1.1 Towards more sustainable tourism

Tourism is recognised as being one of the world’s main economic activities. In 2000 there were almost 700 million international arrivals, and it is estimated that domestic tourism accounts for ten times more trips than international travel.

Tourism demand was seriously affected by the terrorist attacks in 2001, but appeared to have largely recovered by the summer of 2002. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) predicts that international tourism will continue to grow by 4 to 4.5% annually over the coming years, with levels of domestic tourism also set to increase.

Tourism has a major impact on local communities in tourist destinations. It can be a significant source of income and employment for local people. It can also pose a threat to an area’s social fabric and its natural and cultural heritage, upon which it ultimately depends, but if it is well planned and managed it can be a force for their conservation.

These stakes have led to a recognition of the tourism sector’s need to incorporate the principles of sustainable development contained in Agenda 21, which was adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992. At an international level, the tourism industry has taken certain initiatives towards this, and guidelines are now available that are relevant at all levels of government. Now there is a need to focus on local action, since “the true proof of ‘sustainable tourism’ will be the sustainable development of local communities that serve as tourist destinations”.

According to the WTO, “Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.” The development of sustainable tourism meets the following requirements:

- Tourist resources - natural, historical, cultural and others - are preserved in a way that allows them to be used in the future, whilst benefiting today’s society;
- The planning and management of tourist development are conducted in a way that avoids triggering serious ecological or socio-cultural problems in the region concerned;
- The overall quality of the environment in the tourist region is preserved and, if necessary, improved;
- The level of tourist satisfaction should be maintained to ensure that destinations continue to be attractive and retain their commercial potential; and
- Tourism should largely benefit all members of society.

WTO, Guide for Local Authorities on Sustainable Tourism Development, 1999
1.2 The role of local authorities in sustainable tourism

Traditionally, tourism development has depended on initiatives taken by the private sector. In many countries local authorities have not been closely involved in tourism and have little experience of its planning, development and management.

In recent years this has been changing, and the key role of local authorities is now recognised. This is due to:

- The complexity of the tourism sector, where it is the consumer who is brought to the product and not the other way round, as happens with most other goods and services.
- Increasing awareness that tourists select and respond to destinations, not just individual products. The visitor experience is made up of a complex range of elements including expectations, transport, information, accommodation, attractions, activities, local infrastructure, natural environments, cultural heritage, a welcoming host population, security and other services.
- The disparate nature of the private sector in tourism, much of which comprises small and micro enterprises.
- Acceptance that, in the interests of sustainability, public authorities need to be involved in regulating tourist development in destinations, and not simply leaving it up to the laws of the market.
- The trend towards administrative decentralisation underway in many countries, which increases the ability of local authorities to intervene.

Local authorities are often the best placed organisations for establishing a sustainable approach to tourism in destinations, setting a strategy and balancing the interests of tourism enterprises, tourists and local residents. Their ability to manage tourism sustainably is related to:

- Their democratic legitimacy;
- Their relative permanence and ability to take a long term view; and
- Their responsibility for a range of functions that can influence tourism development, including spatial planning, development control, environmental management and community services.

1.3 The Local Agenda 21 approach

Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 binds local authorities to implementing at a local level the commitments made towards sustainable development by the international community.

A Local Agenda 21 is an approach through which a local community defines a sustainable development strategy and an action programme to be implemented. The approach is usually initiated by the local authority, which provides leadership for the process. Its success hinges on close cooperation between the population, NGOs, private enterprises and other local interests.

The process normally involves five steps:

1. Setting up a Local Agenda 21 Forum and/or working groups;
2. Discussion and analysis of the main local issues;
3. Identification of goals and ideas for action for the sustainable development of the local area;
4. Integration of these goals and ideas into a Local Agenda 21 action plan that is adopted by the local authority and others;
5. Implementation of the action plan, with the involvement of all relevant players.

There is no prescription for what issues and activities the process should address, as all places are different and the principle is to enable partners in each location to identify their own priorities. However, in accordance with Agenda 21, the process should focus on economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) estimates that more than three and a half thousand local communities worldwide are now establishing or implementing Local Agendas 21. Over the coming years their number should continue to rise, thanks to inter-community networking, international information campaigns and the circulation of training guides and other materials (see bibliography).

The next section considers the extent to which the Local Agenda 21 approach has been applied to tourism.
2.1 The incidence of Local Agenda 21s for tourism

There is no precise information on the extent to which Local Agenda 21 processes have been applied to tourism at a destination level. However, the search for case studies to use in this document obtained some insight about this.

The search was for communities that had:

- A global approach to sustainable development, demonstrated by introducing a Local Agenda 21;
- A comprehensive strategy for sustainable tourism, within or linked to the Local Agenda 21, and not merely some individual initiatives;
- Strong leadership by the local authority and a participatory approach.

Examples were found by questioning tourism and municipal bodies and international networks, as well as through the Internet.

The search identified a handful of relevant cases where a truly comprehensive and strategic approach to tourism had been taken that related to Local Agenda 21. The search also found a large number of very interesting local initiatives on sustainable or eco-tourism under the aegis of communities or NGOs, but these were one-off initiatives and not part of an overall strategy.

