Label "Österreichisches Umweltzeichen"](#). The destinations of Kaunertal and St. Anton have become UN Tourism Best Villages in 2021 and 2023. While these are all just first steps on

the never-ending path of becoming a more sustainable tourism destination and a pioneer in this field, there is still a long way to go and issues to address.

## Finland

The sustainability perspective in Finland is regarded as essential given that Finland's parliament has accepted the country's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2035 in their climate and energy plan (Käyhkö, 2023; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2022a). Aiming to accomplish the goal fifteen years ahead of the EU, Finland is among the first welfare states in the world to address the call (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2022a). The strong bonds that Finns have with nature, which they view as an essential source of wellbeing, lend credence to the sustainability concept. Business operations are also encouraged to respect the environment, and the nation's sustainability is further emphasized by the environmental regulations that are already in place (Sorakunnas et al., 2024).

Finland's goal is to be the most sustainable travel destination in the Nordics by 2028 (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2022b). Thus, in terms of sustainable tourism, tourism companies are highly encouraged to implement sustainable measures by Visit Finland, the National Tourism Bureau. In 2019, [Visit Finland established the Sustainable Travel Finland project \(STF\)](#) to achieve this objective and establish a new, sustainable standard for the country's tourism industry. This project promotes the sustainability of tourism-related enterprises and destinations by offering free educational programs, web-based resources, and educational materials. The tool gives the user access to an organized, seven-step approach for developing a sustainable tourism industry. Each phase is accompanied by criteria that meet international standards. After completing the training and development path of STF, the program offers a certification system for tourism businesses and destinations, enabling them to voluntarily commit to enhancing their sustainability and informing foreign visitors about the sustainability practices and actions of tourism businesses and destinations.

The Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) initiative offers a helpful guide to achieving sustainability. It covers general sustainability concepts, standards, specific measurements, guidance, and evaluation methods. These resources assist tourism operators in identifying and implementing sustainable practices into their everyday operations. After completing the program, participants get incentives from Visit Finland for marketing, as well as the Sustainable Travel Finland accreditation. Regular updates are also made to the STF program's set of criteria, ensuring that tourist operators' operations comply with the program's more stringent sustainability requirements. (Business Finland, 2024)

Sorakunnas et al. (2024) note that Visit Finland demonstrated proactive leadership in promoting sustainability within the Finnish tourism industry by initiating the Sustainable Travel Finland program. Giving the industry a dependable and practical sustainability program was intended to support Visit Finland in implementing its new sustainability strategy and achieving its objective of Finland becoming the most sustainable destination in the Nordic area. The STF program was implemented as a preventative measure to address the detrimental ecological, social, and cultural effects of the business. With a focus on sustainability as a crucial element that increases the resilience and competitiveness of enterprises, tourism destinations, and the tourism sector, the program was specifically designed to meet Finland's unique requirements and demands as a tourism destination. The primary factors that support STF are, therefore, the National Tourism Bureau's supportive actions, which provide self-evaluation tools, online guides, and sustainability training to assist tourism businesses with their sustainable procedures (Sorakunnas et al., 2024). The tourism industry operators have welcomed the program and felt that the



actions inspire, uplift, and encourage the companies. It highlights the value of STF as a flexible framework and training program that relies on participants' self-imposed sustainability efforts, voluntary skill development, commitment, and introspection (Sorakunnas et al., 2024).

## Italy

In 2022, tourism-related activities accounted for about 10% of the overall Italian GDP, making it one of the main local industries and justifying specific investments for both central and local governments. Within the Italian framework, the promotion of best-practices in Tourism has often been linked to the activity of [ENIT](#), a public owned promotion agency having the aim of support the Italian tourism in its different structure and development phases. Starting from 2014, Sustainable Tourism also fell under its mandate.

Together with ENIT, in 2021 Italy re-established a [Ministry for Tourism](#) with the aim of streamlining the planning of tourism related investments, to simplify the regulation applicable to tourism and to coordinate promotion efforts on international markets. Since its establishment, the Ministry has tried to coordinate policies connected to local tourism and to create a branding strategy targeting foreign markets, mainly for mass-tourism. In alignment with such aim, a [new online portal](#) for the promotion of best practices in tourism has been created.

Despite the existence of the Central Ministry for Tourism, Italy's 20 regions have significant autonomy in managing tourism within their territories. Each region has its own local directorate for tourism development that can enact its own laws and regulations tailored to local needs and characteristics, allowing for diverse and specialized tourism offerings. Moreover, municipalities and provinces also have responsibilities in tourism development, including infrastructure, local promotions, and ensuring compliance with national and regional regulations. Local authorities are thus the ones in charge of the promotion of local sustainable tourism practices, within the regional and national frameworks. "Pro-locos" (i.e. local associations of tourism operators and municipal authorities) and local tourism offices are delocalised entities having a crucial role in the establishing of events, managing of resources, and in destination marketing activities. Within this framework, a mixed approach of both local, regional, and national policies generates a heterogenous group of decision makers, each of them having a specific objective. Such organisation was justified by a delay in terms of investments in respect with main competitors, that saw a decrease of attractivity of Italian destinations. Moreover, while traditional Italian tourism was mainly linked to specific (seasonal) activities (i.e. school holidays, skiing, beach, cultural cities), the new three level approach allowed local authorities to pursue a more balanced approach to tourism, thus de-stagionilising the whole industry while leveraging on local characteristics (e.g. wine season, hiking, health and wellness).

Concerning specific tourism patterns, it is interesting that every Italian region (and province) has its own tourism strategic plan – often considering accessibility and tourism as well, as part of the law requirements – with specific local specializations, even within the same region (e.g. Wine&Food related tourism for Cune province vs cultural tourism for Turin).

In terms of regulation, key laws date back 2011 (e.g. Id 79 and 23 of 2011) and only their application at regional level saw major updates. Despite this, with the creation of the new Ministry in 2021, a series of special boards (e.g., for Accessible Tourism) have been also created in order to deliver guidelines and strategic plans to be applied at local level. In respect with sustainability, the main one is the [Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism](#)

2023-2027 aiming at establishing a cooperation framework among the different local authorities involved as well as providing the needed resources for the introduction of new technologies (e.g. Augmented Reality, digitalization, green mobility) for promoting sustainable, inclusive, and responsible tourism. Among the main hard investments foreseen by the Plan, the maintenance of heritage sites and the introduction of new carbon-free and cultural acceptable mobility solutions. The plan also established relevant updates in the monitoring of the quality of service as well as on key professional profiles (and related training) in order to facilitate the creation of specific education paths able to further boost sustainable tourism solutions and local development.

Among the new quality assurance activities, a series of new certifications (and related standards) are planned to be established, particularly in responsible tourism. Within this framework, the Ministry has also foreseen the possibility to enhance the current offer of tertiary education courses for aligning competences to new industry and regional needs. Within this framework, Italian associations currently offer a “flag-system” for establishing best practices: for instance, the “Blue Flag beaches” are those that have been awarded a special recognition by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) as part of the environmental standard monitoring activity for the quality of water at sea, lakes, marinas, and other water-related environments.

Eventually, in Italy all regions need to align local tourism plans with climate and social related regulation, thus assuring consistency between the industry planning and other regional priorities.

## 2. Best Practice Collection

For this report, 10 best practices have been collected considering the characteristics of tourism in the target countries as highlighted in D2.1. All best practices are linked to UNSDGs to see how well they address the overall sustainability goals. As such, the working group of task 2.2 decided to develop an interview scheme and to approach potential best practices, categorizing them in respect with:

- Stakeholders' engagement
- Type of Tourism
- (UN)SDGs involved in the best practice

To be useful for the development of tourism in the target countries of Enricher hubs project, all best practices are linked to the type of businesses and tourism attractions that are common in the target countries of Georgia and Moldova. As such, sustainable exploitation of natural resources (e.g. olive oil for Italy vs. winery for the target countries), ad-hoc activities exploiting new sustainability values (e.g. sustainable hotel in Austria), and events (e.g. Finnish case studies) are used as ways to both describe best practices as well as to provide valuable examples for future exploitation.

### 2.1. Matching best-practices and Tourism Industries

University responsible	Country	HH	HH	HH	MCI	MCI	MCI	MCI	UNIGE	UNIGE	UNIGE
		Finland	Finland	Finland	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria	Italy	Italy	Italy
Best practice		Åksyt ämmät	Flow Festival	Restaurant Nolla	School of the Alpine Pasture	Kaunertal	Vollpension	Boutiquehotel Stadthalle	L'adagio	AISM - II Girasole	EWB
Thematic Field		Adventure tourism Events & festivals Food & wine Rural tourism Health and beauty	Festival and Events	Restaurant	Rural tourism Food & wine Health	Adventure tourism Events & festivals Rural tourism Health and beauty	Food & wine	Events & festivals Food & wine Health and beauty City tourism	Events & festivals Food & wine Health and beauty	Food & wine Rural tourism	Adventure tourism Events & festivals Summer and Winter Tourism

Concerning the overall best practices background, 3 best practices come from Finland and Italy, 4 from Austria. Most of the best practices are related with experience relation activities (e.g., Flow Festival, School of Alpine Pasture, L'Adagio) and food related experiences (e.g., Il Girasole, Nolla restaurant).

