

Recommendations Network of European Islands for the development of sustainable tourism

Contents



I. Introduction



II. Community-Led Solutions for Small Sustainable Islands



a. Lowering the impact of visitors' waste - Removing waste bins on Saint-Honorat



b. Controlling the impacts of maritime transport to an island and visitors numbers – the example of Saint-Honorat



c. Managing change at the coast – the 'Shifting Shores' approach on Brownsea



d. Choosing an appropriate sewage treatment system – the example of Brownsea



e. Engaging people with nature and gaining their support – the example of Brownsea



f. Tackling the issue of waste and involving tourists in the process – the example of marine litter on Mausund



g. Initiating a plastic-free process on your island – the example of Zlarin



III. Some tips to include in your management strategies



IV. Want to take it a step further?

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



I. Introduction

Although islands account for only 5% of the earth's surface, they host 20% of terrestrial plants and vertebrates and 600 million people depend on island ecosystem services for their sustainable development. Islands are also popular destinations, as they include some of the finest and most sought-after touristic places; tourism is one of their key economic sectors. Islands' natural appeal are one of their main assets, as well as their unique blend of lifestyles, cultures, land formations, flora, fauna, ocean and coastal resources. They see their population increase sharply during the high season, in Europe, from May to September, with a peak in attendance in July and August.

Tourism plays an ambiguous role in the preservation of these characteristics. On the one hand, tourism contributes to the exacerbation of the challenges faced by islands: biological resources, ecosystem services, and waste and water management. On the other hand, tourism can become a real development and preservation tool, by raising awareness and even financing the conservation work through revenue generation.

That's why, to keep that "mystique of islands" alive and thriving, islands should implement sustainable tourism policies in all areas including environmental, economic and socio-cultural.

Moreover, islands, although often isolated, share many characteristics, in particular those related to tourism and its challenges. It is thus essential for these islands to be able to work in a network, to exchange knowledge, know-how and inspiration for adapted solutions.

The project "Network of European Islands for the development of sustainable tourism", lead by SMILO in partnership with the islands of Brownsea (United Kingdom), Mausund (Norway), Saint-Honorat (France) and Zlarin (Croatia), and funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, aims to meet this need for more exchanges between small European islands.

As part of this project, each island welcomed the partners for a 3-days on site visit, allowing the partners to discover the island, initiatives and specific challenges of tourism, as well as sustainable development management strategy. They met local partners involved in tourism and the island's management, part of the *Island Committee*, a governance body created under the **SMILO certification process**. This Committee brings together representatives of various stakeholders on the island around a shared vision of the development of the island. The project partners exchanged good practices, tips, and knowledge, and experts from the the SMILO network also conducted training sessions on topics linked to tourism, and welcoming visitors.

The present document aims to share the project results with small European islands and beyond. You will find below good practices, as well as concrete tips, which we hope will inspire you and site managers from islands all over the world.

About the partners

SMILO – Small Islands Organisation



Visit our [website](#) to know more about **SMILO!** For any questions, you can also contact **SMILO** at secretariat@smilo-program.org.

SMILO (Small Islands Organisation) supports small islands of less than 150 km² that wish to work toward managing their territory more sustainably. It aims to curb impacts linked to human activities and development, whilst fostering innovation on islands that benefit the population and their environment. The Sustainable Island label developed by SMILO rewards the positive local dynamics and sustainable practices in the fields of water and sanitation, waste, energy, biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage. Today, over forty islands are members of the SMILO community, driven by a mind-set of cooperation and solidarity between islands.

Brownsea – National Trust (UK)



3 KM²
DORSET, CITY OF POOLE
30 PERMANENT INHABITANTS
140,000 VISITORS/YEAR
ISLAND NATURE RESERVE, SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION FOR HEATHLAND, SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA FOR BIRDS, RAMSAR SITE

The island of Brownsea is the biggest of the eight islands in Poole Harbour in the south of England. All 300 hectares are the property of the National Trust. Brownsea is known for its outstanding biodiversity and for being the birthplace of the scouting

Visit their [website](#) and their [Facebook page](#) to know more about the **National Trust!**

movement. Every year, the island attracts some 140,000 tourists. Since its acquisition by the National Trust in 1963, most of the island has been accessible to the public.

The National Trust is a charity founded in 1895 by three people who wanted to protect the UK's natural and cultural heritage for everyone to enjoy. To date, the National Trust protects 1255 km of coastline, 248,000 hectares of land and more than 500 castles, ancient monuments, gardens, nature reserves. National Trust properties include Brownsea Island and is supported by 5 million members.

Mausund – Eider As Mausund Feltstasjon (Norway)

7 KM²
COUNTY OF TRØNDELAG, NORWAY
200 PERMANENT INHABITANTS
5,000 VISITORS/YEAR

The island of Mausund in Norway is a small fishing village. It stands in the municipality of Frøya, within the county of Trøndelag, south of the Froan Nature Reserve, which comprises over a thousand islands with very rich biodiversity. Its outstanding ecosystems are mainly threatened by marine waste and aquaculture production. The island is located in the middle of ocean currents that deliver substantial amounts of marine litter from all over the planet.

