

Green Ideas For Tourism (GIFT) for Europe

greentourism.eu Online Tool

Student/Trainee User Manual

1. Introduction

With the growing importance of sustainable development for the European tourism comes a need for better practice-oriented qualification for professionals. We've identified a need by tourism businesses for personnel that understand both the positives of sustainable management on a grand scale and the practical measures, which can be implemented in the enterprises' everyday functioning. The practice-oriented content on sustainable management in the curriculum of European vocational schools is usually insufficient or outdated. The *GIFT for Europe* project aims to improve the market relevance of vocational education and training by creating a free of charge, continually updated source of practical information and examples on the subject – the greentourism.eu online tool.

2. Tool description

The introduction of sustainable environmental practices requires not only a good understanding of the need for better management, but also practical tools needed to make change happen. By presenting real case studies and providing the students with tourism professionals' first-hand experience, greentourism.eu serves as a link between tourism and green economy to strengthen cooperation between the current and future needs of the tourism business and vocational schools. The *tool* gives a realistic overview of the functioning of tourism businesses, and highlights the impact of managerial decisions on the environment in the form of a simulation where the user is able to adjust the business model. By introducing online based educational tools, the ability of teachers to teach environmental responsibility in tourism will be enhanced.

2.1 General features & overview

The *GIFT for Europe Online tool* lets you learn from real case studies and makes a direct link between the environmental footprint of small and medium enterprises, their environmental behaviour and their economic indicators. The project is innovative both in terms of the methodology it uses and in term of the content it offers to schools. It:

- Contributes to strengthening the link between tourism vocational schools and the professional world of the tourism industry.

- Presents outstanding examples of excellence, showing how innovative technologies, are applied in the tourism industry.
- It introduces environmental issues in vocational education in a way that shows the students how to use natural resources sustainably and avoid tourism activities that can lead to the depletion of the environment; it stresses the fact that the tourism industry is dependent on a resilient and functioning environment.
- The tool uses illustration and diagrams to visually organise the information for the environmental management of the tourism business.
- It increases the competitiveness of students on the labour market by introducing them to the latest practices in sustainable tourism management and stimulates them to come up with new creative ideas by solving real case studies.

Electronic, web-based, dynamic content, easily accessible by teachers and students, helps to increase the level of digital competence and provides a comprehensive overlook of the functioning of the tourism industry by highlighting its links to environmental sustainability. The Online tool's relevancy to the latest environmental practices will be maintained by the Teacher\Educator Users' ability to upload more content.

As a registered user with a Student account you can access the tool's entire content and review your Simulations and Tests results.

2.2 Sustainable tourism section

The *Sustainable tourism* section of the *GIFT tool* gives an overview of the principles and effects of socially and ecologically responsible management. It helps to answer the main question "What is sustainable tourism?", explains the importance of sustainable tourism and its main impacts in social, cultural, economic, environmental and political development. This section also provides a glance at the measurement of sustainable tourism as well as current practices around the world. You will also find a test for this section to help you fully understand the topic.

2.3 Case studies section

The project strengthens cooperation between current and future needs of the tourism business and vocational schools, by presenting real case studies and providing users with the industry's responsible managers' experience and will serve as a link between tourism and green economy.

In order to provide our users with an objective view, we have selected good practices from different countries and types of hotels. You can choose to see only hotels from a specific country or of a specific type and you can sort the case studies by their name or the date they were added to the tool. All case studies are presented with vivid pictures and analyses.

Case studies have been arranged following a clear structure to provide insight to various sustainable approaches. The section starts with the stories behind each individual hotel about how they have successfully adopted their own sustainable practices, and then share with you the different views and concepts on sustainability based on real experiences as well as useful data and technical details. You can also check out which green labels and awards the given hotel has received. At the end of each case study, you can find a comprehensive summary where hotel savings have been listed.

2.4 Best practices section

Best practices provide users with practical solutions on how to improve sustainability. In this section, best practices are categorized under 12 topics in sustainability: management and monitoring, water, energy, waste, cleaning, air, green purchasing, communication and environmental awareness, social responsibility, risks, transportation, nature and cultural heritage. Each category focuses on the impact on the environment, the potential in terms of saving, and related solutions.

