

**Good Practice Story Title:**

Join us! Harnessing Collective Wisdom to Promote Sustainable Tourism

Destination: *Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area*

Country: *Taiwan*

Submitting Organization: *Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area Headquarters.*

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing*

Destination description:

Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan is a popular tourist destination renowned for its natural beauty and cultural history. After a major earthquake in 1999, the local community worked together to rebuild, revitalizing the tourism industry. However, the thriving tourism has had negative impacts on the environment, leading to a shift towards sustainable tourism. Over the past 24 years, the area has focused on creating a sustainable tourism environment, promoting low-carbon transportation and traditional indigenous culture.

Summary of Good Practice Story:

Since joining GD, we have started to rethink the development vision of Sun Moon Lake based on the GSTC's Destination Guidelines, and at the same time began to think about how we can work together with stakeholders such as local operators, residents, and other public departments to collaborate, link up, and expand our sustainable influence towards green tourism. OneLife Hostel, a GTS-certified local business owner, initiated the Pure Pool campaign and called on the participation of the SUP industry to join in with the local Shao culture to launch the 'Challenge of a One-Day Trash-Free Trip'.

Even though most of the participants were passive at the time, we actively promoted the Sun Moon Lake Good Neighbour Project: free recycled cups and free drinking water. Through board games, we were able to have more conversations with our stakeholders. Gradually, we found that the stakeholders had changed from passive participation to proactively raising the issues they face and the actions they want to take in the future.





In order for more stakeholders to recognise, understand, and be willing to take the first step, we used open meetings to allow different perspectives to be presented to each other. In the course of group discussions, we were able to reach a group consensus that would allow stakeholders to have more empathy for sustainability and for sustainability actions to flourish at the destination.

Issues faced:

Although we continue to promote sustainable development plans, we set relevant, sustainable development goals every year and encourage businesses to participate in international sustainable tourism certification. Currently, four businesses have obtained sustainability certification: Two Feet Poetry Concept Hotel (CU-GSTC & GTS), Fleur de Chine Hotel (CU-GSTC), Onelife Hostel (GTS), and JI CHAO STORY HOUSE (GTS), and have also set their own corporate sustainability goals and action strategies. However, most local businesses still need a comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism, so we (destination managers) need to think about, design and optimise the content of sustainable practice plans every year. In the beginning, these action plans were mainly designed from the perspective of destination managers, lacking consideration from the perspective of other stakeholders (because they still lacked a clear core goal for sustainable development). Therefore, promotion stakeholders are easily influenced by the market's various true and false sustainability messages, making it impossible for them to make quick judgments, and the overall operational effectiveness still needs to meet expectations.

We realised that we were only completing projects during the board game and that the participants needed to understand how much each project would help our planet. So, at the end of the first half, everyone realised that the situation differed from what we had thought. At the beginning of the second half of the game, the participants consciously adjusted their strategies. They invested their time in projects that they were interested in and valuable. Our planet began to generate energy changes, and even after the game ended, everyone continued to reflect on the twists and turns of the process.

Because of this, the stakeholders began to have a common topic, and from the feedback of the game process to the projects of their respective companies, everyone started to enthusiastically talk about the problems they are currently facing, the ways they expect to cooperate in the future, and their imagination of the sustainable development of Sun Moon Lake sustainable development; after the event, we (destination managers) also used a questionnaire to understand further the actual input of different stakeholders, which served as a reference for the adjustment of our various sustainable action plans.





Solution:

Over the past few years, we have actively promoted sustainable development, fostering a sense of inclusion and participation among our stakeholders. In January 2022, we collaborated with the CU-GSTC-certified Fleur de Chine Hotel to co-host an SDGs sustainability workshop. This workshop, designed as a board game, was a platform for tourism operators, local residents, and schools in the area to experience the importance of SDGs through practical actions. We encouraged participants to consider the impact of their personal behavior on the economic, social, and environmental aspects of Sun Moon Lake, and to initiate action plans to reduce single-use waste.