Three types of destination showed up most strongly as having tourism strategies linked to Local Agenda 21:

- **Islands**. On some islands tourism dominates the economy and may even be the sole source of income and employment. Islands are often environmentally vulnerable, facing problems of resource supply and management (such as drinking water and pollution control) and a concentration of tourism in a limited space. An imbalance in the number of tourists and permanent residents may create tension.

- **Historic towns receiving relatively high tourist numbers**. The LA21s conducted by these towns were often found to cover all aspects of sustainable development, with the relative attention given to tourism varying from place to place.

- **Established tourist resorts**. Most of these were in coastal areas. In many resorts the importance of sound tourism destination management is increasingly recognised by the local authority, often because of past problems with uncontrolled or harmful development.

There may be various explanations for the fact that only a handful of cases were identified:
• A lack of involvement in sustainability issues by tourist destinations. Some places may be reaping the economic benefits of tourism development without seeing the need to make this a more sustainable process. Long-term problems arising from traffic, pollution, price rises, etc. may not be immediately apparent to local residents.

• The difficulty in identifying communities that are taking a strategic approach to tourism. Initiatives taken by the private sector may be more visible than local authority strategies.

• The number of sustainable tourism strategies that are not nominally related to Local Agenda 21. Not everyone is aware of LA21. Several communities contacted did not recognise the term or know what it meant. This varies between countries, partly due to the level of publicity given to the process.

The last of these three points is particularly important. It must be accepted that interesting and effective national, regional or local tourism strategies are also being conducted, drawing on the principles of sustainability and using a participatory approach, but using other names for the process and with no explicit reference to Local Agenda 21. The concern should be for achieving effective results, not about the adherence to terminology.

All of this goes to show how important it is to identify local communities with sustainable tourism strategies, in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and to enhance know-how. Some recommendations to this end are in part 4 of this report.

2.2 The selection of case studies

The selection of case studies reflected the diversity of types of destination and tourism-related issues encountered: mature and emerging destinations, urban, seaside and rural tourism, and regions under both high and more moderate tourist pressure.

The case studies had to have a LA21 coordinator within the community who was able to supply information, and reasonably complete and easily accessible documentation, in English or French.

The following were chosen:

Bournemouth (UK) has 151,000 inhabitants. An established and affluent resort in the South of England, it receives some 1.5 million tourists each year, plus 4.5 million day-trippers. Bournemouth is known as a holiday destination and as a centre for conference and business tourism. In 1995, Bournemouth adopted a “Declaration of Commitment” for a LA21. The Bournemouth Community Plan 2000-2005, signed by 100 partners, was officially recognised as the LA21 strategy in 2002.

Calvià (Balearic Islands, Spain) is a community in the South of Majorca. It has a population of around, 42,000 and 120,000 beds. It is one of the Mediterranean’s leading tourist resorts. It experienced the tourism boom of the sixties, followed by a crisis in the late eighties. Following two years of study and discussion, Calvià approved an ambitious LA21 strategy.
Winchester (UK) has 35,000 inhabitants in the city itself (111,700 in the District). The former capital of England, it has an outstanding cultural and historical heritage in a well-preserved rural region. Tourism is one of the region’s main economic activities. Day trips account for 90 percent of visitors. Since 1997 Winchester has been involved in an LA21 strategy and in an integral quality management approach in the field of tourism.

Storstrøm County (Denmark) covers 24 communities with a total of 260,000 inhabitants. It is an affluent, largely industrial and agricultural region, which is also striving to guide its tourism sector towards sustainability. The County unanimously adopted the LA21 Action Plan in 1997. A long term LA21 strategy is currently being prepared.

Marie-Galante (French Caribbean) is a small island in the French West Indies. It has a population of 12,500. It is an agricultural and rural island that has been left untouched by development. It is striving to develop its as yet very limited tourist activity. The three communities on the island joined forces on their development strategy, and in 1999 adopted a LA21 programme.

2.3 Why prepare a Local Agenda 21 for tourism?
Whatever the level of current response, there are a number of reasons why local authorities should consider developing a sustainable tourism strategy within the context of Local Agenda 21. It will:

• Ensure that tourism planning and development address key issues relating to the economic, social, and environmental impact of tourism in the long and short term;
• Place tourism within the overall context of the sustainable development and environmental management of the community;
• Provide a framework for, and give legitimacy to, the participation of a range of stakeholders in tourism and representatives of the local community;
• Raise the profile of tourism and the tourism strategy within the community;
• Strengthen the position of the authority as an organisation that takes sustainable tourism seriously, with national and international support; and
• Help the destination to attract the attention of visitors and tour operators keen to visit or work with sustainable destinations.

Evidence from the case studies, which describe different problems of tourism development and sustainability, shows that the LA 21 approach can be adapted to different situations and have different objectives for tourism. Four typical objectives for LA21 are listed below.

