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Tourism**

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**Analysis of the business strategy of First Light Travel in terms
of sustainability**



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ABSTRACT

Sustainability issues become worldwide more important in various different sectors, also the tourism industry is part of this movement. Tourism has grown immensely during the last decades and has established itself as an important economic sector worldwide. Tourism businesses have impacts on the economy, communities and the environment and should thus revise their business strategies to keep them positive. The objective of this paper is to assess First Light Travel (FLT), an inbound tour operator located in Auckland, New Zealand in terms of sustainability. The already taken measures are collected and the motivation to go beyond is grasped. Further recommendations for concrete improvement measures are developed. For the development of the thesis only information out of literature research and expert interviews is used. The analysis shows that FLT already applies a few sustainability practices and is motivated to go beyond in several areas. With little adaptations presented in this thesis the positive impact can be increased. However in order to generate significant positive impact especially the supply chain management and the product management have to be revised and a sustainable strategy, which affects all the different departments should be determined.

Keywords: Sustainability, Tour Operator, First Light Travel, business strategy, product development

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Already before I started my internship at First Light Travel (FLT) in New Zealand I was interested in the matter of sustainability and considered to write my thesis about this topic. Fortunately it was important to my employer to agree on a research topic, which is on the same time beneficial for him and tempting for me. The tour operator intends and assumes to work in a sustainable manner however has never analysed how it influences the environment, communities and the economy. We agreed on the analysis of the internal management as well as the products and the supplier management. As the company has no strategic documents in written form they promised to provide me with insight through personal interviews and several documents written for clients and sub-contractors. For the development of the thesis only information out of literature research and expert interviews was used. An important aim was to grasp the attitude of the company towards sustainability issues and to collect measures they have already taken. Further it was planned to come up with appropriate improvement measures for FLT. Information to reach those targets could be found within the office environment.

I would like to thank different people who supported me during the realization of this paper. First of all I would like to acknowledge my thesis advisor, Christian Baumgartner, whose topic specific knowledge was a huge assistance. Further I would like to thank him for his flexibility and good advices in all kind of situations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

%	Percentage
B&B	Bed and breakfast
DOC	Department of Conservation
DMO	Destination Management Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
e.g.	for example
Etc.	Et cetera – and so forth
FLT	First Light Travel
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZD	New Zealand Dollar
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SSCM	Sustainable Supply Chain Management
TO	Tour Operator
TOI	Tour Operator Initiative
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important worldwide; many big companies, universities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have an office of sustainability with plenty of sustainability plans and guidebooks. You can even get in contact with this term in the supermarket when shopping sustainable food produced by sustainable agriculture and in various other places. Over the last years people have realized the need of introducing sustainability into the business practices and recognized the benefits this can bring. There are several reasons why companies implement a sustainable business strategy; reducing cost, being different, preserve resources and satisfying customer needs are just a few examples.

Tourism has grown immensely during the last decades and has established itself as an important economic sector worldwide. However tourism has not only an influence on the economy but also on the environmental and social dimension. Therefore it is important to revise how tourism is practiced. In the tourism strategy 2015 the New Zealand's tourism organizations call for sustainable tourism, which is tourism that delivers maximum value with a few unwanted effects as possible. Which means; tourism that makes an optimal use of environmental resources, conserves the built and living cultural heritage of host communities, contributes to inter-cultural understanding and ensures long-term economic operations which generate socio-economic benefits to host communities. New Zealand is unintendedly connected with the image of being a clean and green country, in order to satisfy visitor expectations coming from this image; tourism companies have to work even harder on their products provided.

This study focuses on First Light Travel Limited (FLT) a tour operator located in Auckland, New Zealand. The travel company has already taken some measures to increase their sustainability practices, mainly in the management of their office. They try to use as little paper as possible, share their facilities with another company and encourage their employees to cycle to work or to use public transport. However they have not analysed their business strategy and tours in terms of sustainability.

The overall objective of this study is to find out how First Light travel performs in terms of sustainability and how they can operate more sustainably, better manage the supply chain and develop products with predominate positive social, environmental and economic impacts. The business strategy, supply chain and the products will be analysed with the help of company documents, official websites and personal communication. FLT will be provided with recommendations for concrete improvement measures.