### 2.2. Matching best-practices and SDGs

Country University responsible Best Practice	Matches with SDG			Does not match with the SDG							
	Finland	Finland	Finland	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy
	HH	HH	HH	MCI	MCI	MCI	MCI	UNIGE	UNIGE	UNIGE	UNIGE
	Åksyt ämmät	Flow Festival	Restaurant Nolla	School of the Alpine Pasture	Kaunertal	Vollpension	Boutiquehotel Stadthalle	L'adagio	AISM - II Girasole	EWB	EWB
SDG1. No poverty											
SDG2. Zero hunger											
SDG3. Good health and well-being											
SDG4. Quality education											
SDG5. Gender equality											
SDG6. Clean water & sanitation											
SDG7. Affordable & clean energy											
SDG8. Decent work & economic growth											
SDG9. Industry, innovation & economic growth											
SDG10. Reduced inequalities											
SDG11. Sustainable cities & communities											
SDG12. Responsible consumption and production											
SDG13. Climate action											
SDG14. Life below water											
SDG15. Life on land											
SDG16. Peace & Justice											
SDG17. Partnerships for the goals											

## 2.3. Best practice example 1: School of the Alpine Pasture

Best Practice	
School of the Alpine Pasture	
Company / Organization	Country
School of the Alpine Pasture	Austria
Website	
<a href="https://www.schulederalm.at/">https://www.schulederalm.at/</a>	
Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• DMO</li> <li>• Guests &amp; Locals</li> </ul>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Food &amp; wine</li> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>The project 'Schule der Alm' is a non-profit association that has set itself the goal of preserving the mountain meadows in the Vals valley and thus protecting the valley from natural hazards through volunteer work during holidays. During a four-day working holiday, the participants of the School of the Alpine Pasture learn a lot about nature conservation, landscapes, mountain meadows, flora and fauna and also lend a hand themselves. Activities include mowing with a scythe, building dry stone walls and sloping fences, caring for waterways and herding goats.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
<p>There are 87 protected areas in the Austrian province of Tyrol with a total of 3,413 km<sup>2</sup>. This means that 27% of the province's area is protected.</p> <p>In 2020, a total of 14,215 farms existed in Tyrol. However, this number has been decreasing over the past decades.</p> <p>The total area of all agricultural and forestry holidays includes 937,000 ha of land, thereof three quarters cultivated areas for agriculture (24%) and forestry (50%).</p> <p>Nearly 400 volunteers participated in the School of the Alpine Pastures project so far.</p>	
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)	
<p><b>SDG 2</b> Zero hunger</p> <p><b>SDG 3</b> Good health and well-being</p> <p><b>SDG 4</b> Quality education</p> <p><b>SDG 5</b> Gender equality</p> <p><b>SDG 12</b> Responsible consumption and production</p> <p><b>SDG 13</b> Climate action</p> <p><b>SDG 15</b> Life on land</p> <p><b>SDG 17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>	
How does the organisation fulfil the SDGs?	
<p>The following project aligns with <b>SDG 2</b> – zero hunger and <b>SDG 12</b> – responsible production as it supports a local goat keeper and dairymaid in the production of local and sustainable food production and at the same time serves as an example for female pastoralists in European mountains discussing gender challenges and serving as a role model for many others (<b>SDG5</b>). Participants on the other hand learn a lot about alpine pastures, small-scaled alpine agriculture, but also about climate protection, and</p>	

natural cycles and interrelationships. With the integration of experts in cultural heritage, local crafts, herbs, beekeepers and butterflies, they learn a lot about alpine peculiarities in both flora and fauna (**SDG4**). This also helps to reflect participants' own consumption (**SDG 12**). Through hard voluntary work, feedback from participants shows that they train both their physical and mental health (**SDG3**) while at the same time doing something good for nature. Participants together with local people actively implement actions for the climate and improve the quality of life on land for both fauna and flora (**SDG 13 & 15**). By working closely together with the local people they experience authentic relationships with locals as well as like-minded people who are willing to work together for a necessary change in society (**SDG17**).

#### Detailed description of the best practice

The School of Alpine Pastures is an association of like-minded people wanting to preserve the local agricultural traditions of a non-tourism-intense region in Tyrol, Austria. The entrepreneur started reviving the family business of goat farming and traditional alpine agriculture in the Vals Valley in Tyrol. However, the labor-intensive practices required her to think about a business model that would allow the traditional practice to thrive while decreasing her workload. She founded the non-profit association "School of Alpine Pastures" with a partner to bring this business idea to life. The project aims at preserving both the traditional farming and craftsmanship and alpine mountain meadows, which can only be mown by hand and are thus very labor- and time-intensive.

The association's mission is to educate volunteers and guests about traditional agricultural practices; and, to preserve alpine pastures and mountain meadows in the Vals Valley (Tyrol, Austria). To do so, the School of Alpine Pastures organizes three to four four-day courses during summer to find and encourage volunteers for this work while, at the same time, educating them and raising awareness for the unique characteristics of these alpine landscapes and the people living in and from these landscapes. The three central building blocks of the School of Alpine Pastures include local instructors from nearby valleys form the backbone of the association (e.g. farmers, herb specialists, beekeepers, protected area officers, etc.). The courses include an introduction to traditional alpine agriculture and landscapes: its peculiarities, information on local flora and fauna with a particular focus on mountain herbs and flowers, as well as old techniques like scything, building dry stone walls, special traditional fencing, and irrigation systems. This hands-on approach aims to pass on knowledge and to give volunteers another layer of exploring the alps, compared to conventional travel approaches.

#### Results and impact of the best practice

The outcomes are beneficial for the region and participants. First, voluntary work in the summer courses contributes to the maintenance of the alpine pasture and cultural landscape of the Alps. It sustains the protection against natural hazards, erosion, and scrub encroachment while simultaneously carrying on the legacy of alpine traditions and knowledge about these landscapes' historical and cultural heritage. It offers participants an authentic experience in the alpine ecosystem. Course fees, membership fees, and donations finance the association. The project shows how agriculture, tourism, and education can actively work together to preserve local knowledge and crafts in the Alps and prevent the extinction of traditional agricultural practices by creating an innovative approach to combining tourism and agriculture. The courses have been so successful, that in addition to these basic courses, volunteer assignments are now also offered in the neighbouring side valleys of Gschnitztal and Obernbergertal, an herbal course in Schmirntal and a mountain forest course in Vals. This creates a win-win situation in which guests can enjoy a meaningful holiday, get to

know the local alpine culture and work directly with the locals, while the mountain pastures and the ancient rural cultural heritage can be preserved.

#### Recommendations for replication

The project lives from the people behind the association. Without their personal effort, this project would no longer work. Various challenges were met by establishing a new generation of decision makers forming a completely new board of association in 2021. This guaranteed the continued existence of the association and its activities. Within this process, the cooperation with MCI master students in the course “Business plan” helped the association to better understand their strengths and to further develop their offer. Also, the strong cooperation with other local stakeholders like the destination marketing association, the protected area management or the mountaineering villages are crucial components for the success of the project.

#### Acknowledgments

Presentation at the Agritourism Conference 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAOCGMaVCgQ>

MCI student project 2021 <https://www.mci4me.at/en/news-filter/90-community-projects/1525-schule-der-alm>

<https://www.mci.edu/en/news-filter-en/295-studyprogram-news/news-entrepreneurship-tourism-leisure-business/3605-school-of-the-alm>

Destination website: <https://www.wipptal.at/schule-der-alm>

Presentation by the entrepreneur at the Consultation Day under the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2024

<http://www.carpathianconvention.org/2024/03/14/pastoralist-women-in-european-mountain-areas-discuss-navigating-environmental-and-gender-challenges/>

## 2.4. Best practice example 2: Accessibility in Kaunertal Valley

Best Practice	
Accessibility in Kaunertal Valley	
Company / Organization	Country
Tourism association Kaunertal	Austria
Website	
<a href="https://www.kaunertal.com/en/Your-kaunertal/Accessible">https://www.kaunertal.com/en/Your-kaunertal/Accessible</a>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure tourism</li> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Health and beauty</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>The number of people with limited mobility is greater than expected. In addition to older people, this also includes families with small children and pushchairs as well as physically impaired people. Besides guests, the infrastructure can also be used by locals and staff. For years, the Kaunertal has been expanding the barrier-free offer for its guests in order to make mountain mobility possible for everyone in the nature park and glacier region. Under the motto ‘In Kaunertal, holidaymakers of all ages can breathe in the mountain air without restrictions’, the topic of accessibility has been</p>	

implemented in great detail since the 1980s. From the café to the glacier lifts, to the church, many leisure and mobility facilities as well as public facilities in the Kaunertal have been made accessible and the region has become known not only as a ski resort, but also as a year-round pioneering destination for people with different needs.

### Main facts and figures

- Around 16% of the world-wide population and thus 1.3 billion people experience significant disability (WHO, 2023)
- Amongst people over 60 years of age, this number rises up to almost 50% (UNDESA, 2022)
- Travellers with disabilities are on average accompanied by 2-3 people (Bowtell, 2015). In the case of Hotel Weisseespitze in Kaunertal every wheelchair user brings 4 more people with them.
- Two thirds of people with disabilities from developed economies have the means to travel (Bowtell, 2015)
- 64% of German visitors to Austria in 2022 were concerned about the social compatibility of their trip.
- 1 million people in Austria have limited mobility, 0.5 % of the population is in a wheelchair.
- On average, wheelchair users bring 4 other people with them to the Hotel Weisseespitze in Kaunertal.

### Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)

**SDG 10** Reduced inequalities

**SDG 11** Sustainable cities and communities

**SDG 17** Partnerships for the goals

### How does the destination fulfil the SDGs?

Worldwide, 80% of people with disabilities live in poverty. It is important for inclusive development to recognise that people with disabilities are equal and self-determined members of society. The Kaunertal actively addresses the topic of limited mobility and thus explicitly addresses **SDG 10**. This goal aims for the self-determination and social, economic and political inclusion of people regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

**SDG 11** comprises the inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable design of cities and global human settlements by the year 2030. It aims at the inclusion of particularly vulnerable people and thus includes the barrier-free design of public transport, public buildings and squares. Kaunertal helps by providing inclusive communities and spaces for locals, guests and staff in rural areas.

In accordance with 'leave no one behind', it must be ensured that funds are also used for people with disabilities when mobilising public and private funds. This is an essential part of inclusive development cooperation and financing in **SDG 17**. Kaunertal serves as a best practice example of how both products and services are developed with this holistic perspective.

### Detailed description of the best practice

The history of barrier-free tourism in the Kaunertal began with the opening of the Kaunertal Glacier in the early 1980s. This offered wheelchair users and other guests the unique opportunity to reach the ski slopes directly by car up to an altitude of 2,750 metres. Wide slopes and extensive drag lifts created ideal conditions for learning to monoski. The first hotel, which specialised in barrier-free accommodation was Hotel Weisseespitze. The hotel provided barrier-free car parks, a lift and larger rooms and especially designed bathrooms. Therefore, the Kaunertal became a magnet for monoskiers from all over Europe in the 1990s. The current entrepreneur took over the

hotel in 1989 and recognised the needs of the guests at a time when the "fair hotel industry was still a relatively weak offer". In 2000 the hotel became the first "wheelchair hotel" in the Alps, which includes a barrier-free sauna and wellness area. Today, the hotel offers products also for people with other disabilities and is first and foremost still a normal 4-star hotel, but "barrier-free without compromise". This means that around a third of the rooms are adapted for wheelchair users.

