

The Green Roof Inn

Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism



Introduction

Grenada and its sister islands Carriacou and Petit Martinique are located in the Eastern Caribbean. Grenada have a population of just over 100 000 inhabitants where approximately 7000 live on the island of Carriacou. The main industries of Grenada are agriculture, fishing and tourism. Tourism is the most important industry and affects people directly and indirectly through out most segments of society. A small nation as Grenada is vulnerable to the impacts of the global economic flucutations and policy. The global price on bananas or regulations and transportations of the same are decided out of the countrys control. One decission in the European parliament on importing regulations can cripple the agricultural industry in Grenada over night. Sustainable development within the tourism sector is therefore of great importance to strengthen an independant local economy and create oportunity for socio-political progress and ability to meet environmental chalanges.

Todays conventional idea of development or maintaining a quality of life for a given population does have consequenses that impair the options for developing or maintaining an aspired quality of life later or elsewhere. Therefore the need for a plan of action for sustainable tourism.

Green Roof Inn is an 8 room hotel and 20 seat restaurant on the island of Carriacou. The company is owned by a Swedish family and employ four full time local staff and one part time local gardener. The hotel mainly aims at overseas tourism.

Sustainable Development

In the report “Our Common Future” to the The UN General Assembly in 1987 (also known as the Bruntland Report), the World Commission on Environment and Development defined the term sustainable development as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹ This has since come to be the most quoted definition when discussing sustainable development.

¹ General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987

The impact of sustainable development on business practice was put in words by John Elkington in 1997 with his concept of The Triple Bottom Line.² The triple bottom line refers to the three spheres of Environment, Social structure / Culture and Economy. A business, organisation or government benefits from not destroying the base upon which they are dependant. Sustainable business activities are such that seek to minimise damage to the environment, revitalise the social structure or culture of the community where it is located and continously contribute to the local economy. A sustainable business benefits its owners, its employees and its neighbours.

This triple bottom line concept is also refered to as *doing well by doing good*.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is a worldwide industry with global social, economic, and environmental impact. Tourism represents 31% of the GDP of the Caribbean region and provides nearly three million jobs.³

As an industry tourism has gotten quite an infamous name as it has been associated with ruthless human, economic and environmental exploitation and huge carbon footprints created by long haul flights. This is unfortunately all too often true but is something that could change. Tourism is in many places of the world the only viable industry available at hand and natural beauty, cultural attractions or other uniqueness are then resources that should be capitalised upon.

The principles of sustainable tourism in broad terms have been captured and recaptured by various institutions and international workshops since 1988 when the World Tourism Organization declared sustainable tourism as "... leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems."⁴ Based on the aims of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the Agenda 21 stated "Sustainable tourism products are products which operate in harmony with local environment, community, and cultures, so that these become the permanent

² John Elkington (1997) *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*, Capstone Publishing, Oxford

³ Carribean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) www.sidsnet.org

beneficiaries.”⁵ In 2000 the industry came together to agree on more specific common goals and criteria for certification of sustainable and ecotourism that resulted in the Mohonk Agreement. There sustainable tourism is broadly defined as “tourism that seeks to minimize ecological and sociocultural impacts while providing economic benefits to local communities and host countries.”⁶

Principles and Guidelines

Continuous work under the wing of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) on the subject of creating universal guidelines and criteria for conducting and for certification of sustainable tourism has led to a number of publications on the matter.

A broad guide presenting 12 aims for sustainable tourism was published in 2005⁷

The twelve aims are as follows:

1. Economic Viability: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.
2. Local Prosperity: To maximize the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.
3. Employment Quality: To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.
4. Social Equity: To seek a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.
5. Visitor Fulfillment: To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or in other ways.
6. Local Control: To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.
7. Community Wellbeing: To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.
8. Cultural Richness: To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities.