1. To meet a preventive goal
Bournemouth has long enjoyed a good reputation as far as the quality of its environment is concerned, and its tourist activity is thriving and expanding. The town’s LA21 is of a preventive nature, intended to maintain this high quality environment and attractiveness. It seeks the best possible management of the growth of tourist activity to which it aspires. The town has set itself the target of increasing the number of conference visitors and out of season tourism by 5% by 2005. The strategy of the LA21 is to pursue
awards that would enable Bournemouth as a whole to be marketed as an “environmental” destination.

2. **To address existing problems**
   Calvià has been the victim of uncontrolled growth of tourism, degradation of the tourist product and a drop in tourist numbers. Its LA21 has a curative aim: to restore the resort and the surrounding landscape, to limit the increase in the number of beds, to demolish unsuitable facilities, to improve the quality of amenities, and to develop appropriate products. The LA21 is a genuine long-term overall strategy for reshaping the destination’s approach to tourism development.

3. **To strike a balance between the needs of tourists and residents**
   Winchester is an historic town that is exposed to strong tourist pressure. The LA21 approach looks to limit the downside of tourism as experienced by residents (negative environmental effects, congestion, pollution, risk of degradation of sensitive sites and monuments, etc.). These negative effects are further exacerbated by the remarkably high numbers of day-trippers, who generate a cost for the community whilst producing relatively little economic spin-off compared to overnight visitors. Therefore, the aim of the strategy is to encourage longer-stay tourism and to maximise the profits generated by tourist activity.

4. **To stimulate sustainable development**
   Marie-Galante is seeking economic, social and cultural development based on sustainable tourism, which preserves the environment and respects local populations. It is seeking to establish itself as a tourist destination, building upon its strong cultural identity and the quality of its environment. It rejects the mass tourism found in some other parts of the Caribbean, and seeks self-determination. The local Agenda 21 approach is also a cultural project, which aims to open up future prospects for the population. It sets great store by the social and economic dimensions of sustainability.

LA21 can also be used to achieve a combination of these goals, as illustrated by Storstrom County. These examples clearly show that local communities have very different concerns regarding sustainable tourism, but that the LA21 instrument has proved to be well adapted to their intended aims, no matter how varied they may be. It is applicable to established and emerging destinations, and to those in good condition as well as those with economic or environmental problems. All types of destination potentially face the need to re-think their line of tourism development, and all can benefit from defining a strategy aimed at developing a more sustainable form of tourism.
There are three components of a successful strategy and action plan for tourism in the context of Local Agenda 21:

- Establishing effective structures for multi-stakeholder participation, both in setting the direction for tourism in the community and in working together to develop and manage it.
- Identifying a strategy for sustainable tourism within the context of a wider sustainable development strategy that reflects stakeholders views and that allows tourism management to be integrated with other management functions in the destination.
- Identifying and implementing a set of actions, in line with the strategy, that address the economic, social and environmental sustainability of tourism in the area.

For each of these three elements, the experience of the five case studies has been used to inform and illustrate recommendations to local authorities.

### 3.1 Leadership and partnership structures

A fundamental requirement of Local Agenda 21 is a bottom-up approach, with the local community closely involved in determining a sustainable future for its area. However such a process needs direction and leadership.

Of course, participatory approaches involving both citizens and enterprises are not specific to the tourism sector. Various participation methods have been illustrated in documents on LA21 methodology, and these can be consulted for detailed guidance. This document addresses only the basic structural issues.

**Provide leadership and facilitation through the local authority**

Local authorities are usually well placed to provide leadership on sustainable development and management issues, including tourism. To be effective, they must strike the right balance between leadership and facilitation.

Local authorities often take the initiative for launching Local Agenda 21 and for tailoring it to suit the local situation. They organise and coordinate the participation of others, and implement the actions for which they are responsible. For example, they may provide the various other players with environmental and business support services, such as information, guidance, training, etc., to encourage and enable them to subscribe to the process.

Some authorities will have the necessary skills, including tourism knowledge, to undertake this function. Others may need to acquire them through recruitment, training, or outside assistance.
Clearly, the structure, responsibilities, strength and resources of local authorities will vary from country to country. In some cases, provincial authorities and local municipalities will need to work together, especially in rural areas where municipalities may be too small to undertake the necessary management functions or to relate to viable tourism destinations.

**Involve both the environment and tourism departments**

Frequently, the LA21 process in local authorities is led by departments, councilors or officers responsible for environmental issues, as it tends to be better known in this sector. This is an advantage when tackling issues such as pollution control and habitat protection, but can mean that the community’s economic and social development are not fully addressed in the process. For successful sustainable tourism planning and development it is essential that departments and staff concerned with economic development and tourism, and who understand markets and enterprise realities, are equally involved.

The starting point may vary between authorities. In Bournemouth, the LA21 is led by the environment team, although the tourism department is very much involved and works in close cooperation with them, as do all the Council services. In Winchester the tourism department put a lot of hard thinking into the right type of tourism for the city and was one of the first of the Council’s services to switch over to a sustainable development position. It played a significant role in opening the Council’s eyes to sustainability, and the Council then committed itself to producing a global LA21.