Many other hosts and decision-makers in the region have followed the example of this hotel, seeking advice from the entrepreneur and his family for making their facilities just as accessible. Together with the 'Humana Raetica' platform, further accommodation was identified and certified that is completely barrier-free or wheelchair-friendly as part of an Interreg project between Austria, Italy and Switzerland and the RegioL project. The establishments are inspected by a specialized jury. In addition to certified accommodation, accessible activities and excursion destinations are offered in both summer and winter. These include, for example, the handicapped-accessible Drei-Länder-Blick viewing platform, the Kaunergrat Nature Park House on the Piller Sattel, which has won several awards, with the Gacher Blick nature and culture panorama viewing platform or the 700-metre-long, accessible larch wood footbridge on the Piller Moor. Free Swiss Tracs can be hired there; these are tractors for wheelchair users for steeper forest paths. They can also be used to tackle routes such as the path to the Gepatschhaus, the Falkaunsalm or the Aifneralm. We also offer the 'Bach am Moos' nature playground on the Sommerberg Fendels for people with limited mobility as well as themed hiking trails adapted for wheelchair users and wheelchair-accessible car parks.

The annual handbike race in June on the Kaunertal Glacier Road is an absolute highlight. Last summer it took place for the 9th time. Participants overcome almost 900 metres in altitude over 20 km from the toll station to the Ochsenalm valley station. This race is an emotional highlight every year.

The Kaunertal Glacier provides car parks for monoskiers and people with disabilities directly on the slope and is recognised as a monoskiing area by the province of Tyrol and offers its own courses for this purpose. All lifts are accessible at ground level and staff are specially trained in accessibility. In addition, the Weisse restaurant is also easily accessible by lift. In addition to amateur athletes, also professional racers regularly train on the glacier for their competitions. Cross-country skiers are also catered for with four certified barrier-free trails in the valley area. You can hire your own cross-country sledges for this purpose.

### Results and impact of the best practice

With his concept of offering "people with disabilities a completely normal holiday" the entrepreneur can be considered as a pioneer in this field. In 2013, the Kaunertal was honoured with the EDEN Award (European Destinations of Excellence) and the Tirol Touristika for its accessibility. This was followed by the title in the TOP 5 Alpine Destinations at the ALPS Award, the Tourism for All award as competition winner in Tyrol and 2nd place worldwide in terms of accessibility at the World Responsible Tourism Award.

While the Kaunertal became a pioneer for barrier-free tourism services, the region also recognized the need for ecological sustainability. In 2017, the Kaunertal became one of the first regions of its kind in Austria as a climate change adaptation model region (KLAR!) Kaunergrat and also a pilot region of the 'Clean Alpine Region' project in 2020. In 2021, the Kaunertal was recognised for its sustainable development, the first



Austrian tourism region to be recognised by UN Tourism as the 'Best Tourism Village' award.

### Recommendations for replication

Sustainable innovations like those ones needs single pioneers, who believe in something and manage to think out of the box making the impossible possible. Similar to other projects however, the cooperation behind partners is crucial to bring single initiatives such as the one at Hotel Weisseespite to a broader level and making it possible to extend the idea to the whole destination. Active stakeholder involvement is thus crucial to develop barrier-free products and services and train staff accordingly. Only by making accessibility a top priority, a destination can reach this goal. This includes the necessary funding for infrastructure development and (awareness) training. Also, UNWTO provides recommendations for accommodations, F&B, MICE companies, cultural tourism, and managers of natural resources, governments and destinations. For further details have a look at ISO Standard 21902:2021.

### Acknowledgments

Kaunertal website <https://www.kaunertal.com/en/Your-kaunertal/Accessible>  
 UN Tourism Best Village Kaunertal <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages/kaunertal/>  
 Video Barrier-free Kaunertal <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybo306ekNTw&t=59s>  
 Video Natural Monument Piller Moor in the Nature Park Kaunergrat <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSbzzDABJLQ&t=2s>  
 Video Handbike battle Kaunertal [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RYrAYQdT\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RYrAYQdT_Y)  
 Accessibility in Tirol <https://www.tyrol.com/things-to-do/barrier-free/adaptive-nordic-skiing-kaunertal>  
 UNWTO Accessibility <https://www.unwto.org/accessibility>  
 UNWTO Tourism for All Good Practices 2016 <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284418138>  
 Accessible destinations <https://disabledaccessibletravel.com/accessible-destinations/>  
 Further destination examples: <https://www.sevencorners.com/blog/travel-destinations/popular-accessible-travel-destinations>

### Photos



Source: TVB-Tiroler-Oberland

## 2.5. Best practice example 3: Boutiquehotel Stadthalle

Best Practice	
First SDG hotel	
Company / Organization	Country
Boutiquehotel Stadthalle in Vienna	Austria
Website	
<a href="https://www.hotelstadthalle.at/index-en.html">https://www.hotelstadthalle.at/index-en.html</a>	
Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice	
Accommodation	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Food &amp; wine</li> <li>• Health and beauty</li> <li>• City tourism</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>The Boutiquehotel Stadthalle used to be an ordinary city hotel in Vienna. When the current owner-CEO took over in 2001, she had the vision of creating a sustainable hotel concept following Gandhi's quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world". At that time sustainability was not a buzzword and hardly any other Austrian hotels had this focus. Boutiquehotel Stadthalle in the early 2000s was the first hotel with a solar energy installation in Vienna. After some years already, it became the first urban Net Zero Energy hotel. With a big portion of optimism, teamwork, passion for innovation and assertiveness, the owner-CEO was able to look at the bigger picture and convert the accommodation business into the first SDG hotel.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability is a booking-relevant factor for around two thirds of Austrian tourists when travelling.</li> <li>• In the indicator for sustainable development goals, Austria is in 5th place worldwide.</li> <li>• 21,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> are saved in all rooms by dispensing with minibars annually.</li> <li>• Around 60-70% of hotel guests book the accommodation because of its sustainability efforts. This includes clientele of all ages.</li> </ul>	
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)	
<p><b>SDG1</b> No poverty  <b>SDG2</b> Zero hunger  <b>SDG3</b> Good health and well-being  <b>SDG4</b> Quality education  <b>SDG5</b> Gender equality  <b>SDG6</b> Clean water and sanitation  <b>SDG7</b> Affordable and clean energy  <b>SDG8</b> Decent work and economic growth  <b>SDG9</b> Industry, innovation and infrastructure  <b>SDG10</b> Reduced inequalities  <b>SDG11</b> Sustainable cities and communities  <b>SDG12</b> Responsible consumption and production  <b>SDG13</b> Climate action</p>	

<p><b>SDG14</b> Life below water</p> <p><b>SDG15</b> Life on land</p> <p><b>SDG16</b> Peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p><b>SDG17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>
<p><b>How does the company fulfil the SDGs?</b></p> <p>The hotel addresses <b>all 17 SDGs</b> by incorporating them into the strategy since 2020. Together with the social enterprise “garbarage”, 17 hotel rooms were transformed with upcycling furniture into SDG rooms. This includes self-made lamps from old objects like pasta strainers or meat grinders or a wardrobe made of an e-car charging station. Guests receive information about the specific SDG already at the entrance and can scan a QR code for more input. Also, employees were actively involved in this process by becoming ambassadors for one SDG. The hotel is currently working on ten more SDG rooms. The 17 SDGs thus serve as guiding principles for the hotel creating a high recognition value and comprehensibility for both guests and staff.</p>
<p><b>Detailed description of the best practice</b></p> <p>Boutiquehotel Stadthalle is a small hotel in the city center of Vienna. Already the current owner’s mother received an ecolabel for the hotel. At that time, it was the second hotel in all of Vienna to receive this award. When the current owner took over the hotel from her parents in 2001, the 140-year-old house was renovated and enlarged in 2009 by building a passive house. This received a groundwater heat pump, PV system and thermal solar panels. Through these measurements, the hotel produces its own electricity and hot water. A further reduction of water and energy consumption was achieved by the introduction of LED lights, eco shower heads and the installation of rainwater harvesting facilities to use rainwater for flushing toilets. Dispensing with minibars in hotel rooms saves a further 21,024 kg CO2 per year. 100% of trash is separated in the hotel. All coffee purchased for the hotel is shipped by sailing boats instead of oil vessels. The roof top of the hotel was transformed into a refuge for bees and butterflies. The interior courtyard garden serves as a green oasis in the city center of Vienna. Guest arriving with public transportation or bike receive a 10% discount. The hotel describes itself as queer-friendly offering a list of restaurants, bars, clubs and shopping facilities for the LGBTIQ visitors and most facilities are barrier-free. Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered with organic and regional products. Food waste is prevented wherever possible applying the “first in first out” system.</p> <p>At an early stage during the “sustainability Stone Age”, the owner received a lot of skepticism and derogatory comments for her initiatives. She, however, followed her vision and unconventional thinking, even though it was often a difficult path. By learning from her own mistakes and letting staff do so as well, the hotel became a pioneer for a sustainable hotel concept. Employees are actively involved in the transformation of the hotel and can contribute to the success of the business concept with their own ideas. The hotel thus succeeded in addressing all 17 SDGs by paying special attention to the environment, the use of natural resources, and improving both the guest and staff experience in her hotel.</p>
<p><b>Results and impact of the best practice</b></p> <p>The owner-CEO is often referred to as the “green queen from Vienna”. For all her long-term efforts, she has won various prizes and awards and serves as a role model for sustainable accommodation concepts and the active integration and communication of the 17 SDGs in the tourism industry.</p> <p>→ 2024 certificate for sustainable business management and corporate responsibility</p>

- 2022 The Austrian Republic's Golden Medal of Honor for services to Austrian tourism
- 2021 SSDG Award of the Senat der Wirtschaft (Senate of Commerce)
- 2021 SME Enterprize Award Austria
- 2018 Brand Award
- 2015 The Austrian Republic's Silver Badge of Honor for the Boutiquehotel Stadthalle's outstanding efforts toward sustainable tourism
- 2011 Sterne Award of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce (WKO) in the category „Sustainability“
- 2010 Austrian Climate Protection Prize by ORF (Austrian radio & television broadcaster)
- 2010 Hotelière of the Year
- 2009 City of Vienna Environmental Prize
- 2009 National Prize for tourism

The owner-CEO is not only focused on her own business. She also helps others on their path towards a more sustainable company or organisation within, but also outside the tourism industry. She helped e.g. to set up a Green Community for Vienna connecting young and idealistic entrepreneurs of small, sustainable companies.

