BEST PRACTICE: COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Key Challenge

Changing consumer preferences towards more sustainability.

Type of Solution

Stakeholder participation and management; Promotional campaigns; Digital Solutions.

Case Classification

Type of Destination | Urban

Territorial Level | NUTS 2

Size of the Tourist Area | 2,862 km² (Greater Copenhagen)

Population | 1.4 million in 2023 (Greater Copenhagen)

Type of Tourism | Coastal, maritime and inland water; Cultural; City; Business; MICE.

DMO | Public-Private-Partnership with different business divisions.

Main Stakeholders Affected | Tourists; Local residents; ALL tourism service providers.

Additional Challenges Covered | Spatial and temporal concentration of visitors; Insufficient or declining acceptance of tourism; Lack of community participation in tourism activities; Lack of visitor participation in tourism development.

Context & Background

With a turnover of EUR 4.2 billion and 29,900 full-time jobs (2022 in the city of Copenhagen), tourism is an important industry that attracts visitors with its port, cultural attractions and gastronomy scene. Overnight stays have doubled in the last decade and will exceed 11.65 million in 2023. Copenhageners are known for their sustainable lifestyle.

Key Challenge

Even though Copenhagen has not yet reached the limits of its capacity, there is an awareness that the strong growth must be balanced to avoid visitor pressure in certain areas. Tourists should be inspired by the Copenhagen lifestyle and adapt to actions that can lead to a positive change in terms of more climate friendly actions. The destination of Copenhagen wants tourists to be involved, inspired and part of the sustainable transformation of the city.

Implementation of Solutions: In order to spread the Copenhagen lifestyle and encourage visitors to behave sustainably, numerous communication and nudging campaigns were developed and implemented in addition to expanding the sustainable tourism offer.

SOLUTIONS

- *Sustainable Choice CPH* is a project (2021-2024) based on the sustainable tourism strategy "*Tourism for Good*" and aims to accelerate the sustainable transformation of Copenhagen's tourism industry and motivate Copenhagen visitors to make sustainable choices during their stay. Also, the *Planet Copenhagen Manifesto*, launched in 2022, underlines the ambition to create a destination that is seen as an environmentally friendly destination by visitors and inspires them to make more sustainable choices.
- *Development of Sustainable tourism* as the basis to enable visitors to make sustainable choices, such as "*GoBoat*", the rental of solar-powered boats made of recycled plastic, or "*Norrebro*", self-guided tours through unknown neighbourhoods that disperse the flow of tourism while promoting local trade and consumption of local products.
- A *sustainability guide to Copenhagen* on the DMOs visitor *website* aims to inspire visitors to behave more sustainably with sustainable offers such as cycling opportunities, more sustainable food options, shops with locally produced goods, meeting places for locals and visitors to do shared activities.
- The *Copenhagen Sustainability Guide 2.0* was developed as a planning tool for business events, congresses and meetings with the aim of minimizing the carbon footprint and creating a positive and sustainable impact.
- *Copenhagen Legacy Lab* The Copenhagen Legacy Lab uses congresses and events to develop targeted and collaborative projects with the organizing associations that have the potential to leave a lasting legacy and, ideally, lead to new business and funding opportunities.
- The *Copenhagen Card* is a *digital all-inclusive city pass* that offers easy access to public transport and over +80 attractions, also outside the hotspots, thereby reducing visitor pressure.
- *CopenPay*, CopenPay, a four-week pilot initiative launched in July 2024, aimed to reward climate-friendly behaviour. Tourists who demonstrated environmentally friendly behaviour, such as taking the train, cycling, participating in clean-up activities or volunteering at urban farms, were rewarded with perks such as free coffee or museum entry.

Replicability potential: High (requires stakeholder collaboration).

Cost & funding source: No information

Success Factors & Barriers Regarding the Implementation

Success factors: The way of life in Copenhagen and shared ambitions of the municipality and many stakeholders; Consistent encouragement and motivation of different stakeholders; The willingness of stakeholders to develop and share their experiences; Already seeing positive results from the work and collaboration around sustainability making the transformation tangible.

Barriers: The whole transformation process takes time, efforts and needs to be planned and prioritised for tourism companies; It can conflict with time and resources including other important aspects in terms of economic viability.

Results and Impacts

- The spread of visitors has led to less overcrowding of the places.
- Positive feedback from partners, residents and visitors.
- Visitors are also inspired for their daily lives.
- The use of certified hotels, venues or other tourism-related aspects is increasing.
- A good reputation thanks to the eager to be part of projects including positive media coverage.

Takeaways

- The transformation takes time, it is important to be patient.
- It is worth taking this path because eventually you will see the positive result.
- Coordination and focus are crucial because there are many opportunities and stakeholders.
- People act sustainably when they know how.

Useful Links

- Wonderful Copenhagen | Wonderful Copenhagen
- The official Guide to Copenhagen | Copenpay | Visit Copenhagen

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