The first chapter of this thesis, the theory part, is divided into three parts; Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism in New Zealand and Sustainable Practices for tour operators. It will be described how sustainability evolved and how it is applied in various different areas. Then a closer look at sustainability in the tourism industry will be taken and specific examples of how sustainability issues are handled in New Zealand will be given. The third theoretical part will give insight about the impact of tour operators and will provide specific guidelines and recommendations for a sustainable business management. In the second chapter First Light Travel will be presented, it includes information about their field of action, motivation and core values. The third chapter describes the methodology used for the research, the problem the objectives and the research question are presented as well. The third section is divided into three parts and shows the result of this paper. The first section presents the results found in the analysis of the strategy as well as improvement suggestions. The second part is about the products FLT offers; an existing offer is analysed and enhancement options are presented. This chapter is finalized by the discussion, where the main findings of the prior two parts are shown and interpreted by the author.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. SUSTAINABILITY

In this chapter the term sustainability is explained with the help of different definitions, furthermore the development of sustainability over the past years is shown. The three different dimensions of sustainability; social, economic and environmental are introduced in more detail. The general part about sustainability is followed by a demonstration of sustainability practices and issues in the tourism industry with specific focus on tourism businesses in New Zealand. At the end of this first chapter theory about how tour operators are affected by sustainability issues is presented.

1.1.1. DEBATE BETWEEN THE TERMS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Two terms are regularly used in articles and books talking about the matter of sustainability and sustainable tourism. One is sustainability and the other one sustainable development. Many claim that sustainability is state orientated, the goal to reach and sustainable development is the journey to get there. (Washington, 2015, p. 359 in Kopnina & Shoreman-Ouimet) (Kopnina & Shoreman-Ouimet, 2015). Development does not necessarily mean growth, as a specific social or economic goal can be reached by stabilization or change of quality or even by removing existing products or industries (Liu, 2003, p. 461). The concept of sustainable development lays the emphasis on development while the concept of sustainability should focus on being sustainable – whether this includes development or not. However the term development has been coequal with growth for a long time in the Western society and as we live on a finite planet where no endless growth can be provided Washington (2015, p. 372) believes that the emphasis should lie on the term sustainability and not development (in Kopnina & Shoreman-Ouimet, 2015)

However in tourism literature many academics use the two terms as equivalents, only a few writers have tried to examine the difference between these terms (Liu, 2003, p. 460). Due to indefinite beliefs the author will use the terms sustainable development and sustainability as synonymous in this paper.

1.1.2. HISTORY OF SUSTAINABILITY

Basic ideas of sustainability can be found earlier in history, for example the Romans planned and build their towns and cities in a sustainable manner, which means they intended to build a living environment also for future generations. Likewise, many agricultural systems were created to preserve the productivity of the land rather than exploiting it. (Swarbrooke,

1999, p. 3) H. Kopnina and E. Shoreman-Ouimet (2015, p. 3) state that the concept of sustainability as most of us use it nowadays has emerged in the 1960s in order to fight against the environmental degradation. The term was linked to ethical issues such as human rights, fair working conditions and equal distribution of wealth. However sustainability with the three inseparable dimensions social, environmental and economic only appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s when academics, diplomats and activists who stood up for a sustainable society presented the overlapping of following issues: pollution, the limits to population and consumption, the potential to tap renewable energy sources and the prospects of building sustainable cities. (Caradonna, 2014, pp. 1, 137) One of the first reports, which talked social, environmental and economic issues in combination, was the Brundtland Report published by The World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. The main idea was to transform the economic growth in a more socially acceptable and environmentally protective way. (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 4-5). The Brundtland Report also known as Our Common Future provides one of the most widely quoted definitions of sustainable development: (Weybrecht, 2014, p. 14)

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

the concept of **needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and

the idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.”

The report also recommended holding a conference on environment and sustainable development, which took place in 1992 in Rio and was called the Earth Summit. It was an important event for the environment and sustainable development law and gave a foundation for basic knowledge about sustainability that stimulated a wider mass of people to dispute with this matter. This led also to an increase in the publication of books and academic articles about sustainability. (Dodds, Laguna-Celis, & Thompson, 2014, p. 5)