#### Recommendations for replication

In her long experience of running a sustainable enterprise, the owner had to learn from her own mistakes and especially by those of others. She realized that it is okay to feel uncertain. And as a tourism entrepreneur, she managed to make the impossible possible. According to her experience, taking the first step is the most difficult. But considering sustainability as a life-long journey rather than a destination, is her advice for other entrepreneurs who want to follow her example. The hotel promotes equality, fair pay and professions development for all staff members and therefore succeeded in building up a loyal and satisfied workforce. Happy staff are the basis for also happy guests thus resulting in good online rankings, reviews and recommendations.

#### Acknowledgments

Climate protection in the hotel kitchen

<https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/tourism/sustainable-tourism/klimaschutz-in-der-hotelk%C3%BCche/>

Podcast: May I Speak to the Manager please, Boutiquehotel Stadthalle, Vienna

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/QjNh8leqqGNuNlrWGeriqw>

#### Photos



## 2.6. Best practice example 4: Fighting old-age poverty

Best Practice	
Fighting old-age poverty	
Company / Organization	Country
Cross-generational coffeehouse "Vollpension"	Austria
Website	
<a href="https://www.vollpension.wien/en/welcome/">https://www.vollpension.wien/en/welcome/</a>	
Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice	
Cross-generational gastronomy concept	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food &amp; wine</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>The idea of "Vollpension" was started out by an emotional memory of grandmas by the founders. Realizing that there is a gap in the market, they wanted to create a coffee shop for grandma-missing youngsters in the city of Vienna. The social enterprise consists of two cafés and a digital as well as an offline baking school in Vienna and provides a space for people to gather, laugh and spend time together across all generations. Vollpension offers a possibility for retired people with small pensions to earn some extra money and thus fight old-age poverty but also stay connected with society and fight loneliness in older age.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2020, 118.000 retired people lived by themselves in Vienna.</li> <li>Due to the demographic change, the age group of the over 65s in Austria is estimated to reach 28 % in 2050, which is an increase of 8 % points compared to 2022.</li> <li>In Austria, only 36 % of very old senior citizens maintain contact with more than 6 people outside their family.</li> <li>Half of the Vollpension full-board team is over 60 years old.</li> <li>The initiative has increased the disposable income of the employees by an average of 40%.</li> </ul>	
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)	
<p><b>SDG 1</b> No poverty  <b>SDG 3</b> Good health and well-being  <b>SDG 8</b> Decent work and economic growth  <b>SDG 9</b> Industry, innovation and infrastructure  <b>SDG 10</b> Reduced inequalities  <b>SDG 17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>	
How does the company fulfil the SDGs?	
<p>Old-age poverty and loneliness is a widespread problem that affects many senior citizens, especially pensioners, and often leads to social isolation. Limited incomes make it even more difficult for retirees to participate in social activities, and in urban areas, the lack of meeting places for young and old can contribute to stigmatisation. The Vollpension Generationencafé goes beyond the traditional role of a coffee house and focuses on the difficulties faced by people in old age, thus addressing <b>SDG1</b>. In addition to offering delicious pastries and coffee, the Vollpension also sees itself as a genuine</p>	

meeting place for generations. The underlying philosophy is clear: to combat loneliness in old age through active participation (SDG3). Another goal is to replace old-age poverty with meaningful activity (SDG1), to develop a possibility for decent work opportunities also at an older age, (SDG8), to create an infrastructure for generations to meet and connect with each other (SDG 9), to promote a constant dialogue between the generations and thus to create more understanding for each other (SDG17). This helps to reduce inequalities connected to both differences in age and social status (SDG 10).

#### Detailed description of the best practice

The founders succeeded in combining the value of multiple generations living with the simple concept of a coffee house. With the opening of the first Vollpension café pop-up - a concept for all ages - in 2012, they managed to address various challenges of today's society. Today, the Vollpension Generationencafé has become a versatile centre with staff ranging from 17 to over 80, actively promoting interaction between generations and bridging the gap between old and young.

In 2014 a mobile VW bus was converted into a mobile coffeeshop and toured through Austria together with the Vienna Tourist Board. This rolling coffeeshop also led to a re-organisation of the team bringing new people into the management and the foundation of a private limited company. In 2015, the concept finally found a permanent home in the middle of Vienna through the support of various partners.

The Vollpension Generationencafé emphasises the importance of an infrastructure that welcomes all generations. To get a job at the Vollpension Generationencafé, you need a friendly smile and for some positions also a talent for baking as the only requirements to join this inclusive community initiative. Being so successful, the second Vollpension opened in 2019 at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. Over 350 seniors applied for a position in the newly created branch.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team came up with a new innovative idea of creating a bakery academy and starting a crowdfunding campaign. € 140,000 were raised through guests, friends and family. Older employees who were unable to meet physically used the digital platform to share their baking knowledge online. Furthermore, to-go services completed this difficult time of lockdowns. The success of this virtual academy prompted Vollpension Generationencafé to expand its programme. The creation of Vienna's first "grandma's baking school" not only teaches aspiring bakers classic treats, but also enables real-time interaction.


#### Results and impact of the best practice

The Vollpension Generationencafé tells stories not only through its cuisine, but through the lives it touches. It shows that a cup of coffee and a piece of cake - just like grandma's - can be powerful drivers of positive change. However, the concept was not always perceived as a positive initiative. The founders were confronted with various challenges. Despite all this headwind, the initial idea has become a sustainable gastro-social business. The initial pandemic idea turned into a world-wide movement of "Bake Against Poverty". Grandmas and grandpas from various countries were invited to apply as online baking teachers. Baking courses from New Zealand or Germany took place in the kitchens of baking students.

#### Recommendations for replication

Get in touch with Vollpension if you want to open a Generationencafé in your city!



Acknowledgments
Read more at: <a href="https://www.vollpension.wien/en/our-history/">https://www.vollpension.wien/en/our-history/</a> Video (in German only): <a href="https://vimeo.com/81219283">https://vimeo.com/81219283</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqI9QITuiwA&amp;t=6s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqI9QITuiwA&amp;t=6s</a>
Photos
 <p>Source: Vollpension</p>

## 2.7. Best practice example 5: Äksyt Ämmät

Best Practice	
Sustainable tourism service provider: Tour operator, accommodation provider, activity provider	
Company / Organization	Country
Äksyt Ämmät Oy, Green Finn Tour Operator	Finland
Website	
<a href="https://aksytammat.fi/en">https://aksytammat.fi/en</a>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure tourism</li> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Food &amp; wine</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Health and beauty</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>Äksyt Ämmät is a privately-owned Finnish tour operator and activity provider, which focuses on sustainability. They offer activities in North Karelia, Eastern Finland, to individual travellers and small groups, who wish to engage in authentic experiences with local service providers. On their tours, the customers stay in small, family-run guesthouses, eat in local restaurants, use local transport and guides. The target group is anyone who want to enjoy real Finnish way of life and pure nature. This aligns very well with the main target groups identified by Visit Finland.</p>	

Main facts and figures
The company was established in 1995 and is owned and operated by two female entrepreneurs. The turnover of the company was 275,000 euros in 2022.
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)
<p><b>SDG3</b> Good health and well-being</p> <p><b>SDG5</b> Gender equality</p> <p><b>SDG7</b> Affordable and clean energy</p> <p><b>SDG8</b> Decent work and economic growth</p> <p><b>SDG10</b> Reduced inequalities</p> <p><b>SDG11</b> Sustainable cities and communities</p> <p><b>SDG12</b> Responsible consumption and production</p> <p><b>SDG13</b> Climate action</p> <p><b>SDG17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>
How does the company fulfil the SDGs?
<p><b>SDG3:</b> Belief in “muscle power”, nature activities. Many of the activities are about wellness and wellbeing, e.g., experiencing Finnish sauna, forest bathing and learning about the wonderful qualities of herbs and spending time in nature, which is known to reduce stress levels and increase happiness. They have also designed experiences around Finnish lifestyle and happiness – sharing with their guests the reasons why Finland has been the happiest country in the world for seven years in a row.</p> <p><b>SDG5:</b> Offering tours to everyone, including women only, e.g., women’s camping skills tour.</p> <p><b>SDG7:</b> Donating to renewable energy projects around the world through carbon offsetting initiatives.</p> <p><b>SDG8:</b> Awarded top entrepreneur in sustainable development by Visit Finland in 2017 as well as international (e.g., Tour Cert) and domestic (Sustainable Travel Finland) sustainability labels for its sustainability work. Employing local guides.</p> <p><b>SDG10:</b> Inclusive and accessible tours: Offering tours to special needs groups and for everyone from infants to seniors, also for women only and for visually impaired persons. Also dogs are welcome.</p> <p><b>SDG11:</b> The local community is the focus of all activities. Local food, services, guides and transport is used whenever possible. Customers are also hosted by the company as guests, not visitors, in line with the principles of regenerative tourism. Belonging to the North Karelian Biosphere Reserve to improve the overall relationship between North Karelians and their environment by promoting the exchange and transfer of ideas and knowledge on sustainability as well as creating awareness that helps the inhabitants to focus more on sustainable solutions.</p> <p><b>SDG12:</b> Recycling and ecological purchases (e.g., biodegradable, plant-based, vegan, environmentally friendly) have been considered in all activities. Giving guests information (in form of a welcome leaflet and house rules) about how to save water and electricity.</p> <p><b>SDG13:</b> Calculating the carbon footprint of staff business travel and flying guests for carbon offsetting through atmosfair.de., e.g., contributing to renewable energy projects around the world. Organic and local produce used to reduce foodmiles.</p> <p><b>SDG17:</b> Working with other sustainable companies and organisations, e.g., undertaking voluntary work in the local unemployment association.</p>
Detailed description of the best practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability communication</li> <li>• Emphasising local content (food, culture, nature, experiences, produce, guides)</li> <li>• Considering sustainability in all its actions</li> </ul>



Äksyt Ämmät was the first company in Northern Karelia to receive the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label in 2020. Äksyt Ämmät is a member of a German "responsible travel" society of tour operators and travel agencies called Forum Anders Reisen. Äksyt Ämmät is certified with TourCert diploma. It has received several awards over the years. It has stressed sustainability in its operations from the start and mentions perseverance as its principle: practicing what they preach, considering sustainability in all actions, emphasising responsibility in all its activities. Äksyt Ämmät operates mainly in North Karelia, Kainuu and the eastern part of Finland. They have their own guesthouse [Pihlajapuu](#) (Rowan Tree) in Nurmes, North Karelia. The guesthouse used to be the village school but was renovated to become an accommodation and tourism services provider, serving also local food. The closest airport is Joensuu (130 km) and railway station is Nurmes (22 km).