Visitors to Mausund are made aware of the impact of waste through local initiatives and clean-up campaigns. Eider As



Visit their [website](#) and their [Facebook page](#) to know more about **Mausund Feltstasjon!**

Mausund Feltstasjon aims to lead the field in the battle against marine waste (in terms of knowledge and innovative solutions), and more generally, protecting the environment.

Saint-Honorat – Our Lady of Lérins Abbey (France)

0,4 KM²
SOUTH-EAST OF FRANCE, ALPES-MARITIMES DEPARTMENT, CANNES BAY
21 INHABITANTS
110,000 VISITORS/YEAR

Saint-Honorat is a 44-hectare island, part of the Lérins Islands archipelago, in the south-east of France. The island has had a monastic vocation since the 5th century and is the property of the Cistercian Congregation of the Immaculate Conception. The community maintains the monastery and produces wine, olive oil and liquors. There is a guest-house for spiritual retreats welcoming around 3000 persons each year. Very popular with tourists, the island welcomes 100 000 visitors per year. Protected by its Natura 2000 status (terrestrial and marine), the island must raise public awareness to encourage better touristic practices.

The Abbey is the partner representing Saint-Honorat for this project. The community is in charge of the reception of tourists on the island and is engaged in the promotion of sustainable tourism, by organizing regular workshops on this topic.



Visit their [website \(in French\)](#) and their [Facebook page](#) to know more about **Our Lady of Lérins Abbey!**

Zlarin – Zlarin Tourism Board (Croatia)

8.19 KM2
WEST OF CROATIA, ŠIBENIK COUNTY
296 PERMANENT INHABITANTS
2,000 VISITORS IN SUMMER



Zlarin is an 8.19 km² island located in the west of Croatia. Its environment is mostly unspoiled since cars cannot circulate on the island and the level of urbanisation, concentrated around the port, is low. Zlarin is known for the red coral and sponge exploitation. The current challenge is the preservation of the environment and coastline while developing new and sustainable economic activities for the 270 yearly inhabitants and 2,000 seasonal tourists.

Visit their [website](#) and their [Facebook page](#) to know more about the Zlarin Tourism Board!

The Zlarin Tourism Board is the partner representing Zlarin for this project. It has been engaged in the promotion of sustainable touristic activities for many years, leading several initiatives, such as the “Zlarin Zero Plastic” initiative.

Associated expert partners

We thank all the associated expert partners that have shared some valuable insights that are highlighted in section III:

- **Parc national de Port-Cros (France)**

- **Conservatoire du littoral (France)**

- **CPIE – Permanent Initiative Centre for the Environment – Lérins (France)**

- **Corinne Van der Yeught (IAE de Toulon, France)**

- **National Trust: Emma Stokes, Olivia Gruitt, Tony Flux (United Kingdom)**

- **Chris Weedon (United Kingdom)**

- **Action for Ocean (Norway)**

- **Blue Competence Centre (Norway)**

- **Bernt-Erik Sæther (Norwegian University of Science and Technology – NTNU)**

- **John Linnell (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research – NINA)**

- **Tatavaka association (Croatia)**



II. Community- Led Solutions for Small Sustainable Islands

The project allowed the partners to share best practices in relation to sustainable tourism and nature protection. The present section aims to inform and inspire European island managers, and beyond.

a. Lowering the impact of visitors' waste - Removing waste bins on Saint-Honorat

WHAT WERE THE ISSUES?



Until 2019, the island of Saint-Honorat had 54 wastebins spread over the island (no selective

sorting). In 2018, 59'180 tonnes of waste were brought back to the continent to be selected and treated, a costly operation. The presence of waste on the island could also have a visual impact on the landscape, as well as olfactory nuisances. Rats and gulls scattered the trash around the bins. The Abbey hence decided to remove the outdoors waste bins as part of their management plan.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- 54 waste bins all around the island have been removed during summer 2019.
- Visitors have to bring their waste back to the mainland (Cannes).
- Visitors who need a bag to bring their waste back can ask for a recyclable paper bag to the restaurant of the island or the Abbey's shop.
- The community actively informs the visitors and raises awareness on the impact of waste on the island: they carry regular awareness campaigns, in particular:
 - When visitors take the boat to visit the island, an audio message in French and English informs them of the initiative, explaining how sensitive the environment is and why it is important to preserve it, and respect the spirit of place.
 - On social media and Internet.
 - On the island, monks regularly answer visitors' questions.

- Visitors awareness-raising by teams of young volunteers throughout the summer
- An employee of the Abbey regularly patrols on the island to collect waste that is still thrown away in nature. They have noticed that it is essential to collect this waste immediately, otherwise people are more prone to throwing waste in the same place.