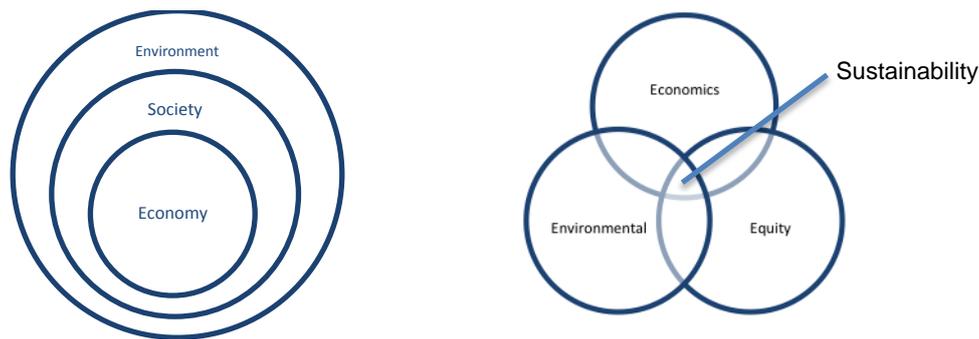
The application of the term sustainability and the awareness of its issues grew quickly and the implementation and mention of sustainable practices can nowadays be seen as a mainstream movement. Many big companies, universities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have an office of sustainability with plenty of sustainability plans and guidebooks. You can even get in contact with this term in the supermarket when shopping sustainable food produced by sustainable agriculture and in various other places. Unfortunately this does

not mean that we live in a sustainable world yet. (Caradonna, 2014, pp. 176-177) Critics claim that the term sustainable development was used to embellish the matter of limited resources. (Kopnina & Shoreman-Ouimet, 2015, pp. 11-12) In 2014 the human population used the equivalent of 1.5 planet Earths to provide us with resources and to absorb our waste. By 2030, if we continue with business as usual, it is estimated that we will require two planet earths to fulfil our needs. (Weybrecht, 2014, pp. 88-89) Thus Peter N. Nemetz states that the global achievement of sustainability is a complete failure. The way we view the world has to change and economics have to adapt to operate in a resource-constrained world. (Nemetz, 2015, S. 40,63)

1.1.3. THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Some critics argue that the concept of sustainable development only focuses on the retention of human welfare and thus the preserving of resources for future generations but does leave out concerns about the environment. (Kopnina & Shoreman-Ouimet, 2015, pp. 11-12) However traditionally, sustainability has been outlined as standing on the three pillars of Ecology, Society and Economy or said in different way on the “triple bottom line” of People, Planet and Profit. The three pillars are interdependent and it is impossible to respect only one and ignore the other two. (Thiele, 2013, p. 5) The ecological dimension is about the natural environment including biodiversity, air and water and is also referred to as Planet. The social dimension corresponds to concerns such as peace, security and human rights and is referred to as People. The third dimension is the economical one also referred to as Profit it deals with the limits and potential of the economic growth including poverty reduction, corporate responsibility, employment and education. (Weybrecht, 2014, p. 15) Some of the above mentioned keywords could belong into more than one category. For example education is according to several academics also part of the social dimension (Rogers, Jalal, & Byod, 2008, p.44; Beyer, 2015, pp. 202-203 in Rein & Strasdas).

The most common model to illustrate the three main dimensions; environment, economy and social equality is a tripartite Venn diagram, see figure 2. It was endorsed by the 2005 United Nation World Summit and is used in many books and websites. (Caradonna, 2014, p. 8) The model was criticized by sustainability economists, such as Peter Victor and Herman Daily who claim that society and economy could not exist without the environment and thus the environment should be in the centre of each model of sustainability. The model in figure 1 has been created according to these critics. (Caradonna, 2014, p. 9) However the Venn Diagram is still the most accurate as many academics indicate the interrelation between the three dimensions as the core of sustainability (Thiele, 2013, p.5; Weybrecht, 2014, p. 15).

Figure 1 - Model created according to critics Figure 2 - Venn Diagram


Source: Adapted from Caradonna (2014 pp. 8-9)