To continue learning and draw on the sustainable experiences of other public and private sectors, we held a study tour in July 2023, inviting sustainable seed stores in the jurisdiction and members of the sustainability team in the agency to visit several representative companies in the country. Including O'right, a company that focuses on green hair and skin care products, how they achieve their goal of becoming a zero-carbon enterprise and their daily sustainable practices; the cooperation model between the tenant operators of the Heping Island Geopark and the public sector, and the local operators in the Northeast National Scenic Area, such as Note Shuangxi, how they promote the development of sustainable tourism products in the community. The cooperation model between the tenant and the public sector in the Heping Island Geopark, and how local businesses in the Northeast National Scenic Area, such as the Note Shuangxi, promote the development of sustainable tourism products in the community.

We further challenged ourselves to organize a more open and consensus-based sustainable camp. This sustainable camp was a valuable learning opportunity, engaging multiple stakeholders in an open discussion format. It allowed each participant to raise issues of concern and work together to explore feasible action plans for the future. During the meeting, we gained a lot of insights and shared different ideas and opinions. The sustainable seed stores clearly expressed their desire to further establish a consensus on business models and hoped to accelerate sustainable operations through the connection of products in the tourism industry chain. For those stakeholders who have not yet fully understood the stakes of sustainability, it was an enlightening experience to discuss and exchange ideas with more stakeholders.





Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

- A. Establishment of a cooperation model for sustainability seed stores in the jurisdiction:
Through the annual systematic planning and arrangement, we guided stakeholders to gradually move from understanding the sustainability principle to actual participation in action. We provided two types of cooperation models to the business operators with a consensus on sustainability:
- A-1) Our low-carbon tourism products, designed and promoted through activities, have a significant impact on the environment. By establishing a feasible business model, we link the sustainable actions of business operators through tourism industry chain products, enabling faster operations. This approach also makes it easier for tourists to participate in sustainable tours and understand their importance in preserving the environment.
- A-2) Based on the characteristic elements of the natural environment and culture of Sun Moon Lake, environmental education courses (outline) are designed by the regulations of the Environmental Education Act to educate the participants (tourists, students or the general public) to understand the ethical relationship between people and the environment, to enhance their knowledge, skill, attitude and value about environmental protection while promoting participants to value the environment and to actively change their existing behaviours with positive actions based on their own will.
- B. Sustainability incubation method for other stakeholders: During the discussion process of the Consensus Camp, stakeholders propose possible future solutions for their concerned topics and subsequent action plans for cooperation with others, such that from experience in the failure of sustainability promotion shared by others, stakeholders can reduce the time to establish a successful strategy and more excellent opportunities of the action plan implementation can be increased. The results of the incubation of each stakeholder include:
- B-1) Accommodation providers should not provide disposable amenities to reduce waste generation and should consider whether the ingredients of shower gel and shampoo are harmful to the water environment.
- B-2) At the local school, the National Chi Nan University, we have initiated a series of sustainability training courses. These courses empower students to understand and incorporate sustainability into their daily business management practices, thereby taking the first steps towards sustainable development.
- B-3) In addition to our ongoing efforts to promote reusable cups, local catering businesses have also begun actively promoting reusable utensils in place of disposable ones.
- B-4) We are also actively promoting the 'use of electronic tickets or mobile payments to enjoy half-price discounts on Taiwan Tourist Shuttle tickets' programme to reduce the number of tourists driving themselves.





Achievements and Results:

