

Travel Foundation at work

Sustainability plays a vital role in the growth of businesses and the work of sustainable tourism charity the Travel Foundation has never been more relevant

CASE STUDY 1: CYPRUS

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has formed a partnership with the Travel Foundation in an attempt to cement its reputation as a destination of sustainable tourism excellence.

The partnership has completed the first stage of developing national sustainability minimum standards for accommodation providers, which should become mandatory within three years.

The CTO believes the new standards will give Cyprus's tourism industry a competitive advantage and safeguard its future by reducing costs; protecting and celebrating local environments and people; and improving business resilience by reducing dependence on resources.

The minimum criteria relate to:

- **Integrating sustainability into business planning:** measuring against a published sustainability policy.
- **Environmental:** measuring and minimising consumption of water, energy and chemicals, emissions and generation of waste.
- **Protecting human capital:** treating staff fairly and providing training and development.

Clean up operations are helping to make beaches 'greener'



- **Buying local:** purchasing local goods and services from the community where possible.
- **Customer relations:** communicating sustainability measures and showcasing local attractions to clients.

● BEACHES

Another area of focus for the partnership is making Cyprus's beaches 'green'.

Nissi Beach and Fig Tree Beach have already been the targets of the initiative, which work to improve the environment and experience for users and showcase the benefits to other beach communities.

Recent activities have included workshops for residents and businesses, beach clean-ups,

the introduction of sunbeds and umbrellas made of recycled materials and a water fountain to cut down on litter.

Irene Yiasemi, project manager, said: "It has been incredibly encouraging to see so many businesses and organisations getting behind the project. The feedback has been wonderful.

"First impressions count, and we are sure that those arriving at the 'green' beaches for the first time will be impressed by what they see, and those returning will be pleasantly surprised."

A survey was carried out at the start of the project with support from Tui Travel UK & Ireland's Project Discovery volunteers, and it will be repeated at the end to gauge reaction.

● WASTE MANAGEMENT

The final, and long-term element of the partnership is conducting an investigation into reducing solid waste from the tourism industry.

Current incentives and penalties are not sufficient, according to a report, so the partnership is developing a proposal including a waste mapping project to alleviate the impact of the industry on the island's pressured landfill sites.



CASE STUDY 2: GAMBIA

According to the Holiday Shopping Report issued by the Travel Foundation and Abta this year, British holidaymakers could be unwittingly spending as much as 10% of their budget on souvenirs that are illegal, environmentally damaging or destined to end up in the bin.

While three-quarters of those surveyed said they enjoy buying from local markets and shops, only half check whether the products they are buying are made locally.

In Gambia, the Travel Foundation is working with artists and producers on the Guaranteed Gambian project in partnership with the Association for Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism, Sandele Eco-Resort and Thomas Cook.

The project follows initial research from the charity that revealed two-thirds of craft items on sale in hotels and gift shops in the main resort area were imported.

At the centre of the project is a new Guaranteed Gambian brand, which can only be used on crafts that reflect Gambian culture, are locally-produced and use sustainable materials.

Jo Baddeley, sustainable destinations manager for Thomas Cook, said: "Enabling holidaymakers to buy locally-produced goods has been the aim of this project and we've made considerable progress in just one year."