**Seek a high level of political engagement**

The fact that tourism touches so many aspects of society, and cuts across such a wide range of local authority functions, means that it should be addressed at a high level politically and within the executive. This will help to ensure that it is taken into account within the community’s overall policy, with effective coordination between departments. Relating tourism to LA21 can help in this respect.

**Learning from the experience of local communities...**

The skill, experience and acceptance of LA21 coordinators can be a very significant factor. In Storstrøm, for example, the on-going presence since the early 1990s of a team of four people responsible for supporting the initiatives towards sustainable development is an important element in their success.

In Calvià, the LA21 is directly led by the Mayor and his cabinet, which is why not only the local administration, but also private and public partners and the population have rallied so strongly behind it. The tremendous financial stakes attached to tourist activity, as well as the economic clout of the private tourist sector, have led to a particularly marked involvement by councillors in changing the resort’s tourism development policy.

**Ensure that broader LA21 participatory structures involve tourism interests**

The Local Agenda 21 process requires the establishment of a stakeholder group. This can range from a round table or forum with a limited-term mandate...
to a new statutory committee with a long-term mandate. Its purpose is to:

- Create a shared common vision for the future;
- Identify and prioritise key issues;
- Ensure an integrated approach;
- Develop action plans, drawing on diverse experiences and knowledge;
- Mobilise community-wide resources; and
- Increase support for municipal activities.

A stakeholder group might include representatives of local businesses, trade unions, community groups, religious organisations, indigenous communities, or different levels of government, among others.

Within the stakeholder group, it is common practice to establish a set of working groups. These groups might be given responsibility for different stages of the vision and planning process, or be asked to look at specific topics and issues.

Tourism should be integrated into this process by ensuring that the sector is represented in the stakeholder group and the working group structure. In some areas, tourism may be such an important issue that it becomes central to the work of the community’s stakeholder group, or requires the establishment of a dedicated stakeholder group with further working groups looking at specific aspects of tourism.

**Learning from the experience of local communities...**

In Calvià, the Citizens’ Forum discussed an initial expert diagnosis, before splitting into six committees reflecting the six themes identified as central to the development of sustainable tourism: population, social integration and quality of life; local ecology; historical and cultural heritage; economy and tourism; town planning system; and key environmental sectors. These committees included citizens, community organisations and enterprises. The Forum and the advisory committees prepared scenarios and a vision for the future of tourism in Calvià, and proposed actions to make the vision a reality. The LA21 priorities were then defined by the Forum, by using a voting system to evaluate the 10 strategic lines of action, 40 initiatives and 15 immediate actions.

In Bournemouth, 100 influential organisations, including a number of tourism associations and bodies, have been brought together to form “the Bournemouth Partnership” to improve local quality of life. The Community Plan, recognised as Bournemouth’s LA21 strategy, has been built up by the Bournemouth Partnership and endorsed by these 100 partners.

**Ensure that ongoing destination management involves environmental and community interests as well as tourism stakeholders**

Partnership is essential not only for the creation of strategies and action plans but for the ongoing development, marketing and management of tourism in destinations.

Many areas have established public-private partnership bodies, sometimes called ‘destination management organisations’, for this purpose. These are usually independent of the local authority but partly funded by it. Early examples were the Convention and Visitors Bureaus found in various cities. Such partner-
ships commonly involve individual tourism enterprises or representative organisations such as hotel or camping site associations.

It is important to encourage such bodies to promote an interest in sustainability issues amongst their membership and to reflect this in their policies and programmes of action. Local authorities can do this by encouraging them to involve environmental organisations and community groups, not just tourism industry members.

**Consult and inform the wider community**
Clearly it is not possible to involve all citizens directly in LA 21 bodies. However, there needs to be a process to enable everyone to be informed and to have their say about the sustainable development of their community, including the level and nature of tourism development. This can be achieved through:

- Holding open meetings in different parts of the community;
- Maintaining a good relationship with local media;
- Establishing dedicated communication media such as newsletters and websites; and
- Undertaking resident surveys.

**Learning from the experience of local communities...**
In Winchester, a citizens’ panel of 1,600 residents regularly completes detailed questionnaires on all aspects of the Council’s services and strategies, including tourism.

**Encourage initiative from others, not just the local authority**
Another aspect of partnership is that all those involved initiatives should be able to take action. In Storstrøm the “Sustainable Development around Præstø Inlet” project was launched at the initiative of a campsite owner who wanted to bring all actors together for local tourism development. The surrounding municipalities then signed up to the project to develop sustainable tourism for the site.

**Engage the customer (tour operators and visitors) in the process**
The partnership process should be as inclusive as possible. It is increasingly recognised that progress in achieving a more sustainable approach to tourism will require getting the message across to, and accepted by, the marketplace. Tour operators and visitors themselves should be engaged in the process, both by seeking their views and by influencing their actions. It is important to understand their expectations, level of satisfaction, and reaction to sustainability issues and alternative travel and product options.

It is not easy to engage individual tourists directly in stakeholder groups, but they can be brought into the process through regular visitor surveys and through excellent information for them in the destination. Hosts, such as accommodation operators, play an important role in communicating ideas to visitors and passing feedback from them to destination planners and managers.