- A-1 In 2022, industry operators organized a one-day tour focused on waste reduction following two waste reduction sessions. Additionally, there were other activities in 2024, such as the SUP Lake Cleaning & Waste Reduction Action, Electric Boat & Aboriginal Culture Guided Tour, Native Plants and Aboriginal Finishing Culture Links, and Circular Container Fabrication and Utilization. The tourism products are continuously adjusted to integrate with the internal group training of private enterprises, with a focus on low-carbon offerings. For example, Delta Electronics, Inc., a world-leading supplier of power management and cooling solutions, follows the business philosophy of "Environmental Protection, Energy Saving, Love the Earth." Since 2017, the company has established a sustainable management organization and participates in the Conference of the Parties (COP) annually. In 2021, the company joined the RE100 initiative and has been committed to implementing sustainable actions for an extended period. On December 2, 2023, the company organized a two-day Employee Annual Consensus Camp in the Sun Moon Lake area, including activities such as cycling around the lake, extreme climbing, and group raft building to establish group trust. During the event, 45 employees picked up 9.4kg of waste and reduced the use of 240 disposable utensils.
- A-1 Based on the two waste reduction one-day tour initiated by the Nantou County Sun Moon Lake Water Tourism Recreation Development Association in 2022, in addition to SUP clean-up & waste reduction activities, electric boat & aboriginal culture tours, and native plant planting, the connection between Indigenous fishing culture & the preparation and use of recycling containers, etc., in 2024, it will be combined with internal training for private enterprises and flexibly adjusted to suitable low-carbon tourism products. For example, Delta Electronics, Inc. is a global leader in power management and thermal solutions. The company has long been committed to sustainable action and held a two-day, one-night staff training event in the Sun Moon Lake area on December 2, 2023, where they participated in activities such as cycling around the lake, extreme climbing, team raft building, etc., to build team trust. The two-day event allowed 45 employees to pick up 9.4 kg of waste and reduce 240 waste cups.
- A-2 The Fleur de Chine Hotel operator is developing environmental education courses, "Green Corridor Policy" and "Circular Eco-bottle," for hotel guests and the public. These courses are in a trial teaching stage and are expected to be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Executive Yuan in 2024 to become official.
- B-1: Currently, some businesses have agreed to stop providing disposable supplies. The Ministry of Environment, Executive Yuan has also established the "Restrictions on the Use of Disposable Toiletries and Implementation Method," which will take effect on January 1, 2025.





B-2 The Nantou County Government and National Chi Nan University are collaborating to organize the "Nantou Sustainable Tourism Lecture" series. The plan is to offer monthly courses on sustainability, low carbon emissions, and greenhouse gas inventory inspection to help local businesses understand international tourism trends. In 2024, a total of 9 lecture sessions were organized.

B-3 Since June 2022, we've collaborated with other businesses to promote a circular cup rental service. By April 2024, 1,108 sets were rented out with a return rate of 83%. Fleur de Chine Hotel encouraged tourist and employee use of circular cups. In 2022 and 2023, 774 and 586 circular cups were used, respectively. A-cong's Hakka Restaurant in Shuili District promoted QR code meal ordering and eco-friendly lunch boxes, involving 9 local businesses and 3,000 participants in a recycling initiative.

B-4 In 2023, the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle Sun Moon Lake Line served 769,323 passengers, a 28.4% increase from 2022. A shuttle line connecting Checheng and Sun Moon Lake served 11,883 passengers in 2021, 14,203 in 2022, and 18,957 in 2023, showing a clear increasing trend.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

Previously, we independently created plans and proposed yearly implementation content, making understanding stakeholders' expectations challenging. We've established a dialogue platform to invite stakeholders to suggest topics and action plans, fostering open and transparent dialogue for consensus building. This has helped us establish a cooperation model for sustainability seed stores and drive various chain actions of other stakeholders. Such a chain effect and cooperation is more efficient than our unilateral efforts or actions like a multi-horse carriage.

Under an inclusive framework, we systematically plan and connect with sustainability seed business operators to guide them continuously. We also provide assistance to different levels of business operators to find specific and feasible business models. For operators still learning about sustainability, we organize seminars and plan topics to encourage their participation. We continue to promote sustainable development and encourage business operators to participate in the international sustainability certification of CU-GSTC (Green Travel Seal). This helps us establish common links with other domestic business operators with sustainable tourism certification, thus expanding the market influence of sustainable tourism.





Recognitions and Additional References

A-1 https://www.facebook.com/story.php/?story_fbid=830982682368395&id=100063700124744&_rdr

B-1 <https://enews.moenv.gov.tw/Page/3B3C62C78849F32F/14df312e-1fb9-4c68-8dca-9d02cb5a15eb>

B-3 https://issuu.com/cw_event/docs/_-aoc_-_0301

B-4 <https://www.taiwantrip.com.tw/holiday/index.html>

