TOURISM IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

Guidelines for Product and Communication Managers for the Implementation of Human Rights-Related Due Diligence

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IMPRINT

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TOURISM IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS – HOW TO SCOPE WITH RISKS?

Political instability, unrest or upheaval, social inequalities or natural disasters – many factors can have an influence on tourism in the destinations. These factors represent the partly fragile framework in which tourists move about a country.

In post-conflict situations, tourism is often one of the first sectors to experience a new boom – after 26 years of civil war in Sri Lanka, for instance, and when the dictatorship in Burma had come to an end. Tourism promises new investments and employment. Rapid development, however, may also lead to grievances or may even fuel latent conflicts. In many cases, governments promote the sector even before actually having initiated a serious process of reconciliation and comprehensive recovery. In this process, ecological and social standards are often disregarded, and the rights of local people overlooked.

In fragile situations, tour operators are faced with special requirements of human rights related responsibility. The Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism has looked at human rights violations in the development of tourism in Sri Lanka. Our observations suggest that tourism enterprises operating without due diligence run the risk of tolerating human rights violations, or of aggravating conflicts. It is important for them to first get to know and understand the local situation.

Especially in post-conflict situations, implementing human rights related responsibility requires additional measures by companies. In order to be able to assess the impact of business operations on human rights in a post-conflict area, both the conflict and the current situation need to be carefully analysed. In particular, it is essential to keep posing concrete questions to all the actors involved.

This guideline provides tour operators with a set of questions that may serve to identify human rights related risks. It is to be understood as complementing the 'Implementation Guideline Human Rights in Tourism' **http://www.menschenrechte-im-tourismus.net/en/implementation-document/guideline.html**. This new guideline provides product and communications managers with recommendations for practical implementation. It is based on the experiences and the work of members of the Roundtable in Sri Lanka. The recommendations are based on measures that have been tried and tested in practice and specify tangible options of what tour operators can do. They are meant to help in identifying the range of risk situations. They may be used across countries and may be developed further by the respective companies. In this guideline, the Roundtable highlights another dimension of corporate due diligence in fragile human rights situations and supports tour operators in meeting their special responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

1. DESTINATION CHECK:

How do I assess the general situation in a destination? Basic analysis of a destination which in each case needs to be carried out once, before deciding on a product

a. Proceed by taking into account the conflict that has affected the region

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ What were the causes of the conflict, who were the parties involved?
- ✓ Is there a master plan for tourism development in the region, taking ecological and social factors into consideration, and which has jointly been developed with the population, and has been adopted with their involvement?
- ✓ Who are my business partners and where do they stand in the conflict context?
- ✓ Who benefits from tourism development on the long run?
- ✓ Which groups of the population might be affected by human rights violations due to the current development of tourism? What are possible remedies?
- ✓ Are there supportive measures for disadvantaged groups of the population, e.g. educational initiatives, legal advice?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Identify independent sources of information, e.g. federal ministries (Federal Foreign Office, Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), NGOs (international and local), trade associations, relevant local stakeholders (e.g. agencies, existing business contacts), international organisations (e.g. Danish Institute for Human Rights), conflict-sensitive local experts, country representations (e.g. consulates, foundations)
- ✓ Dialogues with various stakeholders in the destinations (e.g. companies, authorities, civil society groups)
- ✓ Clarify the strategies of possible business partners to respect human rights in the destinations
- ✓ Treat all information with great care and without bias, also in case of statements and information that may be contradictory

b. Business Management

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ Summary of results to assess the situation

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Taking results into account in the implementation of further steps planned

2. QUESTIONS ON ACCOMMODATION AND TOURISM PRODUCTS IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS:

What do I need to pay attention to when selecting my partners and service providers in the destination?

a. Ownership and land acquisition
Public access to resources such as water for the local population