It is easier to engage representatives of the market, such as incoming tour operators, as stakeholders in the planning process. The views of international operators should be included as well. It is also very important to engage transport providers, as they can have a significant influence on tourist flows and impacts.
LA21s tend to be supply-oriented, the link with demand and the market being a relative weakness. Although market assessment has been an important part of tourism planning in destinations, actual dialogue with visitors and tour operators has tended to be rather limited. To some extent this applies to the case study areas as well. However, some of them, such as Winchester, have developed information-gathering and visitor survey mechanisms.

3.2 Sustainable tourism strategies and local management tools

One of the main purposes of creating partnership structures, as outlined in the previous section, is to prepare a widely accepted strategy for the sustainable development of an area that includes tourism.

Ensure that sustainable tourism is integrated within the overall policies and actions towards sustainable development in the area

The LA21 process involves using the stakeholder group and working groups to identify issues, agree on an overall vision, identify strategic priorities, and establish an action programme. The process requires time and careful consultation.

Tourism should be considered alongside all other issues relating to sustainable development. The relative level of priority given to tourism will vary from place to place, depending on factors such as the current importance of tourism to the economy, the area’s resources, and the desires and aspirations of the community. This is likely to influence how tourism is treated within the LA 21 strategy. Some options include:

• Developing a LA21 strategy for the area, of which sustainable tourism is the dominant component, as in Calvià;
• Developing a LA21 strategy that contains some policies and actions for sustainable tourism. This has been the case with Storstrøm and Marie-Galante. In both cases, there are aspects of the whole LA21 strategy that have a bearing on tourism, not just those that are specifically identified as tourism policies or actions. For example, in Marie-Galante, various actions on agriculture and handicrafts involve tourism;
• Creating separate sustainable tourism strategies and LA 21 strategies, but ensuring that they take close account of each other in the way they are formed and implemented. This has been the approach in Bournemouth and Winchester.

Ensure that the strategy for sustainable tourism is based on sound analysis

While the strategy for sustainable tourism should be integrated into the overall sustainable development strategy, and be developed through a participatory processes involving stakeholders, it is also important that it is based on a sound analysis and framework. This should include:

• An assessment of the area’s socio-economic and environmental circumstances and needs and of how tourism can relate to these;
• An audit of resources and facilities for tourism (including natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, etc.) and an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses;
• An analysis of existing and potential future markets;
• An assessment of existing and potential problems and opportunities brought by tourism, including the environmental performance of tourism businesses;
• A long term vision of tourism in the destination at some future point;
• A set of strategic objectives;
• A set of measurable targets and indicators;
• An action plan, including an indication of resources and responsible players; and
• An identified process for monitoring and review.

Specifically address the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism within the strategy
This is a key requirement of LA21. In the past, conventional tourism strategies have tended to concentrate mainly on economic needs and opportunities. The principles of LA 21 planning include:

• “A systemic approach that addresses the underlying causes of social, economic and ecological problems in an integrated way, focussing on the entire systems that are affected, rather than only problem symptoms;
• Ecological limits that are defined by the Earth’s carrying capacity and serve as the limits for development;
• Equity and justice that are secured locally through the provision of equal opportunities and human rights …”

In terms of tourism, this suggests that there should be an emphasis on issues such as total volumes of tourism, visitor and traffic management, the siting of development, local community attitudes and decision-making, policies towards local employment, access for all without discrimination, retention of income in the local area, etc. These themes are developed further, with practical examples, in Section 3.3 below.

Place special emphasis on the long term vision
This is another fundamental aspect of the LA21 philosophy. Conventional tourism strategies have often focussed on driving a five-year action plan rather than truly setting a path towards future prosperity and sustainability.

Clearly, a long-term vision can be used to guide short- and medium-term actions that may emanate from it.

Learning from the experience of local communities...
In Calvià, it became clear that short-term tourism actions were not sufficient to deliver the necessary change in tourism development patterns. A new vision was required that involved a fundamental change in the whole approach to development and planning.

Make sure the strategy is community-owned and community-driven, but also reflects technical expertise
The partnership structures and processes outlined in the previous section are essential for a tourism strategy based on LA21 principles. The strategy process should be given enough time to enable full participation by stakeholders in identifying issues and ideas and agreeing on directions and solutions. However,
there are also many aspects of tourism planning, such as market analysis or assessment of environmental sensitivity and impact, that require technical expertise that may need to be brought in from outside.

Community-based Issues Analysis is generally advocated for LA21 work. The key to success with this is to link together the use of participant assessment exercises and expert technical assessments. Stakeholders should participate in technical assessments and the findings of these assessments should be provided as final input into the participant assessment process. In this way, the full assessment exercise can be used to educate residents and stakeholders, and technical findings can be used to validate participant observation and knowledge (and vice versa).

**Learning from the experience of local communities...**

The painstaking process adopted by Calvià provides a good example of a balanced use of expert reports on technical issues and stakeholder deliberation and decision-making.

**Integrate tourism into broader planning and management tools and functions**

The recommendations outlined above should ensure that sustainable tourism policies and priorities are reflected in the wider policies of the local authority towards sustainability, and vice versa. However, this synergy should also be carried forward into actual management processes on a day-to-day basis.