Figure 1: Information poster about the removal of waste bins on Saint-Honorat

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- The volume of waste collected on the island has dramatically decreased (by 46 % - in 2020, a year impacted by covid, hence the numbers could prove to be higher in the coming years)
- The island is cleaner without waste bins
- Fewer boats are needed to bring the waste back to the mainland, therefore reducing the cost and environmental impact of the island's waste management, as well as impacts on the landscapes
- Close to Saint-Honorat lies the island of Sainte-Marguerite. It has been observed that more people, in particular pleasure-boaters, throw their waste on Sainte-Marguerite, instead of going back to the mainland. The wastebins will also be removed on Sainte-Marguerite in the summer 2022. It is therefore recommended to view archipelagos as a whole, and coordinate, when possible, such policies.

Saint-Honorat's overall successful waste management has been rewarded with the Waste Sectorial Award within the Sustainable Island Label process, created by SMILO.

Lead by the Lérins Abbey, with the support of the Cannes Pays de Lérins Agglomeration community, the City of Cannes, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tourism Board.

Recommendations to improve waste management:

Remove waste bins on the island

As a general rule, it has been observed that more waste bins on an island generate more waste. Removing waste bins decreases the volume of waste that needs to be sent back to the mainland. Transporting waste entails CO2 emissions, impact on marine ecosystems (noise, pollution, etc.), and important costs for island managers.

Start informing the visitors before they reach your island

It allows them to better prepare their visit on the island and better accept your environmental policies, such as removing waste bins. There are a handful of tools to do that: on the Internet (when booking boat tickets or other offers on the island... and don't forget to partner with your local Tourism Office, many tourists visit their website to prepare their trip!), social media, on-site raising-awareness campaigns, local medias,...

Try to make the process as easy as possible for visitors

By making paper bags (or other sustainable item) available if they don't have a bag to bring their waste back, and provide well-kept and easily accessible on-land facilities to sort their waste

Monitor the island and collect the waste that is still thrown away in natural spaces

If waste is left somewhere, visitors tend to see it as a disposal site and it might quickly become a de facto waste bin.

Your island is part of an archipelago? Make sure that the strategy is applied to the whole archipelago

The removal of trash bins on an island may lead to an increased volume of waste from pleasure-boaters on the other islands of this archipelago, if they are closer than the mainland.

b. Controlling the impacts of maritime transport to an island and visitors numbers – the example of Saint-Honorat

WHAT WERE THE ISSUES?



Since the 60s and 70s and for a few decades, many boat companies have offered numerous maritime shuttles, including for example a half-a-day visit of both Saint-Honorat and the nearby island of Sainte-Marguerite, resulting in an uncontrollable development of mass tourism. The Abbey thus wanted to gain more control on the visitors' influx in order to better preserve the island, via the management of their own maritime shuttles.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- A long legal battle lasted more than 10 years before the Abbey became the legal owner of the boat company and have the control of sea shuttles.
- The Abbey then acquired 2 boats (capacity: 196 and 136 passengers) and one barge (capacity: 180 passengers and 26 tons of vehicles).
- The Abbey recruited a crew that shared the Abbey's vision to preserve the island.
- Tickets for a visit including both Saint-Honorat and Sainte-Marguerite have since been cut.

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- The number of visitors on the island is more regulated: the monks know how many people are on the island and can adapt the number of boats depending on the season, and even the weather conditions.
- The trip from Cannes to Saint-Honorat becomes a powerful communication tool. Messages encouraging visitors to respect the environment and spirit of place are shared with visitors prior to their arrival on the island.
- The monk community can control the boat frequency and schedule them according to their needs (for supplies, construction material etc.).
- 4% of the boat ticket price go to the protection of the island through the [French Barrier tax](#).

c. Managing change at the coast – the ‘Shifting Shores’ approach on Brownsea

WHAT WERE THE ISSUES?



The geology of the island of Brownsea is made up of sands, gravels and clays, and so it is subject to coastal erosion. Due to climate change, the island is also affected by rising sea levels. Some parts of the harbour are already changing, a phenomenon which was already predicted by old data from 50 years ago: some parts of UK, including Brownsea, are sinking. Some buildings already have adapted structures, and defences were placed along the coastline in the 1970s. By the early 2000s, the metal and wood defenses had started to degrade and had a negative impact on the beautiful landscapes and represented a hazard to shipping and people on the island. They also were no longer functioning as sea defenses.

Moreover, the government’s policy is to participate in paying for the protection programmes only if these will protect valuable (from a financial point of view) sites or buildings.