The products highlight sustainable, local culture, Finnish lifestyle and nature-based activities as well as products aimed at women and disabled traveller groups. The approach of the company is already beyond sustainability, not just sustaining and surviving, but more towards regenerative tourism, where the focus is on local community, treating customers as guests and locals being hosts, everyone working towards the flourishing and thriving of the local community.

The activities Äksyt Ämmät offers include, e.g., canoeing, hiking and cross-country skiing, making natural cosmetics with herbs and learning to cook local delicacies, teaching camping skills to women, forest bathing and staying in local guesthouses. Their mission statement says that the activities they offer are: *"genuine experiences with the local people in the most beautiful Finnish nature"*.

Overall, respecting local residents and their culture is at the core of their operations: Local food, guides, services, transport, guesthouses, culture. Äksyt Ämmät offers "real insight into Finland" through local knowledge and expertise: *"We offer responsible and eco-friendly travel packages. Nature tours for groups of all sizes. Nature holidays with local twist - walking, canoeing, biking, skiing, Karelian culture and food..."*

Examples of products:

"Nature, Herbs and Beauty week: A wonderful experiential and new learning week. You will learn how to make, for example, natural cosmetics, nourishing herbal baths and wonderful delicacies straight from nature to your plate."

"Women's camping skills and nature tours week: This nature week includes a women's field skills course as well as hiking and nature trips."

"Accessible Tour in Kuhmo - Nature, Culture and History: This activity week includes lots to do and experience. We will go on excursions and nature observation and enjoy local food. Let's have an adventure..."

"Just hanging out - A night of forest bathing: Become one with nature, feel how the wind blows, experience what a dewdrop feels like on your skin, taste the sunset!"

"Guesthouse to Guesthouse Karelia à la carte Sauna Tour: From Guesthouse to Guest House sauna adventure with Karelia delicacies and cuisine workshops."

"Welcome to pure nature - All-inclusive hiking tour from national park to national park: On this guided national park hiking tour you will enjoy magnificent scenery when trekking in unspoiled nature. When you choose a guided trip you will get much more out of your wildlife experience. With the help of a guide you will get to know the area and its history while listening to interesting stories along the way."

"Authentic Karelian Cuisine and Culture in Finnish Lakeland: Experience the genuine Karelian way of life on a tour of four destinations full of joy and Karelia hospitality. Getting to know into Karelian traditions, flavors, and nature on this immersive tour for groups."

"Experience Valamo Menu at Bomba Karelian House! Karelian culture is strongly linked to Orthodox religion. The Orthodox religion and Karelian culture can also be seen in the buildings at Bomba. The tastes of Valamo Monastery can be experienced through Valamo menu at Bomba restaurant; where the delicious menu is combined with Valamo Monastery's berry wines."

#### Results and impact of the best practice

Being noticed as a responsible tourism service provider by the industry and Visit Finland. Focusing on responsible activities that leave a minimum ecological footprint. Combating seasonality by offering tours also outside the main tourist season.

#### Recommendations for replication

Sustainability communication: Very good communication about sustainability on their website, clear and concrete examples of their actions and impact

<https://aksytammat.fi/en/a/20-11-2019/sustainable-travel-principles-of-aksyt-ammat> and <https://aksytammat.fi/en/responsible-travel>

#### Acknowledgments

<https://www.visitkarelia.fi/en/stories-of-sustainability/aksyt-ammat/>

The Guardian: Where to go on holiday in 2020: the alternative hotlist:

[https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/jan/04/where-to-go-on-holiday-in-2020-alternative-hotlist-ethical-destinations?fbclid=IwAR0WAJvUjigv2vbtDPU6vtt\\_2HE9BSLY8CEu4XWzTspf\\_CooYNCy9NFVImQ](https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/jan/04/where-to-go-on-holiday-in-2020-alternative-hotlist-ethical-destinations?fbclid=IwAR0WAJvUjigv2vbtDPU6vtt_2HE9BSLY8CEu4XWzTspf_CooYNCy9NFVImQ)

Awards and certifications:

- Sustainable Travel Finland (Visit Finland)
- The top entrepreneur in sustainable development 2017 (Visit Finland)
- A member of a German "responsible travel " society of tour operators and travel agencies called Forum Anders Reisen - Certified with TourCert diploma

#### Photos



Photo: Äksyt Ämmät

## 2.8. Best practice example 6: Flow Festival

Best Practice	
Sustainable event	
Company / Organization	Country
Flow Festival	Finland
Website	
<a href="https://www.flowfestival.com/en/flow-festival/">https://www.flowfestival.com/en/flow-festival/</a>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events &amp; festivals</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>Flow Festival is a music festival organised annually in August since 2004 in the city of Helsinki. The urban festival aims to be one of the most attractive and prestigious festivals in the world. Flow's mission is "to offer high-quality and diverse experiences, as well as to renew and develop Helsinki's cultural offering and cultural atmosphere." The values of the festival are content orientation, customer orientation, sustainability and community spirit, which are all included in its responsibility programme. The festival is known for its sustainable festival production, responsible values, culinary delights and spectacular festival area on the grounds of a former power plant.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
Flow Festival hosts around 150 artists and 90,000 visitors every year.	
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)	
<p><b>SDG4</b> Quality education  <b>SDG5</b> Gender equality  <b>SDG7</b> Affordable and clean energy  <b>SDG8</b> Decent work and economic growth  <b>SDG9</b> Industry, innovation and infrastructure  <b>SDG10</b> Reduced inequalities  <b>SDG11</b> Sustainable cities and communities  <b>SDG12</b> Responsible consumption and production  <b>SDG13</b> Climate action  <b>SDG14</b> Life below water  <b>SDG15</b> Life on land  <b>SDG16</b> Peace, justice and strong institutions  <b>SDG17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>	
How does the company fulfil the SDGs?	
<p>Flow Festival has a very ambitious sustainability programme where it covers rather extensively all the three levels of sustainability. Without mentioning the SDGs in its sustainability programme, it nonetheless tackles several of the goals in its actions, e.g.:</p> <p><b>SDG4:</b> Flow influences the quality of education by offering a chance for volunteers and interns to get experience of event production. They offer a chance for students to get exposure to the world of events by volunteering, having an internship or getting their thesis commissioned by Flow Festival.</p> <p><b>SDG5 &amp; SDG10:</b> Two of the main values of Flow Festival are diversity and equality, including diversity of genders and equality. They stress that in their marketing, employment opportunities as well as in the artists they hire. They also work with NGOs focusing on refugee employment. Flow has a code-of-conduct for its employees.</p>	

**SDG7:** Flow aims to get much of its energy from renewable sources and donates to renewable energy initiatives.

**SDG8:** Flow aims to operate on a profitable and financially sustainable basis, be a responsible employer by hiring permanent, seasonal employees as well as interns to give them an opportunity to grow and develop in the industry. Flow follows industry salary recommendations as well.

**SDG9:** Flow keeps innovating new solutions like the carbon footprint calculation method. It has also received recognition by the international scientific community for its advanced impact research and [impact report](#).

**SDG11:** Flow aims to develop the industry to become more professional and sustainable. It promotes the city infrastructure and use of public transportation.

**SDG12:** Flow has very advanced impact assessment. In collaboration with experts, Flow has created a tool to measure its carbon and material footprint. It emphasises sustainability in its food choices, too, by removing red meat and poultry from its culinary offerings, offering vegan, vegetarian and seafood options only. It promotes drinking tap water by offering refilling stations for clients, to reduce plastic waste generated by bottled water. Flow encourages its customers to take public transport, cycle or walk to and from the event. Flow recycles materials and waste as much as possible in cooperation with the city. Responsible procurement is in the core of its operations and Flow favours local producers and service providers.

**SDG13:** Carbon footprint calculation is one of the main things that helps Flow to be aware of its carbon footprint and to mitigate the effects of its operations on climate change.

**SDG14:** Flow aims to reduce plastic waste by preferring tap water. It also donates to NGOs to protect the Baltic Sea. Its location next to the seashore makes it even more important to focus on life below water.

**SDG15:** Flow donates money to protect old-growth forest in Finland and has so far permanently protected four hectares. It also encourages recycling and responsible consumption to avoid waste generation.

**SDG16:** Flow values are justice, equality, diversity and safety. It has no tolerance for discrimination. Accessibility is of utmost importance. Physical, emotional and social safety are always respected and taken care of. Flow aims to be a place where all people can be and feel safe.

**SDG17:** Flow aims to work with like-minded suppliers and subcontractors. It also donates money to charities working on sustainability issues.