There are a number of important management tools relating both to tourism and to sustainable development that may be used by local authorities in pursuing sustainable tourism and the requirements of LA21. Those that have emerged from the case studies are described below.

**Spatial planning.** This is a major tool for organising and controlling development, including building and changes in land use. It is extremely important that sustainable tourism policies be reflected in spatial plans and implemented through rigorous notification and determination procedures. Spatial planning has proved a key tool in Calvià, where the new spatial plan includes the declassification of 1,350 hectares of land previously designated for building, the prohibition of new buildings on rural land and the reduction of maximum population density from 1,708 to 1,491 inhabitants per hectare.

**Carrying capacity or limits of acceptable change.** LA 21 embraces the principle of identifying limits to growth for planning and management purposes. The concept of carrying capacity - the number of visitors that a destination is able to absorb without damage to the environment, community or visitor experience - has been widely debated. It was central to Calvià’s approach. Current thinking suggests that it may be misleading to think in terms of specific quantities, but rather to specify clearly the limits to acceptable change and the processes for staying within them.

**Environmental Management System (EMS).** The individual operations and initiatives carried out by the local authority itself, or supported by it, should comply with sustainability principles. An EMS is an effective tool for ensuring the sustainable management of organisations and improving their environmental performance. EMSs, originally designed for private companies, have now begun to
spread to local authorities. Bournemouth has adopted an EMS-style approach (without referring to ISO standard 14001) and Storstrøm County is set to follow suit.

*Integrated Quality Management (IQM).* This concept, long used by industry, has recently been taken up by tourist destinations. Integrated quality management of tourist destinations is a continuous management process that “should simultaneously take into account and have a favourable impact on the activities of tourism professionals, tourists, the local population and the environment (that is the natural, cultural and man-made assets of the destination)”. It involves setting standards, measuring responses and making improvements. The LA21 process and IQM have many points in common, given that the environment plays a major role in destination quality and IQM covers the destination as a whole. However, the central concern of IQM is market understanding and the quality of the visitor experience, which is only partially true for the LA21 process, if at all. The two processes should be conducted in tandem.

*Environmental charges.* The possibility and benefit of putting a charge on the tourism industry or tourists, to raise revenue for conservation and destination management, has been looked at and pursued in some destinations. A tax introduced in the Balearic Islands including Calvià in March 2002, averaging 1 euro per night, is expected to raise some 60m euros. It has been controversial, drawing opposition from many private sector interests. Voluntary initiatives have been pursued in the UK and elsewhere, but have raised only small sums.

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**Learning from the experience of local communities...**

Winchester has adopted an integrated approach to destination management. By gathering information about visitor profiles, movements and trends, the Council can accurately measure the impacts of tourism and develop policies accordingly. Its experience with IQM enabled the Tourism Department to take the lead on LA21.

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**Set goals, targets, indicators and monitoring procedures**

The LA21 process requires that strategies (including the sustainable tourism strategy) contain elements that help to ensure that the vision is translated into reality. These include:

- Setting goals that are attainable but also sufficient to achieve the vision over time. These should be agreed amongst stakeholders through the use of priority-setting exercises;
- Setting targets that relate to the goals, and that are achievable and measurable.

The LA21 process identifies four key components for an effective evaluation:

- Establishing a system for all key stakeholders to report to each other on the actions they have taken.
- Developing valid and measurable indicators to measure the performance of the area as a whole. Destinations will vary in terms of what is practicable.
- Implementing a comprehensive analysis and review on a periodic basis.
- Establishing ways of letting everyone in the community know about progress and performance.

Besides the indicators created for study purposes, a small number of simple
indicators should also be developed to allow communication with residents, enterprises and tourists. Everyone in the community should be in a position to assess how much ground has been covered on the long road towards sustainable tourism.

3.3 Tourism issues and actions relating to Local Agenda 21

The philosophy behind LA21 is that circumstances in each community will be different and that priorities and actions should therefore be determined by the communities themselves through the processes outlined above. However, a number of areas for action that are particularly relevant to sustainable tourism and LA21, and that have been highlighted by the case studies, are discussed below. These are actions that seek to promote environmental, social and economic sustainability. Many of them benefit all three, and are mutually reinforcing rather than discrete actions.

Improve environmental planning and management in the destination

Some issues and actions involve the physical development of tourism. This can include:

- Location and control of new development. The new strict planning policies towards tourism in Calvià have already been mentioned;
- Rehabilitation of the built environment. In Calvià, the community has purchased key sites, and has demolished unsuitable buildings to recreate public open space and a better-quality landscape;
- Careful design of new development, such as low-impact yacht harbours in Marie-Galante.

Provision of environmental control measures and relevant local services, such as monitoring and improving air and water quality, litter clearance, provision of waste recycling schemes, etc. are all functions of local authorities that are relevant to the quality of tourism destinations. Beach management in Bournemouth provides an example.

Promote more sustainable transport

Transport and traffic management is a major issue for sustainable tourism, including:

- Encouraging use of less polluting transport, with global and local benefits; and
- Reducing traffic congestion, noise, and related problems.