The National Trust’s objective was to solve this erosion issue by removing the defenses to establish a healthy coastline shaped by natural forces, with low-cost solutions.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- The National Trust conducted cost-effectiveness studies and agreed on a Coastal Adaptation Strategy based on the National Trust’s coastal policy ‘Shifting Shores’.
- In 2010, after the studies, all coastal defenses on south and west shores were removed: it is an application of the principle “work with nature, not against it”. Evidence from other coasts and our own monitoring shows that, as sediment is released through allowing erosion to occur, this builds up on beaches and creates a profile that better protects the coastline from erosion than hard defenses. This process works better the higher the percentage of whole coast lines that are allowed to erode naturally. The National Trust policy does not preclude defense where high economic, biodiversity or human benefit are prevalent at justifiable cost. However, long term, there will be a need to recognize that, in the end, defenses cannot be maintained and a managed re-alignment implemented
- Most of the coastline is now open to natural erosional processes, but where valuable infrastructure is prone to occasional flooding, they decided to not conduct huge engineering work. Instead, small “Floodstop” units (0.5-meter high) are installed when needed in front of the buildings to prevent small-scale flooding. These units are made of heavy-duty plastic, filled with water and interlocked. Further ‘adaptations’ rather than ‘defenses’ will be used to extend the life of this infrastructure until managed realignment requires them to be taken out of use and re-established further inland.
- These measures should be effective to enable these facilities to continue to be used for the next 100 years or so. The approach is adaptive and is bound to change along with the coast



Figure 2: Example of small "Floodstop" units deployed around the harbour on Brownsea

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- The removal of the defenses made the access to the beaches easier and restored the beauty of the shores
- The sea can now come and go naturally, carrying and dropping sediments as wave energy allows, which allows a facilitated roll-back and a natural shaping of the coast
- Priorities shifted towards the protection of key sites without using or building major infrastructures: the aim is no longer to protect the coast as it is at all costs, but rather to preserve it for as long as possible in a non-intrusive way
- Wildlife and their habitats enjoy more space and have greater chance to adapt naturally and gradually to the changes of the shores

Learn more by watching the [short film](#) about this initiative!



Figure 3: Extract of the short film about the Brownsea Island Shoreline Restoration Project

Recommendations to maintain a healthy coastline:

Look at the benefits and the drawbacks of protection structures

For every specific case, for both short and long term, undertake an option review taking into account financial cost, environmental and social impacts i.e a 'triple-bottom-line' assessment.

Favour 'adaptation' of building to accommodate rising sea levels

These tend to be low-cost solutions, e.g. raising electricity cabling/sockets higher up to the walls, rather than large scale engineered sea walls or other defenses. Heavier infrastructure might a good solution for only specific areas on your island. For example on Brownsea, we are investing in coastal infrastructures like piers and jetties for a life span of around 50-100 years. We have decided on a 'maintenance-only' for other infrastructures like our lagoon wall, accepting that the sea will start to overtop more regularly and we must allow habitats to begin to change and evolve.

Plan for the long-term

For example, knowing the expected sea level rise and the possible evolutions of the coast. However, keep in mind that a strategy can only be valid for a certain amount of time (based on climate change adaptation scenarios and plans). Our government-prepared and stakeholder-agreed 'Shoreline Management Plan' has 3 'epochs': Short term to 2027, Mid term to 2057 and Long term to 2107. Each part of the UK shoreline has an agreed policy: HTL Hold the Line, MR Managed Realignment and NAI No Active Intervention.

For Brownsea the agree policy within the Shoreline Management Plan is as follows:

Town Quay	Short Term (to 2027) HTL	Mid Term (to 2057) MR	Long Term (to 2017) NAI
Remainder of Island shoreline (inc lagoon)	NAI (special definition in SMP*)	NAI	NAI

Work with nature not against it

Accept that your island landscapes will change in time. Example of the removal of defenses. And our brackish lagoon will eventually become a sea inlet again as the wall installed 200 years ago is overtaken by the sea. Nearby habitats such as reed beds will also change depending on topography to something else, e.g. saltmarsh.

Promote the idea of an adaptive approach

Example of small "Floodstop" units as primary shoreline defenses. Building modifications such as temporary barriers for doors for when flooding is intermittent. Increasing ability to pump water to remove water to re-establish access more quickly if lost during flood events. Raise level of tracks/paths to extend life during intermittent flooding. Plan for when this is no longer viable, i.e. managed realignment. This usually means planning to move facilities further away from existing coastline but is not always possible due to ownership/planning restrictions, i.e. in situations of coastal squeeze.

Involve the public and communities, Work in partnership, Think and act in a wider context

For example, taking into account the whole ecosystems and adaptation processes and not only the conservation of the actual state of the coast. Brownsea Island is part of a landscape scale National Nature Reserve and works with the government, local councils and other landowners to manage this scale where the need to provide for protected species might be possible over the wider landscape where it is not possible on the island itself.

E.g. our small colonies of Sandwich and Common Terns are unlikely to be able to continue nesting on Brownsea

following loss of the lagoon wall, so we need to plan for allowing or creating appropriate habitat in nearby coastline.

Make space for nature at the coast

At an even wider scale, work with others to try to:

Ensure that the coastal corridor is continuous, unbroken and free from barriers to movement: heavy infrastructures (such as concrete walls) might result in blocking species from freely moving to where they need to go (nesting or resting areas for example)

Create a recognised and safe coastal path for all to enjoy: by clearly identifying an itinerary for people to walk around the island without taking paths made dangerous by erosion for instance and without disturbing the key ecological areas

Through partnership working, widen an existing coastal amenity area such as a path to include adjoining land. Sometimes this is farm land that could make more space for nature by farming in a less intensive or more wild-life friendly way. Government-sponsored grant schemes where available can enable farmers to do this.

d. Choosing an appropriate sewage treatment system – the example of Brownsea

WHAT WERE THE ISSUES?