#### Detailed description of the best practice

- Sustainability actions on all three levels (economic, environmental, social)
- Advanced impact assessment (Flow Impacts) of its carbon and material footprints
- Strong on values that matter to its customers
- Skillful sustainability communications and collaboration with stakeholders

Flow Festival is an excellent example of a sustainable event as it addresses equally the economic, environmental and social sustainability issues. It does its best to discover new solutions for producing sustainable events. Already now, its sustainability programme singles out concrete examples of its actions and the information can be used for benchmarking and idea generation for events in the target countries of the Enricher project. Flow has been successful in integrating many of the SDGs in its actions. It is particularly strong on the SDG12 of responsible consumption, promoting sustainable options for food, drink and transport. The values of the event, e.g., diversity, equality, and safety, resonate with the customer base and influence the brand of Flow. All in all, the main best-practice of Flow Festival is the comprehensive sustainability work they do on many levels, involving many stakeholders, including the public, artists,

subcontractors, city and NGOs. They truly can function as a forerunner of sustainability in the event industry. Their goal is to make the event industry more sustainable.

### Results and impact of the best practice

Flow Festival has very advanced impact assessment and it now knows its carbon and material footprint. It is also communicating about its sustainability work on its website and the solutions often make the news. Flow is known for its emphasis on values and sustainability. It is a forerunner of sustainable events in Finland and in Europe.

### Recommendations for replication

What is special about the Flow Festival is the fact that it is equally strong on all three levels of sustainability. Some of the examples like collaborating with NGOs, creating a code-of-conduct, promoting public transport and vegan options, can be replicated elsewhere whenever there is a will to do so. Others may require infrastructural collaboration from the city or governmental agencies, e.g, regarding recycling and circular economy solutions. The recommendation is that anyone wishing to organise a sustainable event, studies the sustainability programme of Flow Festival to get practical ideas and examples of actions to be responsible. Flow is known for its excellent performers as well as its emphasis on sustainability.

### Acknowledgments

Sustainability programme of Flow Festival: <https://www.flowfestival.com/en/flow-festival/sustainable-flow/>

Flow Impacts - Material and carbon footprint assessment of Flow Festival 2022: [https://www.flowfestival.com/current/uploads/2023/03/FLOW-IMPACTS\\_REPORT\\_2023.pdf](https://www.flowfestival.com/current/uploads/2023/03/FLOW-IMPACTS_REPORT_2023.pdf)

This is Finland: Sustainable sustenance: As Helsinki's Flow Fest returns, food vendors feature menus without meat: <https://finland.fi/arts-culture/sustainable-sustenance-as-helsinkis-flow-fest-returns-food-vendors-feature-menus-without-meat/>

### Photos



Photo: Jussi Hellstén

## 2.9. Best practice example 7: Nolla restaurant

Best Practice	
Zero waste restaurant	
Company / Organization	Country
Nolla Restaurant	Finland
Website	
<a href="https://www.restaurantnolla.com/">https://www.restaurantnolla.com/</a>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restaurant</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>Nolla restaurant is the first zero waste restaurant in the Nordic countries, offering seasonal flavours using local and organic products. It was founded in 2017 by three chefs: one from Portugal, one from Spain, and one from Serbia. Their philosophy is: "Refuse, reduce, reuse, and only as a last resource, recycle." As food waste is a major challenge for the tourism and hospitality industry, aiming at eliminating it completely is an admirable goal. Bringing awareness of the issue is also something that Nolla does with its innovative kitchen practices and sustainability thinking that goes beyond food. Being a sustainable restaurant is often the main reason why customers looking for fine-dining options in Helsinki choose Nolla.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
<p>Nolla restaurant has a staff of 22 and a turnover of 1.8 million euros (2023). It was established in 2017 by three chefs.</p>	
Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)	
<p><b>SDG2</b> Zero hunger  <b>SDG3</b> Good health and well-being  <b>SDG4</b> Quality education  <b>SDG7</b> Affordable and clean energy  <b>SDG8</b> Decent work and economic growth  <b>SDG9</b> Industry, innovation and infrastructure  <b>SDG12</b> Responsible consumption and production  <b>SDG13</b> Climate action  <b>SDG14</b> Life below water  <b>SDG15</b> Life on land  <b>SDG17</b> Partnerships for the goals</p>	
How does the company fulfill the SDGs?	
<p><b>SDG2:</b> Food waste is eliminated through their zero-waste philosophy.  <b>SDG3:</b> Nolla aims at serving local and seasonal ingredients in its menu, thinking about the wellbeing of its clients and suppliers. Vegan and vegetarian options are always available. Healthy and high-quality food is on the menu. The cuisine is not made of food waste, but of innovative ideas, organic and local produce.  <b>SDG4:</b> Nolla educates its staff, suppliers and other restaurants on sustainability thinking and the zero-waste philosophy. It also encourages its staff and stakeholders to come up with new ideas and solutions for sustainability.  <b>SDG7:</b> Nolla investigates possibilities of wind energy and other renewable energy options. It has reduced its energy bill by using natural light coming in through its large windows.  <b>SDG8:</b> Nolla employs a staff of more than 20 people and it has steadily grown over the years, contributing to the economic growth of the city and generating tax revenues.</p>	



**SDG9:** Nolla has come up with inventive solutions to carry out its zero-waste practices. It has invested in an on-site compost, creative circular solutions as well as ways to use food waste.

**SDG12:** Nolla is a circular restaurant and considers sustainability in all its actions.

**SDG12:** Nolla is focusing on seasonality and local produce, avoiding food miles and imports. Vegan and vegetarian options are always available. Nothing other than receipts for customers is printed. Even the menu is written on a chalkboard.

**SDG14:** Nolla prefers local fish and other seafood, relying on sustainable sources.

**SDG15:** Local produce is always used at the restaurant, preferring also organic options.

**SDG17:** Nolla works in close cooperation with local suppliers and like-minded organisations, always trying to find sustainable solutions.

#### Detailed description of the best practice

The three chefs who are behind Nolla Restaurant grew frustrated of amount of leftover food that went to bins. Nolla means zero in Finnish and Restaurant Nolla takes into practice the definition of zero-waste according to the Zero Waste International Alliance: "The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health."

Nolla with its zero-waste dining concept is an inspiration for other restaurants in Finland and abroad. It is also used in the city and country marketing as an inspiring example of creativity and sustainability thinking. However, Nolla was not the first in the world to go zero-waste. The first zero-waste restaurant in the world is [Silo Restaurant](#) in the U.K. Both Nolla and Silo are "restaurants without a bin". There are also apps that focus on eliminating food waste, e.g., [ResQ](#) app in Finland and [Too Good To Go](#) in many European countries and the US. Customers can order surplus food with the app from local restaurants and stores for a reduced price, thus cutting food waste.

Nolla is putting a lot of effort into its sustainability thinking and is encouraging its staff and suppliers to come up with sustainable solutions. There are many inspiring sustainable and circular solutions in use already. For example, Nolla uses recycled bed sheets for staff aprons. Empty wine bottles are cut down into drinking glasses and the napkins are made from recycled plastic bottles. Even the table and chairs are recycled and repurposed. The restaurant does not accept single-use packing from any of its suppliers. The menu offers seasonal produce from local farmers and local lakes and sea. All ingredients are used in many ways or composted on site. The compost is turned into biological waste fertilizer in just 24 hours and shared with local farmers. There is a microbrewery in the restaurant, and it uses food waste to make craft beer. In the bathrooms, the hand towels are reusable. The gift cards are made of compostable paper that can be replanted to grow poppy flowers. It reduces its energy footprint by having large glass windows to let in natural sunlight.

#### Results and impact of the best practice

Restaurant Nolla is very well known for its zero-waste philosophy and being a forerunner in circular economy. The innovative restaurant is used in the marketing of the city of Helsinki as well as by Visit Finland for the whole country. There have been many articles written about the restaurant in Europe and elsewhere.

#### Recommendations for replication

Restaurant Nolla can serve as an inspiration for others. Nolla has shown that it is possible to make good quality and delicious food and be sustainable at the same time. The zero-waste philosophy is something that others can aspire towards as well, rethink ways to operate. Many small solutions can come a long way and make the business thrive.

#### Acknowledgments

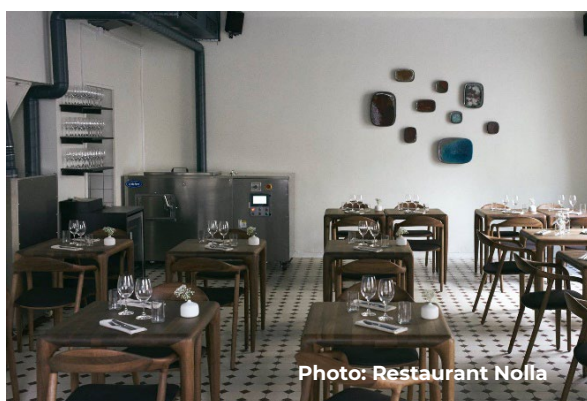
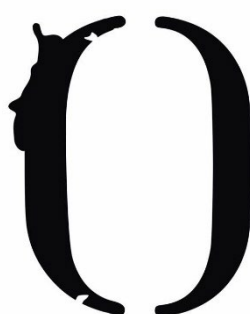
Restaurant Nolla has received several awards for its sustainable dining concept, e.g., the restaurant of the year in 2022 by The Finnish Gastronomic Society. It was awarded in 2020 by Michelin Guide as the best eco-friendly restaurant and is listed as a Green Star restaurant in the [Michelin Guide](#).

