

Putting SIA to the Test as a Method for Implementing Responsible Tourism Practice

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The Research

What is responsible tourism?

An approach for managing any form of tourism that requires "producers and consumers to identify sustainability issues which they can address, that they take responsibility for doing so and demonstrate the outcomes" (Goodwin, 2011:13).

What is social impact assessment?

"Analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions and any social changes processes invoked by those interventions so as to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment" (Vanclay, 2003:6).

1 HYPOTHESIS.

Existing approaches to planning & managing the social impacts of tourism have been largely unsuccessful. We need an approach that is pragmatic and shaped by real world operational constraints & the existing "ways of doing things" used by tourism businesses.

2 QUESTION.

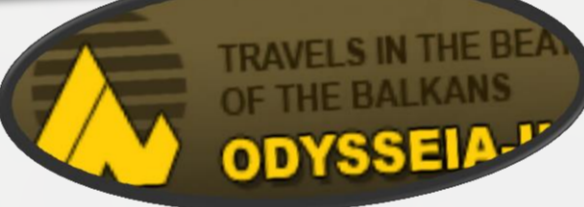
Can SIA offer responsible tourism a practical approach to embedding the management of tourism's social impacts into the existing planning, product development & operational processes of tourism businesses?

3 OUR TRIAL STUDY.

We worked with two communities in Bulgaria - Kalofer and Gorno Draglishte – and the local travel company Odyssea-In which specialises in walking tours.

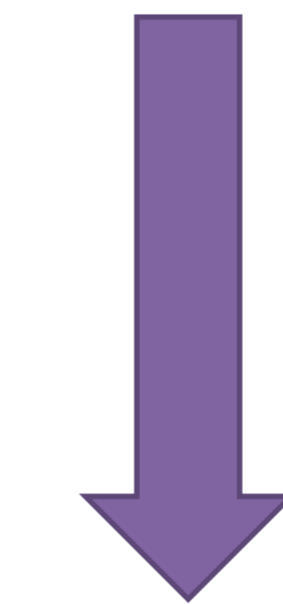


The Research Team & Our Hosts



4 OUR 6 PHASE SIA.

- Scoping
- Predicting Impacts
- Embedding
- Mitigation Strategies
- Capacity Building
- Monitoring



Community Members



Workshop Sessions



Transect Walk



Community Interviews

The Findings

CONCLUSIONS:

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Trial SIA has value as a practical method for implementing responsible tourism development but needs to be further adapted to address key challenges within this (and other) tourism contexts. Next step requires collaboration between responsible tourism & SIA practitioners.

Advantages

- business case benefits
- positive community impacts
- rapid & cost-effective profiling of communities and social impacts
- opportunities for product development & embedding proposed actions

Challenges

- capacity building/mentoring staff to identify & implement social impact management plan
- ownership of SIA process by staff

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Your Feedback:

1. How can new technologies contribute to a pragmatic approach for tourism businesses to manage their social impacts responsibly? _____
2. What could a closer collaboration between responsible tourism and SIA look like to nurture SIA-aware practice within tourism industry? _____
3. Any examples of impact assessments carried out within the tourism industry? _____