Most of the existing treatment infrastructures were rather old, costly and risky: the pollution risk to soils and potential aquifers by sewage was high. These structures were also not practical, as they needed to be emptied and cleaned regularly. The maintenance process and the infrastructures impacted visitors' experience: they often could see the tanker transporting sewage and the septic tanks

sometimes smelled bad. The National Trust therefore decided to upgrade the treatment system.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- The National Trust studied various scenarios and possibilities, with their advantages and drawbacks. The reflection took into account the financial, legal and technical aspects. Options considered were:
 - Remote septic tanks – upgraded
 - Remote vertical flow reed beds
 - Remote package treatment plants
 - Centralise and export to mainland
 - Centralise, and use upgraded on-island sewage treatment works
- Given the sensitivity of the aquatic environment, the remote systems that would have required some discharge into Poole Harbour, these were not viable. Following a comparison of costs and benefits of the remaining two options: centralise and export to the mainland and centralise and treat on the island, the latter options was chosen.
- All waste from outlying buildings is now pumped to the central sewage treatment works and this has been upgraded significantly to deal with all year round waste and to provide emergency treatment capacity.
- A flowsplitting chambre, a rotating biological contractor, a second final settlement tank, new pipes, as well as composting bays were added to the existing treatment structures.
- The elements of the new system, as well as the engines, were transported to the island and installed: this operation represented a complex logistics and civil engineering work.

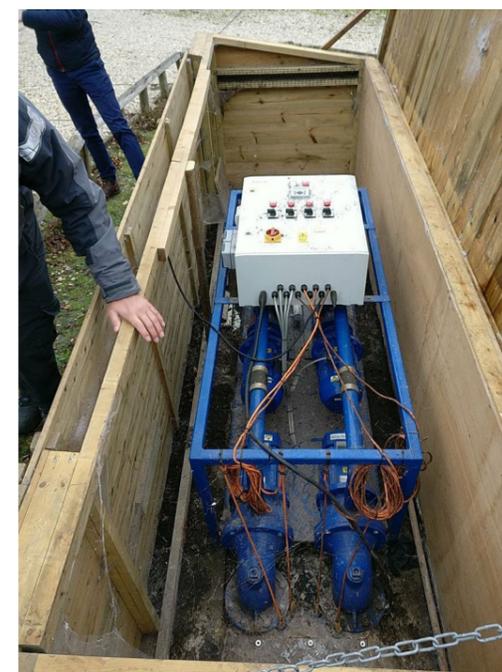


Figure 4: The flowsplitting chambre allows to choose whether the wastewater goes to the old infrastructures or to the new ones

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- The combined treatment system was completed in 2019.
- The sewage treatment system no longer impacts on visitors, is more easily managed by staff and contractors, and is more automated with electronic alarms systems to on and off-island staff and contractors.
- It has been working properly since then, with discharge maintained below legal limits (constant monitoring process is conducted, including the collection of samples to evaluate the efficiency of the treatment).
- End products of composted waste and dried sludge are currently exported off the island. This is significantly more cost effective than wholesale export of untreated waste.
- It was interesting to see the decision and thinking process, and how the views of the organisms involved (locals, the National Trust, the government...) changed through the process, as various solutions were explored

Recommendations to improve sewage treatment and management:

Undertake an audit of current sewage management facilities

To determine if there are any significant issues – e.g. use technology to view the inside of pipework to identify any leaks

Monitor existing facilities to establish a base line and understanding of efficiency of current treatment

The National Trust found even old equipment was working very effectively and better than anyone thought

Involve key stakeholders with a review of options for improvement

This would likely include statutory authorities such as Environment Agency and Natural England in UK.

Engage a sewage treatment expert to work alongside you in delivering your project

Although an additional cost, their knowledge will provide invaluable short cuts and new ideas. For example, they will probably already know which technology would be best in your situation and at the very least know the characteristics, the advantages and drawbacks of each possible solution.

Re-use of end products should be investigated and options will depend on the quality of your end products

But export to biomass and anaerobic digestion facilities may be possible.

Keep in mind that civil engineering work is harder on an island (logistics-wise), in order to choose a feasible system

e. Engaging people with nature and gaining their support – the example of Brownsea

WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE?