Fodors - How One Restaurant in Finland is Embracing Zero Waste in a Unique Way: <https://www.fodors.com/world/europe/finland/helsinki/experiences/news/how-finnish-restaurant-nolla-is-embracing-zero-waste>

Ellen MacArthur Foundation - The role of restaurants in a circular urban food system: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/articles/the-role-of-restaurants-in-a-circular-urban-food-system>

Restaurant Nolla (You Tube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4he07FCBPSw>

#### Photos



## 2.10. Best practice example 8: L'adagio – Olive Industry and Wellness Centre

Best Practice	
L'adagio – Olive Industry and Wellness Centre	
Company / Organization	Country
Adagio and ROI olive company	Italy
Website	
<a href="https://www.agriturismoladagio.it">https://www.agriturismoladagio.it</a>	
Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice	
<p>Wine-Food Company involved in many local events and active as pivotal node for the promotion of local products.</p> <p>The company comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Olive oil production facility (Oil "ROI")</li> <li>– Farm and nature amenities</li> <li>– B&amp;B</li> <li>– SPA and Wellness</li> <li>– Cosmetic production (local shop as well as online portal)</li> </ul>	



The tourism related activities are promoted together with regional best-practices in both oil (e.g. Consorzio Tutela "Olio Riviera Ligure DOP") and tourism (e.g. "Mete di Liguria" for Destination marketing) industries for assuring quality certification. The company organizes the "Bistro dell'Ulivo" connected with Slow Food Initiative. The event serves as both a industry fair (oil) and tourism/heritage activity for the promotion of local food heritage. Moreover, it co-organises the local "Sagra dello Stoccafisso" in September in collaboration with Pro Loco for providing local products. It regularly organises training and education activities for both kids and adults in collaboration with local school, training centres and Universities.

#### Thematic Field

- Events & festivals
- Food & wine
- Health and beauty

#### Short description of the company and the project

Company founded in 1900 as part of a olive oil business. Starting from 2013, in alignment with local priorities, a Wellness and Health centre and natural B&B has been established. From there onwards, the company established itself as a focal point for local tourism events and educational activities.

#### Main facts and figures

The Wellness centre is the main tourism destination of the small municipality. The business is still mainly relying on oil production as main source of revenue but hoteling, cosmetics, and the SPA today account for more than 50% of the overall profits.

The company is a best practice in terms of:

- Aligning local needs to international tourism through special packages (e.g. Qoqa) sold online to foreign tourists and including all services as well as local tours (e.g. how to make oil)
- Development of a factory 4.0 with all traditional processes but with automated quality control and reducing carbon-foot print
- Circular-economy approach, using olive waste as thermal source of power
- Linking the company strengths (e.g. natural cosmetic products from olive sources; Wellness activities) with local opportunities (e.g. hiking) for creating complementarities
- Organisation of a national fair of oil producers for promoting local best practices and increasing awareness of local tourism attractions
- Long-lasting collaboration with the "University of Pollenzo" (Agri-food tertiary education) for specific training opportunities and research
- Tours organized in connection with the valley historical activities (i.e. agriculture, castles)

Despite the different strengths, given that the company is located within an historical site, there are many constraints for further updates, including restrictions when it comes to the establishment of Renewable Energy solutions.

#### Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)

**SDG8** Decent work and economic growth  
**SDG11** Sustainable cities and communities  
**SDG12** Responsible consumption and production

#### How does the company fulfil the SDGs?

The company represents the main tourism spot in Badalucco, determining a best practice for the old village and a huge employment generator as well as a tool for the promotion of local heritage (**SDG11**). The company represent a major oil producer, the align its main activity with nature based complementary businesses. Its hoteling and

SPA activities are coordinated with other local practices, in order to promote local excellence. Moreover, the structure offers trainings from primary school kids to tertiary education traineeships in order to disseminate local practices and uses (SDG8). Over the years, the company has invested in new production facilities (for reducing pollution and waste) and in a circular economy approach for the utilisation of olive waste as primary heating source (SDG12).

#### Detailed description of the best practice

The company employs about 50 people, and it has direct commercial links with main businesses within the municipality. Moreover, the national fair organised during every fall, attracts the attention of hundreds of olive producers, promoting local amenities and products.

Olive related activities are promoted in between September and December, with specific cultural tours within the valley. A School Farm is running in Spring for promoting youth education to nature. Cosmetics products are sold through an online shop. The B&B, SPA and Wellness centre are open all year round, with peaks of visitors during the olive season (i.e. October-November) and during summer (i.e. for hiking related tourism).

Over the year, the profile of the tourist changes substantially, with families concentrated over the summer, and couples of any age during Fall and Winter times. Moreover, summer periods often see long-distance tourists, while winter and fall often see a majority proximity tourists (i.e. Italy, France, Switzerland).

The core element of the best practice is leveraging on traditional activities (i.e. olive oil production) for i) differentiating the business thus assuring long-term sustainability for the company itself and ii) create new opportunities for local activities, leveraging on local peculiarities that differentiate the area from potential competitors.

#### Results and impact of the best practice

The chosen best practice is a valuable example on how historical activities can turn into sustainable tourism generators, representing a pivotal activity within a given region. The key element of the "Adagio" society was to create a series of complementary products able to boost its standing not only as producer but also as tourism operator.

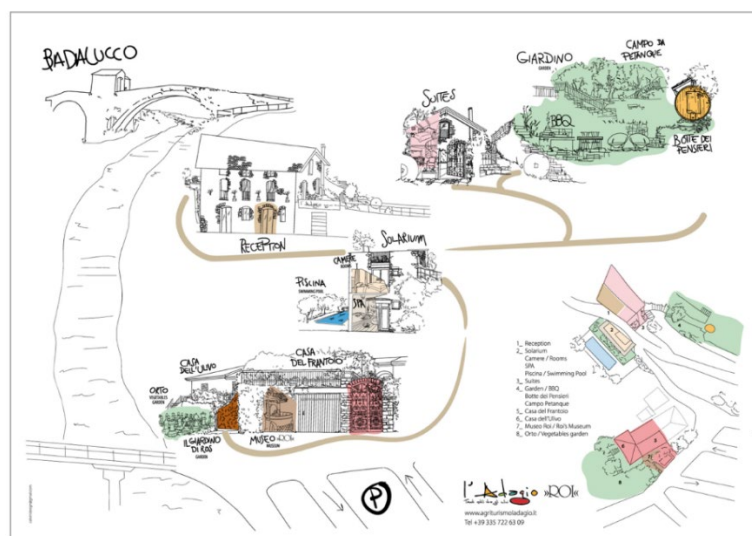
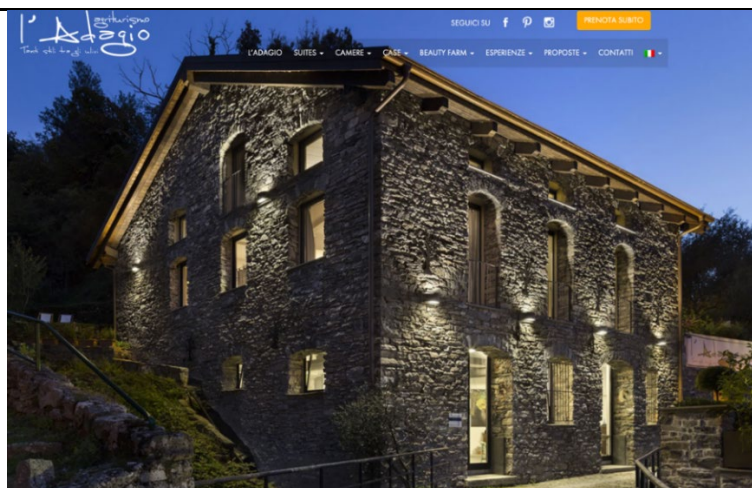
#### Recommendations for replication

Aligning local needs and resources to responsible tourism industry. Advertising local traditions as key exploitation tool for attracting international tourism.

#### Acknowledgments

<https://www.agriturismoladagio.it>  
<https://www.oliroi.com/en/>

#### Photos





## 2.11. Best practice example 9: AISM – Il Girasole

Best Practice	
AISM – Il Girasole	
Company / Organization	Country
AISM	Italy
Website	
<a href="https://www.aism.it/">https://www.aism.it/</a>	
Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with disability, both physical and mental related</li> <li>• People with specific access needs, such as Age related (also under 5) or with specific Cultural and Health related constraints</li> <li>• Hospitality Tourism and local authorities</li> </ul>	
Thematic Field	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food &amp; wine</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> </ul>	
Short description of the company and the project	
<p>AISM is the Italian Association for Sclerosi Multipla. As part of its activities is managing several structures for assuring high quality standards for tourism with special needs. All activities are done through own hoteling infrastructure and in collaboration with local operators. Different structures assure coordination in between health treatments and special local tours.</p>	
Main facts and figures	
<p>AISM promotes several activities aiming at verify quality “standards” even though a proper certification is not currently feasible. The development of a quality stamp for</p>	

the implementation of potential accessible solutions in currently under development (EasyGoOUT project). Moreover, AISM is a funding member of ENAT, the European Association for Accessible Tourism.

Concerning direct tourism activities, AISM main structure (48 rooms) was founded in 2000 as a special hoteling solution totally accessible for people with disabilities. The main hotel is located in Luciniano (Arezzo), Tuscany. Luciniano comprises an hotel and a swimming pool, restaurant with specific dietary, and health services and its activities also include the organization of tours in neighboring cities (e.g. Florence, Siena, Umbria).

Given the services provided, the structure is characterized by high costs of maintenance and by a break-even guaranteed by the cooperation with local authorities and the offer to the general public as well. Luciniano is often used as a Living Lab for Accessibility standards, with tailored made services in relation with specific disabilities. Moreover, employees register ad-hoc training, often used also by other local hoteling activities.

Among the other structures Casa Letizia (Belluno) is more connected with youth and social policies (e.g. immigration). Other tourism structures were managed but they are currently not active anymore. Despite this, many other hoteling activities are officially associated with AISM as a way to attract a distinctive market niche. AISM also owns a tour operator, linked to the Europe Without Barriers (EWB) initiative, with specific long-term partnerships [Costa Cruise Foundation].

AISM is the leading partner of an Observatory for the implementation of procedures for Disability people (Ministerial level for incorporating accessibility and inclusiveness standards in the hoteling industry regulation)

#### **Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)**

**SDG3** Good health and well-being  
**SDG8** Decent work and economic growth  
**SDG11** Sustainable cities and communities  
**SDG12** Responsible consumption and production  
**SDG16** Peace, justice and strong institutions

#### **How does the company fulfil the SDGs?**

The association has in social inclusion its mission and all activities are related to this main goal. Within the tourism sector, all its endeavours are connected to the achievement of the association goal. Activities are linked to well-being of people with different disabilities and age status (**SDG3**) and priorities training of different social groups (e.g. **SDG8 and SDG11**) through activities that takes into consideration local resources and heritage (**SDG12**), facilitating the inclusion of groups within society and the upgrade of standards aiming at improving current conditions for people with disability (**SDG16**).