⁴ UN-World Tourism Organisation www.unwto.org

⁵ Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry (1996) World Travel & Tourism Council

⁶ <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism/documents/mohonk.pdf>

⁷ Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers United Nations Environment Programme – WTO, 2005

9. Physical Integrity: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.
10. Biological Diversity: To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.
11. Resource Efficiency: To minimize the use of scarce and non renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.
12. Environmental Purity: To minimize the pollution of air, water, and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors

In 2008 the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria was created by a coalition of 27 organisations. Close to 100,000 tourism stakeholders was consulted and over 4500 criteria from 60 existing certifications was analyzed as well as comments by over 1500 individuals. This bottom up, grassroots anchored process resulted in a detailed guideline for businesses to become more sustainable. The criterias are centered around the four basic aims for sustainability: Sustainable management, socio-economic responsibility, cultural heritage and environment. See Appendix for criterias in full.

Carriacou

The island of Carriacou is 13 square miles large and has a population of 7000 inhabitants. The economic core has since the end of plantocracy been a one of family interdependence with emphasis on family members working abroad to support. There is also a tradition of trading goods from up the islands and subsistence farming and fishing to extend the limited means. The unemployment rate is high and as most goods in stores are imported the trade balance is unequal and cost of living is not in par with wages. Without the influx of foreign exchange through family support or tourism the economical situation would become acute. There are approximately 100 hotel beds available on Carriacou so that is in broad terms the tourist capacity of the island.

Green Roof Inn

When adopting a plan of action for Green Roof Inn we have taken in regard the local oportunities and limitations. We have also put emphasis on the principles that are the most meaningful to us and that are the obvious way of change. To me the economical limitations but great potential of Carriacou is the main chalange in the aim towards sustainable tourism. Tthe most important priority for Green Roof Inn to support the local

market and economy in a sustainable way. The motto is that as much as possible of a dollar spent at Green Roof Inn should remain and multiply within the local economy thus benefit the local, national and/or regional community with priority in that order. With economic prosperity comes the means to deal with environmental issues and to afford to make sustainable choices on the national policy making level as well as the day to day life of people. It is of course of great importance to minimise the negative impact of on the local environment created by Green Roof Inn and also to set a standard as being a role model on sustainable tourism.

Plan of Action

Fair Travel

Green Roof Inn recognises that it is only as good as its staff and that mutual respect, trust and care is of great importance in a working relation. All employees shall feel that there is room for growth and personal and professional development.

Salaries, breaks and holidays are in line with and above national union agreement. Breaks are natural parts of the everyday work and yearly paid holidays are granted. Staff is encouraged to join the local union. The local praxis of seasonal work in the tourism trade does not suit our ethics, as our staff are all family providers Green Roof Inn employ full time, all year round to secure the income of our employees. Green Roof Inn also applies a gender awareness approach where in a female dominated workplace we have an ongoing dialogue discussing gender issues and women empowerment. We also constantly try to offer further training and education for our staff and share as much as possible the knowledge of business that we have. Green Roof Inn is against all forms of discrimination and tries to extend this stance to all its employees and beyond the walls of the hotel. Environmental questions and options of choice in operation policy from garbage reduction and recycling to supporting the local economy and refusing imports are constantly under scrutiny at the Green Roof Inn thus furthering all of our knowledge on these issues in the day to day work.

Supporting the Local Market

With an aim that most of a dollar spent at the Green Roof Inn should remain, multiply and benefit the local region we have adopted the following agenda.

We only use local produce in the restaurant as main ingredients.

This means beef, pork, fish, lobster, fruits, vegetables, drinks and most accessories. Promoting local producers, entrepreneurs, farmers, fishermen this also leads to the seasonal use of produce for quality and freshness.

Hotel equipment and maintenance products are also sought regionally.

Products needed but not produced locally we try to find regionally.

The few articles necessary to import such as wines, coffee etc. we buy from local merchants, no direct imports.

Although production is not regional, local/regional traders and transportations benefit, promoting local employment and profits.

Fish and Seafood

Green Roof Inn supports the local fishing fleet and buys fish that is hook-fished, (no over fishing by trawlers) and lobster when in season, September - May.