The National Trust wanted to develop a strategy to welcome people and engage the audience to natural issues and preservation of the island, through

powerful experiences with nature. It implies the creation of a variety of activities to adapt to different audiences.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- The National Trust identified the key characteristics of Brownsea to understand what makes this place special, including the concept of 'Spirit of Pace', how the visitors see Brownsea, and what to do to improve their experience on the island
- The National Trust prepares programmes that include 5 pathways for tourists to feel closer to the place they are visiting:
 - Senses: listening to birds for instance,
 - Emotion: focusing on the positive feelings nature can inspire, such as calm and happiness,
 - Compassion: developing a moral and ethical concern for nature, and finding ways to make it show in our daily lives, by making ethical product choices for instance,
 - Meaning: focusing on the seasonality of the sensation, such as the smell of the first flowers in spring,
 - And beauty: engaging with the aesthetic qualities of nature, by appreciating natural sceneries for instance,
- They shared the information on their website and through panels onsite, including a model showing what the island will look like after the restoration programmes are completed: for instance, how the coastline and its shape are expected to change after the removal of defences.

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- Visitors have all the tools to become long-lasting supporters, ensuring the long-term survival of the National Trust and its work on Brownsea
- Visitors can enjoy an enhanced experience and better understand the island

f. Tackling the issue of waste and involving tourists in the process – the example of marine litter on Mausund

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

Mausund is located at the heart of marine currents, which drag a lot of waste. It ends up sinking or getting stuck on the islands and the islets of the area. Mausund thus faces a double challenge: collecting and managing the waste (1,500 m³ were picked up by Mausund Feltstasjon in 2021); raising awareness of tourists without discouraging them from coming because of marine litter. They have to find a balance between two possible paths: hiding the problem and not talking about it at all; or being true and tackling the issue, with the risk of having no more tourists coming if they see the island as a very polluted site. At the same time, the media attention surrounding these challenges and the ongoing clean-up work, has led Mausund Feltstasjon to be “placed on the map” and many tourists want to be involved in their work, as part of their holiday experience.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- Visitors can discover the work led by Mausund Feltstasjon. To get a sense of this experience, during the workshop, the project partners participated in the cleaning process.
- They present it in a positive way: they start with a boat tour around the archipelago to let people know how beautiful it can be when it's free of waste.

- They explain why and how marine litter arrives in the area, by showing models and animations picturing the movement of discarded items carried by sea currents.
- They give the visitors bags to collect waste only after these preliminary steps. Visitors then experience first-hand the collection of marine plastic waste.



Figure 5: On the way back from an islet where we, like visitors, experienced the impacts of plastic pollution

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- Visitors are sensitized with a positive approach: they learn about the root of the problem, understand how it happens, and how important it is to reduce the effects of plastic waste by collecting it. They also know how beautiful the area will look like after the trash is picked up. In this way, they can actively participate without feeling intrigued, suspicious or put off by the sight of plastic waste.
- By experiencing first-hand the work of Mausund Feltstasjon, people can feel more concerned about plastic waste and marine litter. This has a much bigger impact than reading panels and is therefore more efficient to raise awareness about these issues, while giving a unique holiday experience to visitors.

Recommendations creating activities for visitors as a mean to raise awareness on sustainable development and protecting the environment:

Openly talk about the issue and present the work of local organisations

Tourists will probably see the issue, for example marine litter anyway, so it's better if they know in advance that the issue exists on your island. They will also be aware of the fact that locals are working on it.

Explain why there is a specific issue, i.e plastic waste in the area and show how beautiful your island is when it's preserved

So that people won't feel like the island is too dirty to come back, they will understand the reasons of this issue. They will probably spontaneously want to collect marine litter themselves to participate in working towards a cleaner and preserved island.

Propose a first-hand experience to visitors by making them participate in the solution, for example waste collection

To bring commitment in their personal life. This activity can be implemented as part of ecotourism offers.

g. Initiating a plastic-free process on your island – the example of Zlarin

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

The use of single-use plastic was an issue for the island. Many of them were used on a daily basis by locals and business, and it increased during events.

Such items had a visual impact on the island once they were discarded. Moreover, it was also a cost for business owners who had to buy them: the budget of plastic bags could represent up to a full month of salary every year.

The first goal was thus to reduce single-use plastic items in particular, as well as plastics in general. The plastic-free initiative came from the outside. The association Tatavaka and a group of people started the idea, through cultural activities.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION, AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- Zlarin participated in the Adriatic Plastic Challenge, with the project of becoming a plastic-free island. The name of the initiative, 'Za Zlarin Bez Plastike', means they are going towards this objective.
- The project won and received a small grant of 2,000 euros.
- A social experiment led by 3 volunteers. The focus was on single-use plastics. Indeed, even if a big part of plastic waste comes from packaging, it was harder for them to have an impact on it as volunteers. They based their work on EU Directive on single-use plastics from various categories: plastic cups, cutlery, bags, etc.
- They prepared a questionnaire, listed all the products from the Directive. They then asked to all business how much of these items they used. 12 entrepreneurs, and 5 NGOs joined the objective of become zero-waste. They have listed 1 620 single-use items.
- Reduced: 113 000 plastic bags, 12 300 disposable cups and 36 700 other plastic disposable items (data from 2018.)

