PROBLEM BRIEF 4

What Does Sustainable Really Mean?
EmpCo in Tourism

ONE REAL CHALLENGE. REAL BUSINESSES. YOUR DIGITAL SOLUTION.

The EU Directive Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition (EmpCo) introduces new rules for sustainability communication.

Tourism businesses often rely on partners and suppliers to deliver sustainable products and services. But how can they ensure that everyone shares a common understanding of sustainability?

THE PROBLEM

Tourism businesses work with a wide range of partners. These partners may operate in different countries, speak different languages, and work under different regulations and cultural conditions.

The problem: What one partner considers "sustainable" may mean something completely different to another. Terms such as "locally sourced", "fair working conditions", or "responsible tourism" can be interpreted differently.

Even when a sustainability claim is precisely worded in German, its English or Italian translation may unintentionally suggest a different environmental benefit or a stronger claim than originally intended.

Businesses need to communicate their sustainability expectations clearly to their partners. However, lengthy guidelines, complex regulations, language barriers, and translation challenges can make this difficult – especially for smaller businesses with limited resources.

AN EXAMPLE

> *"We work exclusively with responsible local partners."*

A tour operator collaborates with local guides, accommodation providers, and transport companies around the world. The company expects its partners to follow certain sustainability principles. However, what "responsible tourism" means in practice may differ significantly between countries and businesses.

The sustainability manager wonders: Do all our partners understand what we expect? How can we explain our requirements clearly across different languages and cultures? And how can we find out whether our partners have understood them?

CHALLENGE: SHARED SUSTAINABILITY UNDERSTANDING

HOW CAN WE GET EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE?

How can tourism businesses communicate sustainability requirements clearly across languages and cultures, ensuring that partners understand what is expected?

How can they prevent misleading translations and check understanding without creating unnecessary administrative work?

The challenge is to make sustainability communication simple, accurate, and consistent across languages and organisations.

YOUR TASK

Develop an idea or concept for a digital solution that helps tourism businesses and their partners establish a shared understanding of sustainability requirements across organisational, cultural, and language barriers.

Think about solutions for example that help to

- Communicate sustainability requirements in simple, clear, and accessible language.
- Translate and adapt information to different languages, cultures, and business contexts without changing the meaning of sustainability claims.
- Explain abstract sustainability concepts through practical examples.
- Check understanding and identify potential misunderstandings before they become problems.

Important: You don't need to create a universal definition of sustainability or develop new sustainability standards or certifications (not valid under EU law). The focus is on helping businesses communicate existing expectations clearly and ensuring that their partners understand what these mean in practice.

Turn different perspectives into a shared understanding!