Actions should address transport to and within destinations, and should cover information and marketing as well as physical provision. Examples include:

- Promoting walking and cycling routes and related marketing initiatives in most of the case study areas;
- Provision of integrated transport services on the Bournemouth seafront;
- Gradual replacement of rental cars with electric vehicles in Marie-Galante; and
- More active promotion by destinations and enterprises of ways to reach them by public transport, including offering pick-up services.
Conserve and promote natural and cultural heritage resources
Relevant actions here cover both control and management activity and positive use of tourism to support conservation. Examples include:

• Conservation and restoration projects at specific sites;
• Visitor management initiatives;
• Promotion of natural and cultural heritage themes and features to visitors;
• Methods of raising more support from tourism for conservation, including use of admission charges and encouraging voluntary donations; and
• Improving information and interpretation, including developing events programmes and training local people as guides, as in Marie-Galante.

Help tourism enterprises to be more sustainable
Much of the responsibility for reducing energy and water consumption, waste and pollution, as well as securing more local economic and social benefits, rests with individual tourism enterprises. They can be helped to make their operations more sustainable through a variety of actions, including:

• Training courses and one-to-one advice;
• Provision of guidance manuals supplemented by relevant local information; and
• Financial support for new or existing enterprises adopting sustainability principles.

Learning from the experience of local communities...
The ‘environmentally friendly tourism enterprises’ project in Storstrøm County provides a comprehensive example, including information, training courses, and visits by an environmental consultant. Marie-Galante has provided capital support and training for sustainable development.

Use appropriate certification schemes
Recognition of enterprises that fulfil specified sustainability criteria, through awards and labels, can serve as an incentive as well as raising awareness amongst visitors. In some regions of the world, there has been a proliferation of eco-labels related to tourism. A sensible approach at the destination level involves:

• Making use of existing national or wider ecolabeling schemes where they exist, possibly with some local embellishment, as with hotel certification in Storstrøm County and Winchester;
• Further expanding ecolabeling in relation to other types of tourism, and seeking national recognition for this, as was done with holiday houses on Storstrøm; and
• Seeking to integrate ecolabeling with more general quality labelling procedures, as in the new national scheme in England, to which Winchester and Bournemouth relate.

Further consideration should be given to seeking recognition, awards, and accreditation for destinations as a whole for their sustainable approach to tourism. This has been a motivating factor for Bournemouth, and part of
Storstrøm County has been a pilot area for the Destination 21 initiative in Denmark.

**Prioritise markets that strengthen economic returns**
Many sustainable tourism strategies seek to maximise the economic return they get from tourism without generating significant increases in visitation, especially in the high season where the destination may be operating near capacity. This goal may influence the selection of markets to prioritise in promotion and product development strategies. Examples include:

- Encouraging longer-stay tourism rather than day visitors;
- Seeking higher-spending, year-round visitors, as with Bournemouth’s strategy to attract conference tourism; and
- Promoting special tourism offers out of season, such as “Calvià, the European Winter”.

**Promote the use of local products and integration with other sectors**
Local Agenda 21 calls for an integrated approach to sustainable development. Moreover, minimising the leakage of visitor spending from a destination is often seen as an important strategic priority in sustainable tourism strategies. Tourism can help to support other sectors by increasing demand for services and adding a source of income to individuals and small businesses.

Promoting local food to visitors and tourism enterprises and developing local gastronomy, including traditional recipes, can benefit the local economy, cultural traditions, and landscapes. Winchester has been influencing tourism suppliers to develop their own health-oriented products, promoting farmers’ markets and other local and organic food producers.

**Learning from the experience of local communities...**
In Marie-Galante, the development of tourism is closely associated with support for agriculture and handicrafts, all within the context of the LA21. Here, too, minimum levels have been specified for the use of local services and products by tourism enterprises.

**Spread tourism benefits and opportunities to all**
Social equity is an important principle of LA21. Opportunities for local people to benefit from tourism should be pursued without discrimination. In addition to the participatory measures outlined in the previous section, relevant action includes:

- Promoting employment opportunities widely throughout the community;
- Providing necessary skills training;
- Seeking to improve pay and conditions;
- Pursuing equal employment opportunity policies with respect to race, gender, disability, etc.;
- Making tourism and leisure facilities available to local residents.

Equity principles should also apply to visitors. Relevant action includes:

- Improving accessibility to the destination and its facilities for people with disabilities;
• Promoting a wide selection of accommodation and attractions with a range of prices;
• Maintaining surveys of visitor satisfaction and other feedback processes;
• Taking steps to meet the needs of different types of visitor.

Learning from the experience of local communities...

In Winchester, a particular strategy has been to develop products that spread tourism spending into surrounding communities by linking visits to the city with visits to villages and natural heritage sites in neighbouring rural areas.

Examples of attention to detail from the case studies include the provision of non-smoking beaches in Bournemouth and links between the tourism department and the crime prevention group in Winchester.