Meat Served in the Restaurant

Meat served in the restaurant at the Green Roof Inn comes from local animals. This supports the local Carriacou farmers and also guarantees that the animals have had a free and natural life which would meet any criteria set for ecological farming. The animals are slaughtered locally on their home farm so there are no stressful transportations involved.

Drinks Served in the Restaurant

We try to stock only drinks sold in recyclable bottles and cases. This also coincides with the rule of local production as only the local/regional breweries would recycle their bottles.

When no local choice, as with wine, coffee etc. it is important to choose the closest place of origin of product. This minimises transportation and also supports the regional economy. Local merchants are used for imported articles to support local economy.

Garbage

Green Roof Inn strives to minimise the amount of garbage produced, and we also divide biodegradables and nonrecyclable solid waste.

To minimise wrapping and packaging, portion packs are excluded in favour for large packs and paper wrapping preferred before metal, glass or plastic.

Refill and recyclables preferred instead of disposables where ever possible.

All biodegradable waste from the kitchen is collected in a "pig bucket" that feed the neighbours animals for meat production. The same meat is later purchased to be served in the restaurant. - Full cycle.

Water Situation on Carriacou

Carriacou is an island lacking ground water. Our water supply comes from rainwater collected off the roofs and stored in cisterns under the building to last through the dry season. Running out of water leads to costly and polluting trucking of water.

Saving Water

Green Roof Inn was built around its toilets. To reduce the water consumption we have special low flush toilets that requires no less than 45 degree angles on the waste pipes, the design of Green Roof Inn was thus based on this precondition. The toilet waste pipes originally went in to composting units for a completely closed waste system but are now, because of failure, led in to conventional septs. All bathrooms have special water saving shower heads.

Green Roof Inn has also divided its waste water system between the black water and the grey water. The grey water is run through an infiltration in the ground and collected in tanks for the use of wetting the garden which is specifically important during the dry season.

Energy Savings and Solar Heating

As electricity is expensive and produced locally on the island with a diesel turbine, Green Roof Inn features solar heated water which is a clean and renewable source of energy.

Because of the cost and pollution of electricity production we also have chosen not to

have A/C units in any of the rooms. The house is designed so that there is a natural airflow through the building and there are also fans in the rooms. All light bulbs in the common areas are energy saving bulbs.

Support for Community Activity

Green Roof Inn regularly sponsor community based activities such as music and cultural events. We are also members of the Historical Society of Carriacou that promotes the knowledge of the history and cultural heritage of the island.

The Airline Traffic

The concept of tourism is partly contrary to sustainable development in a global perspective and contain a great environmental challenge as longhaul flights are part of the product that we offer.

One way to counter the effects of the carbon footprint produced is for example planting trees to become carbon neutral. However this can also be seen just as a stunt to justify emissions of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases. We believe that regionally, the positive effects of sustainable development of the islands through tourism must be considered to counter the negative impact of carbon emissions and greenhouse gases caused by the flights that bring the tourists here. Sustainable development can be reached through conscious tourism developments in our region.

Tourism should be seen as a resource and not a threat to the environment and the sustainable development of the islands.

The Overall Perspective

In a small island as Carriacou we can not have the global perspective on sustainability but have to appreciate the local conditions.

We put much emphasis on the importance of socio-economic development to create an arena where ecological, environmental and climate change related issues can be addressed and challenged.

Economic development lays the grounds for education, awareness and ability to afford environmental choices.

Green Roof Inn strive to minimise the negative impact on the environment of our operations and continuously analyse and make all involved aware of the dilemmas inherent and eventually challenge them. This together with advocating gender equality, workers rights, encouraging education and training, sharing business know how, creating employment and supporting society through local spending multiplier effects⁸ on economic investments and daily spendings is our plan of action toward sustainable development.