1.2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1.2.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism has grown immensely during the last decades and has established itself as an important economic sector worldwide. For the first time in history, more than one billion international tourist arrivals have been counted in 2012. (UNWTO 2013a/14, cited in Strasdas, 2015, p.13) The perception of tourism has changed over the last years; Jafari illustrates the emergence of different beliefs, he emphasizes that with the appearance of every new opinion towards tourism the prior ones did not disappear they were still believed by other groups of people. In the 1950s and 60s, after World War Two traveling was accessible for a larger market due to technological innovations and the growing middle class in the more developed countries. Additionally the poor but newly independent countries believed in an infinite supply of tourism recourses such as beaches, scenery and local culture that would help their economy developing. (Weaver, 2006, pp. 4-9)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s voices against unregulated tourism development appeared stating that eventually high environmental, economic and sociocultural costs for the inhabitants of tourism destinations will arise. During these years negative impacts of tourism were noted but it was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s when people started to come up with possible solutions. The term that was used the most to describe the possible solutions was alternative tourism it was seen as a contrast to mass tourism. (Weaver, 2006, pp. 4-9) It included the domains of eco-tourism, agro-tourism, community tourism and ethical tourism to name only a few. (Theng, Qiong, & Tatar, 2015) Characteristics of alternative tourism are for example supporting locally owned small enterprises. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the knowledge that any mode of tourism can bring positive and negative impacts to a destination was spread. According to Jafari a holistic view and rigorous scientific methods are required to fully understand the tourism sector and manage it properly. (Weaver, 2006, pp. 4-9) In the

late 1980s the term sustainable tourism started to appear more frequently as tourism academics and specialists begun to take into account the consequences of the Brundtland report for the tourism industry, however the terms 'green tourism' and 'green issues' were still more commonly used. (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 9)

1.2.2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEFINITION

Sustainable tourism is technically the application of sustainable development within the tourism industry, which is; "tourism development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Weaver, 2006, p. 10). Further, in accord with Budowskis' *symbiosis* scenario, presented in a 1976 published article with the title: *Tourism and conservation: conflict, coexistence or symbiosis*¹ (Orams, 2001, p. 24) it is tourism that wisely uses and conserves resources in order to maintain their long-term viability. Important to mention is that sustainable tourism is about minimizing the negative impacts and maximizing the positive ones. (Weaver, 2006, p. 10) The goal is to manage tourism-related activities and resources in a way that destinations stay a desirable place to visit and to live. Furthermore, sustainable tourism should bring an improvement to the quality of life and the environment of visited communities and not downgrade their environmental, social and economic structures. (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2005, p.8)

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitor, the industry, the environment and host communities." (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, pp. 11-12) Also Bramwell and Lane (1993) emphasize that sustainability is a positive attempt to enhance the impacts generated by the interaction of tourists, the tourism industry, the host community and the environment. The aim is to maintain the industry and retain the quality of the natural and human resources (Liu, 2003, p. 460).

¹ Symbiosis is a more complex relationship, whereby the protection of environment can be enhanced by tourism due to the advantages of interaction between conservationists and the tourism industry. (Rämet et al., 2005)

A different more conceptual definition of the UNWTO is:

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, pp. 11-12).

According to the above definition sustainable tourism should among others make an optimal use of environmental resources, conserve the built and living cultural heritage of host communities, contribute to inter-cultural understanding and ensure long-term economic operations which generate socio-economic benefits to host communities. Also the tourists play an important part in sustainable tourism, a high satisfaction level through meaningful experiences should be guaranteed and the visitors should be educated in terms of sustainability. Further sustainable tourism requires ongoing observation of impacts and the implementation of measurements if necessary (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, pp. 11-12).

The tourism industry depends strongly on natural resources and political stability this leads to the assumption that the whole industry with its stakeholders is interested in sustainably managed destinations and would actively support matters like the environmental protection and human rights (Strasdas, 2015, p. 15).

1.2.3. DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Many people think that sustainability is only about the natural environment and its protection, however a successful sustainable tourism management requires the acceptance of the interrelationship of the three main dimensions (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 47,48).

Environmental

The environmental dimension includes many different aspects; all of them are in direct relation to tourism. The one that most people see as the only part of the environmental dimension is the natural environment, including mountainous areas, seas, rivers and lakes as well as beaches. The natural environment provides the core product of many touristic regions for example the Alps or the Amazonian rain forest (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 50). In New Zealand the glaciers, mountains and coastlines are of high importance as many people travel to the