Some best practices are also illustrated by videos to provide more information on step by step implementation in real hotel environments. At the bottom of each Best practice description you will find the ecomap – a simplified infographic to show the main functional areas in most tourism businesses and to indicate where each practice is implemented.

2.5 Simulations section

This section allows you to try different measures in an attempt to make a hypothetical hotel more environmentally friendly and profitable at the same time.

In this section you will find the following interesting features:

-  An interactive section allowing students to make managerial decisions
-  A single base tourism business example, used for multiple scenarios

- Different scenarios presenting challenges in the following best practice categories: Water, Energy, Waste, Cleaning
- The section lets you choose from a list of measures in different categories, limited by a scenario-specific budget
- Each measure (best practice) has an investment cost, footprint reduction, and maintenance cost reduction (savings) effect
- The effects of your decisions are represented through graphics as part of the mind map
- Which hotels from the case studies have implemented the measures you have chosen in real-life situations.

Within this section, you will learn about the measures' cost-effectiveness and the real-life application of best practices.

2.6 Green labels section

This section provides you with practical information on well-known environmental authorities in different countries, which would help you in learning environment related criteria and improving your own management. Under each institution, we have provided you with website links, organization descriptions, information of geographical level of recognition, justification, and target group in a nutshell.

2.7 Library section

The library provides you with relevant intellectual outputs in the field of green tourism. It also contains various guides, studies and articles from leading humanitarian and scientific organisations, such as universities, the UN World Trade Organization, and the Travel Foundation.

2.8 Test

Here you will find tests for the topics covered in the Sustainable tourism section, and for each category in the Best practices section. You can see your own test results by logging into your account. Your teacher or trainer can use this section to add a personalized test and view your results.

2.9 How to start

As a start, please register on our website to gain full access to its functionality. Fill in the required information and set up a password. You will receive an email containing a link to confirm your registration. If you encounter any difficulty, please feel free to contact us. We would be happy to assist you.

After the registration is done, you can go ahead and learn, share, and contribute knowledge to eco-tourism!

About the GIFT for Europe project

GIFT for Europe is an Erasmus+ project, which gathers leading organizations from different fields – education, e-learning, environment preservation and sustainable development, all of them focused to help people to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The partners have joined efforts in order to bring together their expertise in development education, innovative educational practices, e-learning and innovative managerial practices for sustainable development with the aim of creating an educational tool that introduces environmental sustainability topics in the formal curricula of tourism vocational secondary schools and tourism staff trainings. The role of the student is shifted from a simple receiver of information to an active participant in the educational process, a process in which space is made for new ideas coming from the learner.

Background: Environmental responsibility has been recognized as a key factor for the competitiveness of the European tourism industry, as cultural and natural resources are its main assets. At the same time, the European Commission, within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, is encouraging educational measures directed towards fighting youth unemployment. Special emphasis has been put on vocational education, thus recognizing its potential to provide specific knowledge and skills, which contribute to raising youth employability.

Focus: The *Green Ideas For Tourism for Europe* project (*GIFT for Europe*) is an Erasmus+ KA2 project which seeks to enable and empower students and teachers to take actions in the field of tourism that contribute to creating a sustainable society. In particular, it is aimed at providing a comprehensive and easy to use online tool for teaching sustainable development in secondary schools and professional training programs.

Topics: The most relevant topics addressed by the *GIFT for Europe* project are:

- 🌿 Energy and resources

- 🌿 Enterprise, industry and SMEs
- 🌿 New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses

Goals: The goals of the project GIFT for Europe are to provide outstanding examples on how real businesses in tourism changed their everyday routine to become environmentally responsible enterprises. We hope to inspire students for future actions. The tool contributes to raising the awareness of students from tourism vocational schools about the links between the tourism industry and the environment. The project contributes to the development of highly qualified workers, equipped with the knowledge of environmental management and innovation trends and prepared to face the environmental challenges in the tourism sphere.

Consortium: The project consortium consists of organizations with rich experience in the fields of sustainable tourism management (Ecosystem Europe), environmental policies (SEI Tallinn), global education (Centre for Inclusive Education), e-learning (Context Learning) and a tourism vocational high school (the Vidin Vocational School of Tourism).

Impact: In the long term, the existence of tourism professionals familiar both with the operational challenges of tourism SMEs and the best environmentally sustainable managerial practices contribute to the development of a more sustainable, and therefore more competitive, European tourism industry.