Strengthen communication with visitors and local residents

Effective communication is essential to achieve sustainability objectives. This should apply to both local residents and visitors. Some communication actions have already been mentioned in Section 3.1. Examples include:

• Bringing out the special environmental and cultural qualities and distinctiveness of the destination through image-building and marketing campaigns;
• Providing detailed information to visitors on both the qualities and the sensitivities of the local natural and cultural heritage, and guidance on how to preserve it;
• Seeking financial and other active support from residents and visitors;
• Engaging local media in putting across the sustainability issues and action being taken.

For example, providing quality information to visitors before and after their arrival, and communicating with local schools about sustainable tourism issues, are part of the LA21 programme in Winchester.
Part 4: Moving Forward

Promoting the development of sustainable tourism within LA 21 processes

This section presents a summary of action to be taken by governments at an international, national and local level to support a LA21 approach to tourism in destinations.

4.1 International level

Organisations that work at the international level (UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, WTO, WTTC, and ICLEI, among others) have an important role to play in helping local authorities and stakeholder groups in destinations in the sustainable development and management of tourism. These organisations should:

- Identify and better disseminate examples of good practice from tourist destinations - established, recent and emerging - throughout the world that have embarked on LA21 processes (or similar approaches under a different name).
- Support the creation of networks of sustainable tourist destinations, either worldwide or within global regions. The main function of these networks will be to exchange ideas and knowledge.
- Identify policy and planning tools and training requirements that will assist local authorities and destination management organisations to apply LA21 processes to sustainable tourism development and management.
- Prepare and circulate guidelines and advisory material, and promote training and capacity building activities, to meet this goal.
- Encourage more awareness of and response to sustainability issues within the tourism industry, and publicise good examples of partnerships between private companies and local authorities in destinations.
- Identify and support pilot projects to test approaches and guidelines, as well as public/private partnerships and voluntary initiatives based on capacity, willingness and feasibility.
- Gain - and share - more information on the market response to destinations and products that reflect concern for sustainability, such as high-quality environments and cultural distinctiveness.
- Support campaigns to influence international public opinion and tourists’ awareness of sustainability issues, including the promotion of codes of conduct and other voluntary initiatives.
- Identify and promote the use of suitable accreditation and certification schemes.
4.2 National authorities

National authorities have an important role to play in creating the conditions for more sustainable development of domestic and incoming tourism, and providing support for local destinations involved in LA21 processes. They should:

- Build national strategies for sustainable tourism based on dialogue with the private sector, local authorities and NGOs.
- Use their statutory powers, particularly on transport matters, to create the conditions for more sustainable tourism.
- Ensure that national tourism organisations and tourism ministries are actively engaged in addressing sustainable development issues in cooperation with environmental ministries and NGOs.
- Encourage all local authorities to prepare Local Agenda 21 strategies and action plans.
- Mount a campaign to encourage local communities to include tourism in their LA 21 strategies, and to reflect LA 21 processes in their tourism strategies. This should include providing information and support.
- Strengthen capacity building for sustainable tourism in local communities.
- Encourage networking among communities most engaged in sustainable tourism development, nationally and within tourist regions.

4.3 Local authorities

All local authorities should be concerned about the sustainable development of their communities. Tourism may play a greater or lesser part, according to the area’s location, resources, market circumstances and the general desires and aspirations of the community.

The main recommendations to local authorities are presented and amplified in Section 3 of this document. In summary, local authorities should:

- Initiate and support Local Agenda 21 processes, leading to a LA21 strategy and action plan for their area.
- Ensure that tourism is included in the LA 21 process, strategy and action plan. This should be the case with all areas, irrespective of the level of priority that may initially or subsequently be given to tourism.
- If appropriate, and where tourism is a significant issue, prepare separate sustainable tourism strategies and action plans. These should reflect and be associated with the wider LA21 strategy.
- Ensure that all relevant branches of the local authority are involved in planning and managing sustainable tourism in the context of LA21, with leadership and coordination provided at a senior political and executive level.
• Ensure that tourism enterprises, including tour operators and local service providers, who understand the realities of the market place and of running a viable business are involved in planning sustainable development that includes tourism.

• Establish structures to enable tourism, environmental, and community stakeholders to work together on the general Local Agenda 21 for the sustainable development of the area, and on strategies for sustainable tourism associated with it.

• Develop and maintain permanent partnerships for ongoing tourism management in destinations. These should reflect environmental and community interests as well as tourism interests.

• Consult with and involve the wider community and visitors in these processes.

• Develop a widely accepted long-term vision of tourism in the context of the sustainable development of the local area, and identify actions to achieve this vision.

• Give equal attention to economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism in strategies and actions.

• Integrate sustainable tourism into more broadly applicable planning and management tools and functions, such as spatial planning, environmental management, economic development, and marketing and information services.

• Set clear goals, targets, and indicators for sustainable tourism and regularly monitor and communicate performance and progress with respect to them.

• Work with relevant stakeholders on a set of agreed-upon actions. Give attention to: planning and development control; transport; conservation and promotion of natural and cultural heritage; influencing and assisting private sector enterprises; reducing economic leakage and integrating with other sectors; ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities to local residents and visitors; strengthening communication with all concerned; and other issues as may be determined locally.