country for hiking and being out in the nature. (Tourism New Zealand Insight Team, 2015; Narbey, 2016) Also Tourism New Zealand, the countries Destination Management Organization uses the natural highlights for marketing purposes (New Zealand Tourism a, n.d.). The natural resources also belong to the environmental dimension; many destinations make use of their natural resources and promote for example the clean, pure mountain air or the untouched land of the area. Also New Zealand with its clean and green strategy highlighted in the Tourism New Zealand's *100% Pure New Zealand* marketing campaign makes use of these sources (Connell, Page, & Bentley, 2009, p. 868). The climate change and sustaining the drinking water supply are two main concerns of sustainable tourism. Both have been degraded also because of tourism impacts and can further influence the industry in the future. (Strasdas, 2015, pp. 19-20) The tourism industry is responsible for five % of the total global carbon emission generation. Within the tourism industry the transport sector generates by far the highest amount of CO₂. Also has the industry a generally high consumption of resources. Accommodation, transport as well as activity suppliers, make use of energy and water and generate waste. (Weaver, 2006, p. 85; Strasdas, 2015, pp. 63-64; Hall & Gössling, 2009, pp. 19-20) The usage of the different sectors is explained in more detail in chapter 5.2.

Wildlife is also part of the environmental dimension, tourism can profit from it in form of animal observations and interaction with unusual flora. In New Zealand Whale & Dolphin watching is very famous as well as bird observations (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 50). The inhabitants of New Zealand call themselves "Kiwis" which is after a local bird, in danger of extinction. (New Zealand tourism guide, 2016) Tourism can be good for the environment as some landscapes and wildlife are more protected due to their value for the tourism industry, also the knowledge of people about the environment has grown due to tourism. However the negative impacts of tourism, such as water pollution through discharges of sewage and spillages of oil or disruption of breeding habits outbalance the positive ones (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 50).

The last two parts are the built environment and the farmed environment. Both are man-made and can be used for tourism purposes. For example vineyards and kiwifruit plantation can be visited in New Zealand. The travel industry can bring positive and negative impacts on the built environment, on one hand a new use for old abandoned buildings can be created but on the other hand cities can be overloaded with infrastructure and inadequate buildings. (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 52-54)

Economical

The gross domestic product (GDP) is used to measure the economic growth of a certain area or the whole planet. It represents the total value of all goods and services produced over a specific period of time. This gives a good overview of the size of an economy however the wellbeing of the people is not measured. Also it focuses on short-term activities rather than on sustainable, long-term developments. In the last years several responses to the GDP that look at economic, environmental and social wellbeing have been presented. (Weybrecht, 2014, p. 97) The discussions about the GDP are matching with the general transformation of the traditional economy into a sustainable economy. Whereas in the past the main focus of businesses was to increase its profits, it is nowadays way more complicated and complex. (Feige, 2015, p. 129) In the tourism sector according to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (2004) issues like seasonality, leakage and fair pricing need to be considered. (Weaver D. , 2010, p. 300) Positive economic impacts of tourism can be generated through income for shareholders and suppliers, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, taxes paid by tourism businesses and fees for the use of tourist attractions, like national parks. For example, tourism in the wine industry is popular in New Zealand and also kiwi fruit farmers can profit from the tourist spending. However there are also economic costs generated, for example the local tax payers have to cover for the higher use of water supply, sewage treatment and garbage collection among others (Buckley, 2009, p. 57). Also the multiplier effect plays an important role when looking at the economic impacts of a tourism destination. It indicates that the money spend by tourists circulates around in the local economy bringing profit to different industries. In direct connection to the multiplier effect stands linkage and leakage, as the concept only works if the leakage of a regional economy is little. (Swarbrooke, 1999) Julia Albrecht, Senior Lecturer in tourism management, University of Otago (2016) states that, leakage is not a big issue in the tourism industry in New Zealand as many businesses are small and locally owned and operated. However due to seasonality and the peak season in the summer months, it becomes difficult to accommodate all the tourists in January and February. Tour operators have to choose working with big hotel chains as the supply of B&B accommodation is exploited (Narbey, 2016).

Social

The social dimension aims to increase the quality of life and to satisfy the material and immaterial needs for individuals as well as communities. It is important to include different stakeholders when looking at the aims. The three main actors in the tourism industry, which

are influenced differently by sustainable tourism, are the tourists, the host communities and the tourism companies (Beyer, 2015, p. 201 in Rein & Strasdas).