- Media attention worth 1.628.299,63 EUR
- Total reach: over 37 million people
- They also studied other examples of islands that implemented similar initiatives, and identified solutions to replace single-use plastics, such as reusable cups, with a tax to return. These items were distributed to business owners.
- Cigarette butts is another category in the Directive: they thought about the measures they could implement. Small ash trays were distributed for free in the tourist office. It was always voluntary, with workshops, projections, etc. They also organised actions to pick up cigarette butts, etc. knowing they can't charge fees.
- Education programmes were the top priority.

WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

- Business owners were interested in the initiative. When Zlarin won the challenge, the message from the media was "Zlarin is going plastic-free". Within a few days, older people started the discussion saying they were used to more sustainable solutions.
- Sustainable solutions were implemented on the island, which reduced the negative impact of plastic waste. The initiative got people engaged for the protection of their island. Moreover, it also decreased the associated costs for business owners.
- Through this initiative, they also revived the local association Tataavaka; they can now lead new projects, and support people creating new sustainable initiatives.
- Zlarin can now be used as an advocacy example to encourage other locations in Croatia to choose more sustainable alternatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO HEAD TOWARDS A PLASTIC-FREE ISLAND

- Start with a list of items that are you would like to ban, and identify alternatives that are easily replaceable.
- Find incentives to start a plastic-free initiative, in particular economic, or through media coverage.
- When possible, make life-cycle assessment to make sure the alternatives aren't environmentally more impactful than plastic items.





III. Some tips to include in your management strategies

IF REVELANT

a. People flow management

Carrying capacity:

Determine your site's carrying capacity

The notion of "carrying capacity" is complex and has no universal definition. However, many site managers who want to or already welcome many visitors, have this question in mind: how many tourists can my island welcome, and under what conditions? Concretely, you can approach this question in several ways, including:

- Evaluate which is the criteria you want to highlight to analyse the carrying capacity. For instance, the Port-Cros National Park decided to look at the visitors' satisfaction rate, and found out that beyond 6'000 visitors per day, half of the tourists said they were bothered by the attendance (crowded beaches, too many bikes, etc.)
- Evaluate the legal tools available to you according to your status and the laws applicable in your country: is it possible to limit the number of tourists? Who is involved in the regulation of the attendance? For instance, in France, a law allows the regulation of tourists in protected spaces under certain conditions.

Identify the possible levers to not exceed the determined tourist load capacity

Information, incentives, regulatory measures, adapted facilities can be put in place. For instance: online reservation for boat tickets to avoid long waiting lines on the dock, compulsory advance reservation to be able to go to the island, creation of a calendar so that tourists know when there are more visitors, limitation of the number of bikes, etc.

Show only realistic pictures of your island

It is not rare to see advertisement with beautiful sites,

perfect light and nobody on the picture. We all want to share the best with our visitors, but also avoid overcrowded place, and disappointment if visitors end up discovering a not so quiet and uncrowded place.

Coordinate with local organisations that organise activities on your island (Tourism Board, local associations, etc.)

To make sure that their messages are coherent with the preservation measures implemented on the island.

Signage and visitors' charter:

Create a charter for visitors coming on your island

Such a document summarises the key ideas to protect your beautiful island and offers visitors to commit to respecting them. Try to:

- Determine the objective of your charter: would you like your charter to be used as an awareness-raising tool? Would you like your charter to create a link with visitors so that they decide themselves to adopt the right behaviours during their stay?
- Adopt a positive and engaging communication: favour positive sentences so that visitors still feel free, the charter is more likely to be accepted and respected by visitors if it is not seen as a list of constraints.

Install only the minimum necessary information boards

Try to:

- Use a minimum number of information boards to lower their visual impact on the landscapes: On many islands, several institutions have the power to install information boards: coordinate with them to agree on a common information board to avoid multiplication of boards.

- Group them in strategic areas (mostly at the entrance point(s) for visitors).

Pay attention to the readability of key information

Identify the key elements you absolutely want visitors to remember. They should be easily visible, readable, and highlighted compared to purely informative content. Also, prefer an aesthetic plan map rather than a too technical and complex one.

Limit the number of pictograms to 7 (5 ideally)

Studies show that over 5 to 7 pictograms, visitors don't pay enough attention as there is too much information. Also, try to keep the same style for all the pictograms

Highlight all the locations worth visiting, other than the most popular and well-known activities

Favour a plan that not only shows the most popular areas, such as beaches, but also other locations that are worth seeing on the island, and that you want to keep open to the public.

Translate and adapt the information for foreign visitors

It is important to translate information if your site welcomes many visitors. Texts should be shorter, and translation be provided for the most important elements only to avoid too much visual information on one board.

Choose resistant and sustainable materials that integrate well in the landscapes

So that the boards will last in time (avoid extra costs) and won't impact the beautiful landscapes of your island

Directional signs: test them once they are installed (ideally with people who don't know well the island)

b. Development of a strategy for your island

Data management and strategy building

Collect all the available data about your island

Including the ones related to sea level rise, biodiversity and the evolution of key species' populations. Indeed, these data are essential to understand the current state of the natural resources and to enable a good management that secures their long-term survival.