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ How and by whom were new tourist resorts built?
- ✓ Were local residents resettled prior to construction?
- ✓ In cases in which people were resettled, were they consulted beforehand and did they receive adequate compensation?
- ✓ Was the local population involved in building the tourist resort?
- ✓ Is access to public space generally ensured for all?
- ✓ Does the local population get equal access to public space and resources as the tourism enterprise?
- ✓ Who is the current owner of the business partner's enterprise?
- ✓ Does the operator offer measures of support for employees (accommodation, training, empowerment of women etc.)?
- ✓ Have the living conditions of local people deteriorated (e.g. costs of living, working conditions, small-scale entrepreneurship)?
- ✓ Is there any ongoing conflict between the management of a tourist resort and the population?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Clarify ownership
- ✓ Consult stakeholders who represent the local population (e.g. interest groups, trade unions)
- ✓ Self-assessment by stakeholders using a questionnaire
- ✓ Check with human rights organisations (e.g. Danish Institute for Human Rights, Institute for Business and Human Rights, Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute)
- ✓ NGO contacts

b. Composition of staff of accommodation and tourism service providers

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ How many percent of their staff are from the vicinity?
- ✓ What is the composition of local staff?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Ask business partners
- ✓ Check with hotel association
- ✓ Consult stakeholders
- ✓ Contact persons in the management

c. Participation of farmers, fishermen, local crafts enterprises, food and beverage suppliers in tourism development

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ Does the business partner work with coopera-tives and partners in the region to support local value addition?
- ✓ Does the business partner support education and training measures in tourism development?
- ✓ Which ethnic and religious groups of the popu-lation are involved in hotel businesses or in or-ganising tourist trips?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Get information from business partners about suppliers and local partnerships

d. Particular diligence with regard to groups at risk

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ Does the business partner have a policy that also encompasses the protection of vulnerable groups (children, members of minority groups, etc.)?
- ✓ Is there any evidence available (e.g. cooperation with local NGOs, certification, awards)?
- ✓ Has the business partner signed a child protec-tion policy (e.g. The Code)?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Request the business partner to provide docu-ments (e.g. HR policy, recruitment policy)
- ✓ Obtain information on partnerships and projects with NGOs, etc.

e. Tourism products in the destinations

What do I need to consider?

- ✓ Are local traditions, cultural sites and nature protection zones respected in the tourism prod-ucts?

How can I implement it?

- ✓ Gather information (e.g. from agencies, NGOs)

3. QUESTIONS ON COMMUNICATION:
How do I advertise the product?

a. Authentic presentation of the country and the conflict in customer information

What do I need to consider?

✓ Does customer information include information on the country, on the conflict, and on the living conditions?

How can I implement it?

✓ Tips and background information in the home-page

✓ Further sources of information mentioned in catalogues

✓ Avoid reinforcing stereotypes or role definitions which have got entrenched during the conflict

b. Recommendations for tourists before and during their trip

What do I need to consider?

✓ What should customers pay attention to while travelling?

✓ How can tourists contribute to respecting human rights?

✓ How do I raise tourists' awareness of the issue of child protection in the context of tourism?

How can I implement it?

✓ Own documents including recommended code of conduct and recommendations for travel preparation

✓ Recommendations for further reading, websites

✓ Handouts at the destinations or information provided by local guides

✓ Flyer „Little Souls, Not For Sale" enclosed with travel documents
tinyurl.com/little-souls-pdf

✓ Include information on possibilities for tourists to report suspected cases of sexual exploitation of children: in the website (insert red button), in travel catalogues and in the travel documents for guests
www.reportchildsextourism.eu/?lang=en%20

✓ Obtain feedback from tourists upon their return, using questionnaires

EXPERT ADVICE ON IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE COMPANY:

This guideline has been produced for product and communications managers and complements the 'Implementation Guideline Human Rights in Tourism' **www.menschenrechte-im-tourismus.net/en/implementation-document/guideline.html**.

Companies that are part of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism and have already integrated human rights due diligence into their daily operations offer ideas and recommendations for its implementation and introduction:

» Appoint a team member who will obtain specific knowledge on these topics and who will support the work as a contact person of all team members.

» Discuss the questions and findings in team meetings in order to jointly develop the process and to make decision making on a product transparent and comprehensible for all.

» Continue to develop the recommendations document, specifically adapted to your company's business model: Not all the questions apply to each product. However, some new aspects will emerge, e.g. with regard to specific target groups or activities in your programme. From the recommendations document you may thus develop a basis for decision making that matches your product.

Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism e. V.

The Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism is a multi-stakeholder initiative promoting human rights in tourism. It is organised as a non-profit association. It is an open platform to encourage companies, organisations and institutions in their commitment to respect human rights in tourism.

Participation is open to all institutionalized actors that can identify with the principles of the Roundtable. It comprises tour operators, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), travel associations, certification bodies and multipliers.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which describe the human rights due diligence for businesses, serve as framework for the activities of the Roundtable.