Future Aims and Chalanges

A plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism is a document as well as an ongoing process. This process never ends and a business can always develop further even though the pace of improvement may slow down as the obvious actions have been taken. There are several goals we still have to achieve in the near future that are not in this plan of action. One of the first ones is to apply for certification and through that process learn more of what we can do. There is also a need to address the local Government, Board of Tourism and the Grenada Hotel Association on the need for support to the industry for making necessary adjustments and assistance in the certification process. The UNWTO clearly recommends the development and support for national certifications of sustainable tourism and the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) is supposed to offer assistance and provisions to stakeholders in the Caribbean region.⁹ We shall work towards its realisation.

⁸ The concept of local spending multiplier effects is the idea that an initial amount of spending, leads to increased consumption spending and so results in an increase in national income. In other words, an initial change in aggregate demand causes a change in aggregate output for the economy that is a multiple of the initial change.

⁹ “CAST’s goals lead to a more competitive tourism product through:

- the implementation of the principles of Agenda 21 in the Caribbean tourism industry;
- the assistance of hoteliers in the effective management of natural resources;
- the provision of environmental expertise and services to members;
- the gain of international recognition for Caribbean hoteliers.

CAST is an agreement between the Caribbean Hotel Association, Green Globe 21 and the International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI). Regional business leaders provided financial assistance for the creation of CAST.

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The Green Roof Inn <http://www.greenroofinn.com>

CAST delivers practical, hands-on services to hoteliers. Its mission is to enhance the quality of the region's hotel and tourism operators by offering education and training on sustainable tourism. CAST also promotes the industry's efforts and successes to the traveling public and other stakeholders and serves as a vital link to all take holders with sustainable tourism interests in the Wider Caribbean Region. CAST offers its members cost savings through more efficient energy, water, and solid waste management initiatives.” (<http://www.sidsnet.org/successtories/2.html>)

Appendix

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

- A. Demonstrate effective sustainable management.
 - A.1. The company has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health, and safety issues.
 - A.2. The company is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labor, and environmental aspects).
 - A.3. All personnel receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health, and safety practices.
 - A.4. Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.
 - A.5. Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.
 - A.6. Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure:
 - A.6.1. comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements;
 - A.6.2. respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition;
 - A.6.3 use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction;
 - A.6.4 provide access for persons with special needs.
 - A.7. Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behavior while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.
- B. Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts.
 - B.1. The company actively supports initiatives for social and infrastructure community development including, among others, education, health, and sanitation.
 - B.2. Local residents are employed, including in management positions. Training is offered as necessary.
 - B.3. Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.
 - B.4. The company offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).
 - B.5. A code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities has been developed, with the consent of and in collaboration with the community.
 - B.6. The company has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.
 - B.7. The company is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions, while restraining child labor.
 - B.8. The international or national legal protection of employees is respected, and employees are paid a living wage.
 - B.9. The activities of the company do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, or sanitation, to neighboring communities.

- C. Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts.
 - C.1. The company follows established guidelines or a code of behavior for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.
 - C.2. Historical and archeological artifacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by law.
 - C.3. The business contributes to the protection of local historical, archeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites, and does not impede access to them by local residents.
 - C.4. The business uses elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.
- D. Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.
 - D.1. Conserving resources
 - D.1.1. Purchasing policy favors environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables.
 - D.1.2. The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the business actively seeks ways to reduce their use.
 - D.1.3. Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.
 - D.1.4. Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted.
 - D.2. Reducing pollution
 - D.2.1. Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are measured, and procedures are implemented to reduce and offset them as a way to achieve climate neutrality.
 - D.2.2. Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible.
 - D.2.3. A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to minimize waste that is not reused or recycled.
 - D.2.4. The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.
 - D.2.5. The business implements practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants.
 - D.3. Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes
 - D.3.1. Wildlife species are only harvested from the wild, consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable.
 - D.3.2. No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities, and living specimens of protected wildlife species are only kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them.

- D.3.3. The business uses native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.
- D.3.4. The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.
- D.3.5. Interactions with wildlife must not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild; and any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and there is a compensatory contribution to conservation management.