Be cautious in case data is lacking

It might be difficult to start a decision or strategy process before having all the information on key topics; if data are missing, it is better to favour the precautionary principle.

Involve local stakeholders in the building of a strategy for your island

It allows a consensus building process, which will result in a common and shared vision of the future of your island. The challenges faced by each stakeholder as well as the competences or knowledge they have to offer will be clear. Everyone can work on the development of participatory scenarios and identify drivers of change that can be motivating for each stakeholder. For instance, you might want to involve:

- Local organisations and associations: they can facilitate the existing and new sustainable tourism solutions for both visitors and inhabitants, through communication or the organisation of events for instance.
- Inhabitants: they know their island better than anyone, including its history and the links with other areas around. They probably already know what

they wish tourism on the island would look like and how to achieve it. It will also allow policy-makers to understand what is vital for the inhabitants that should be preserved above all (for instance: cultural identity, agriculture...).

c. Tips on having a productive workshop

Favour on-site workshops

It allows a direct exchange of knowledge and know-how as well as a better comprehension of the context on the ground. More specifically, try to:

- Favour several days on site
- Dedicate one day for the other island partners to discover your territory, by:
 - presenting your management strategy if you have one, or overall objectives
 - organising meetings between local stakeholders and the partners from other islands: each local stakeholder can explain its role on the island, its vision, and the other islands can introduce their territory to local partners. This helps your project partners to better understand life on the island and the role of everyone.
- Share your valuable know-how, by identifying a few solutions that you have implemented to inspire your partners: take your time (plan at least 20-30 minutes for each good practice) and share the details. Sometimes, it is also about sharing why a solution has not worked, and why.
- Make the most of the presence of partners to:
- ask them input for ideas you are planning: for instance, a brainstorming session was organised

in Saint-Honorat to improve the existing map of the island for the reception of visitors. The monks community wanted for example the know how to best highlight on the map where are the places to discover, but also to prevent visitors from going in certain areas, without however banning them officially from visiting those areas.

- strengthen your advocacy campaigns: you are pushing for the adoption of a solution for a determined issue on the island but, for instance, your local partners are not yet convinced or even reluctant, you can invite a partner who has already successfully implemented it to share its experience, and respond to questions.
- Identify with your partners precise subjects on which you think you lack information or knowledge, and identify experts that can provide a training presentation. For instance, practical tips to implement an efficient signage in natural sites.

Offer the partners to first-hand experience part of your activities

So that they will better understand your role and activities on your island, and why it's important for a sustainable tourism and resources management process.





IV. Want to take it a step further?

There are thousands of great **tools** that already exist. Here's some ideas if you want further guidance on achieving a more sustainable tourism on your island.

About Sustainable Tourism

The “MEET manual”, a [guide to plan and promote ecotourism activities](#) and measure their impacts in Mediterranean Protected Areas, developed by the [MEET Network](#). This network of Mediterranean Protected Areas develops ecotourism experiences aiming to benefit conservation and local communities. If you’re interested, you can [become a member](#) of the MEET Network.

A free, online [training on Ecotourism in Mediterranean Protected Areas](#) following the MEET Network methodologies and tools

A guide on “Measuring Tourism’s Impact” by the Travel Foundation is available [here](#). The Travel Foundation is an international sustainable tourism organisation dedicated to ensure that tourism has a positive impact on destinations.

The World Bank published a [document compiling tools and resources for nature-based tourism](#).

A [guide on engaging communication](#) by the CPIE (Permanent Centre for Environmental Initiatives), in French.

An [ecological footprint calculator](#) to measure the impacts of the tourism packages offered by your island.

About related-topics that will have an impact on visitors’ experience:

The National Trust’s [Shifting Shores approach](#), and the [2015 Shifting Shores report](#).

SMILO will publish a guide on sustainable sanitation on small islands by the end of 2022.

... And overall strategies that might be great food for thought too:

The [strategy promoting a transnational year-round tourism for Mediterranean destinations by the WinterMED partnership](#)

Developing ecotourism in protected areas, based on the experience of 9 Mediterranean regions of the [DestiMED Plus](#) program



Bibliography

Introduction:

Sheldon, P. (2005). The Challenges to Sustainability in Island Tourism. 12p.

Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237594447_The_Challenges_to_Sustainability_in_Island_Tourism

Graci, S., Dodds, R. (2010). Sustainable Tourism in Island Destinations. 30p. Available online: <https://www.routledge.com/Sustainable-Tourism-in-Island-Destinations/Graci-Dodds/p/book/9781844077809>

Sharma, D., Bjoor S., Ramesh, M. (2019). Tourism Today in the Andaman Islands: An assessment of challenges through two case studies. Dakshin Foundation, Bengaluru. 45p.

Höjman, C. et al. (2022), Macro plastic from fisheries and aquaculture: Knowledge status, preventive measures and knowledge needs [86fbb05caef9d3050f3b5d681d682aa38d608692.pdf](https://sanity.io/86fbb05caef9d3050f3b5d681d682aa38d608692.pdf) (sanity.io)