#### **Detailed description of the best practice**

Il GiraSole (Luciniano) and La Ginestra (Belluna) were open all year round but - due to cost issues - they have reduced their opening time at the April-October period. Such decision is also connected to the fact that the target audience is usually characterised by accessibility issues, preferring to travel during low season in order to avoid crowds. Moreover, certain disabilities push people to avoid warm season thus facilitating destagionalisation and the link to specific local events. Moreover, the land around the hotel is also used for the production of local products and the creation of special AgriFood packages. Special packages are offered for elderly patterns

Il girasole (Lucignano) is characterised mainly by foreign tourists looking for visiting Italy and Tuscany while experiencing special services. Spillover activities are also connected to collaborations with the local nursery and fairs. Connection with other local activities, e.g. wineries, flights, pasta courses with local restaurants for establishing a link with the local heritage. Links to EU projects managed by AISM allow the structure to be used as a living lab for testing best practice in responsible tourism. In order to boost collaboration among local stakeholders, AISM organises the "MAGGIORATA", an event for enhancing awareness on accessible and inclusive standards.

#### Results and impact of the best practice

The activity has achieved high standing over the years as a European best-practice for both inclusive tourism and as a way to link local practices with social challenges. The initiative has been cited by ENAT in several reports and it has been subject to several transferability attempts. Currently, the structure as a living lab has been used for testing quality standards and for hosting international events. Several international hotelling companies are using AISM structures for transferring standards and procedures. A specific training programmes has been developed in order to exploit the competences achieved.

#### Recommendations for replication

Mapping of needed skills, competences, facilities in respect to local situations has been a key factor in the success. Collaboration with main industry partners and local authorities has also been a key element in the success of the initiative.

#### Acknowledgments

[https://www.aism.it/casa\\_vacanze\\_i\\_girasoli\\_di\\_lucignano](https://www.aism.it/casa_vacanze_i_girasoli_di_lucignano)

#### Photos

### Casa Vacanze i Girasoli di Lucignano



## 2.12. Best practice example 10: EWB – Europe without Barriers

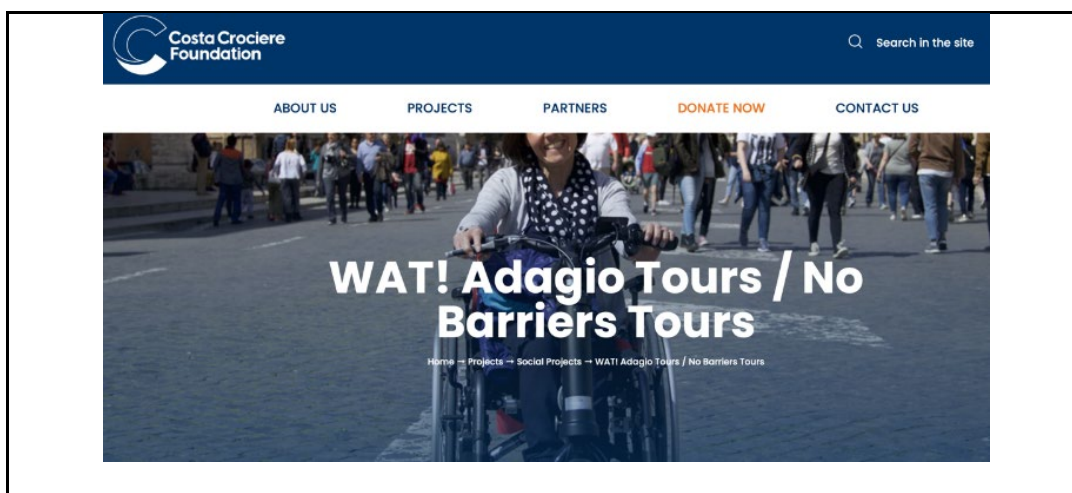
Best Practice	
EWB – Europe without Barriers	
Company / Organization	Country
EWB	Italy



<b>Website</b>
<a href="https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu">https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu</a>
<b>Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitality Tourism and local authorities</li> <li>• People with disability</li> <li>• Decision makers</li> <li>• Tourism companies aiming at upgrading their offer and quality standards</li> <li>• Tourism Operators (e.g. museum, tour operators, attraction) and Public Authorities for updating of activities, organization, skills, and facilities in connection with inclusiveness and accessibility</li> </ul>
<b>Thematic Field</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure tourism</li> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Summer and Winter Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Short description of the company and the project</b>
EWB is a Tour Operator involved in the provision of responsible tourism services, in the organisation of ad-hoc tourism packages, and in the assessment and upgrade of current tourism offer through long term partnerships among key associations (e.g. AISM) and operators (e.g. Museum, Cruise Companies, local authorities).
<b>Main facts and figures</b>
<p>As independent tour operator, Europe Without Barriers (EWB) creates specific itineraries and establish specific long-term partnerships [Costa Cruise Foundation] for creating 100% accessible and inclusive tourism services.</p> <p>WAT and YAT are two projects for women and youth SM people for making cruise itineraries accessible and inclusive (together with AISM and Costa Cruise Foundation). Both Individuals and Group bookings for socialization purposes.</p> <p>Co-Creation of ADAGIO TOURS for Cruises as well as specific rooms [usually sold-out on board of different vessels, all year round], with accessible pricing.</p> <p>Education and Training related to Inclusiveness and Accessibility within Tourism, also through specific EU projects and other local stakeholders (e.g. Costa Edutainment, San Marino Republic, SI4Life) targeting either specific services or potential audience.</p>
<b>Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)</b>
<p><b>SDG3</b> Good health and well-being</p> <p><b>SDG8</b> Decent work and economic growth</p> <p><b>SDG11</b> Sustainable cities and communities</p> <p><b>SDG12</b> Responsible consumption and production</p> <p><b>SDG16</b> Peace, justice and strong institutions</p>
<b>How does the company fulfil the SDGs?</b>
EWB has in social inclusion its mission and all activities are related to this main goal. Within the tourism sector, all its endeavours are connected to the achievement of the association goal. Activities are linked to well-being of people with different disabilities and age status ( <b>SDG3</b> ) and priorities training of different social groups (e.g. <b>SDG8</b> and <b>SDG11</b> ) through activities that takes into consideration local resources and heritage ( <b>SDG12</b> ), facilitating the inclusion of groups within society and the upgrade of standards aiming at improving current conditions for people with disability ( <b>SDG16</b> ).

Detailed description of the best practice
<p>EWB mainly serves the Italian market and Italian companies interested in upgrading their tourism services in a more sustainable and accessible way. In order to do so, EWB is promoting specific itineraries and a number of complementary projects with different public and private stakeholders.</p> <p>During its years of operations, EWB has been promoter of different EU projects focusing on specific training needs (e.g. InTour for the creating the managers of accessible tourism), mapping of ad-hoc itineraries with specific sustainable and inclusive scores (e.g. ports of calls of cruise destination), upgrading standards for potential tourism partners (e.g. museums, cruise ships, city centres). As such, EWB is not only a tour operator but an active voice in the development of local tourism businesses in the light of a more sustainable and inclusive experience.</p>
Results and impact of the best practice
<p>The best practice has been asked to plan tourism accessible events, mapping and training operators, adapting situations, congress centres, and tourism itineraries (e.g. San Marino in 2023 [San Marino for all]; Genoa for Unesco city centre; Guida Mare for Beaches) and creation of guidelines for specific industry partners [e.g. all West Med Cruise Ports].</p>
Recommendations for replication
<p>A key element of success has been the strict collaboration between EWB and industrial partners in order to assess needs and adapt development strategies.</p>
Acknowledgments
<p><a href="https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu/ewb-project/">https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu/ewb-project/</a>  <a href="https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu">https://www.europewithoutbarriers.eu</a>  <a href="https://www.costacrociere.it/costa-club/magazine/viaggio/adagio-tours-le-nuove-escursioni-slow-per-tutti.html">https://www.costacrociere.it/costa-club/magazine/viaggio/adagio-tours-le-nuove-escursioni-slow-per-tutti.html</a>  <a href="https://www.costacrocierefoundation.com/en/projects/social/wat-women-accessibility-tourism/">https://www.costacrocierefoundation.com/en/projects/social/wat-women-accessibility-tourism/</a></p>
Photos





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## Appendix

Template used for Best Practice collection:

<b>Best Practice</b>	
[name and content of best practice]	
<b>Company / Organization</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Website</b>	
<b>Contact person</b> (personal data removed from the report)	
[name, role in organization, e-mail]	
<b>Stakeholder groups addressed by the best practice</b>	
<b>Thematic Field</b>	
Please indicate to which of the following fields the best practice belongs:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure tourism</li> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Food &amp; wine</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Health and beauty</li> <li>• ...</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	
<b>Short description of the company and the project</b> (50 ÷ 100 words)	
<b>Main facts and figures</b>	
<b>Sustainable Developmental Goal(s)</b>	
Please indicate which SDGs are targeted by this best practice (select all that apply):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No poverty</li> <li>2. Zero hunger</li> <li>3. Good health and well-being</li> <li>4. Quality education</li> <li>5. Gender equality</li> <li>6. Clean water and sanitation</li> <li>7. Affordable and clean energy</li> <li>8. Decent work and economic growth</li> <li>9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure</li> <li>10. Reduced inequalities</li> <li>11. Sustainable cities and communities</li> <li>12. Responsible consumption and production</li> <li>13. Climate action</li> <li>14. Life below water</li> <li>15. Life on land</li> </ol>	

16. Peace, justice and strong institutions 17. Partnerships for the goals
<b>How does the company fulfil the SDGs?</b>
<b>Detailed description of the best practice</b> (300 ÷ 500 words)
<b>Results and impact of the best practice</b> (up to 200 words)
<b>Recommendations for replication</b> <i>please provide recommendations for anyone who could be interested in adapting this practice to their organisation (up to 200 words)</i>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> (sources of information, acknowledgment, other relevant information)
<b>Quote</b> <i>please include a quote from staff about the practice</i>
<b>Photos</b> <i>please include 2-3 photos about the practice</i>