What needs to be considered when looking at the host community within the social dimension of sustainable tourism development is the labour market; locals should have an equal chance to get jobs on all levels. New tourism businesses bring only wealth to an area if locals get appropriate jobs and receive education (Krippendorf, 1987, p. 239 in Page & Connell, 2008). Also the culture is part of the social dimension, tourism can have positive impacts as seen in New Zealand where the knowledge about Maori culture can be kept alive through tourists' interest in legends and traditions. Also job opportunities for Maori people are generated as the iwi members, members of Maori tribes, (Macalister, 2005, p. 25) are suited best to introduce the tourists into their culture (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2013, p. 29). But also negative impacts for example the disappearance of traditional eating habits by the introduction of fast food can occur (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 72).

The tourism industry is combined out of local as well as international stakeholders, which take advantage of the land of the host community. The employees expect fair working conditions, education as well as appraisal of the tourists. (Beyer, 2015, pp. 202,203 in Rein & Strasdas) An area that concerns the host community as well as the tourism industry and can lead to conflicts is the planning and decision making process of a destinations future. The worst-case scenario is when the locals are excluded of the decision making process or mislead with promising jobs in the tourism industry (Beyer, 2015, p. 219 in Rein & Strasdas).

Tourism should be available to everyone in the world who has the desire to travel (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 78) This includes minimizing obstacles due to money matters as well as physical disadvantages of certain people (Beyer, 2015, p. 216 in Rein & Strasdas). Tourism New Zealand provides information about facilities for the disabled people on their website, basic knowledge is combined with specific links to travel organizations which are specialized in organizing trips or providing accommodation for people with special needs (Tourism New Zealand b, n.d.). So far only three % to five % of the world population travel, with the growing wealth of the developing countries this amount will increase and with it also the pressure of social and environmental issues of tourism (Beyer, 2015, p. 203 in Rein & Strasdas).

Critics on sustainable tourism

Deep green environmentalists claim that to be purely environmentally friendly, people should stop traveling. (Page & Connell, 2008, p. 8) However the debate gets more complex when social and economic factors are included. As tourism has a large economic impact in some destinations this countries would need an alternative economic source. (Strasdas, 2015, p. 21) It has to be accepted that tourism might never be fully sustainable. (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 41) Furthermore many statements about sustainable tourism are more based on value judgment than empirical research. For example it is not proven that independent travel is more sustainable than package holiday tourism. (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 24-25)

1.3. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NEW ZEALAND

1.3.1. GENERAL TOURISM FACTS & FIGURES

The tourism industry in New Zealand is growing, for the first time in the history of tourism in this country more than three million international visitor arrivals were counted in 2015. The number of overseas travellers is expected to grow further in the next few years and to reach 4.5 million annual visitors by 2022. The biggest increase in the number of tourist arrivals by origin is expected to be in the markets China, Australia and the United States (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2016, p. 6).

99% of the international visitors arrive by airplane. As New Zealand has no direct land border with any other country they are strongly dependent on the airline industry. In the last years due to large reductions in fuel prizes, the profitability of airlines has risen and with it also the motivation to widen their offer. Especially the long-haul international air service has been growing. The better connectivity plus the recovery from the financial crisis has led to a big increase in tourist arrivals from 2013 to 2016 (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2016, p. 14).

Tourists state that the main reasons they visit New Zealand is the diversity this destination offers, from subtropical forest to glaciers everything is available in this relatively small country. Also their interest in the Maori culture contributed towards the decision to travel to New Zealand (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2016, p. 8).

The tourism trade is the second largest export industry behind the dairy industry; it contributed 11.8 billion in 2015, which is 17.4% of the total annual export value. Added to the international expenditures is the domestic tourism spending which sums up to 29,838 million in 2015. Diverse industries generate profit from these expenditures and many jobs are creat-

ed. In total 168,012 are employed in tourism businesses directly and 127,896 work for indirect tourism related businesses (Statistics New Zealand, 2015, pp. 9-10).

1.3.2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

The nations' efforts towards sustainable tourism are shown in a statistic from Statista (2015) with data from the World Economic Forum, which states that New Zealand was one of the leading countries in sustainable Tourism Development in 2013 and 2014. It has to be mentioned that no information was provided regarding the criteria used to come up with this result. (Statista, 2015) This means that it is assumed that there had been efforts towards sustainable development, however this information cannot be used to draw a significant conclusion.

What can be said is that the government of New Zealand introduced a few good projects to support the people and economy in the country. For example in 2009 in order stimulate regional economies by creating jobs and bringing new tourism flows in to the different areas, the government started to build the New Zealand Cycle Trail (Nga Haerenga). Currently it consists of 19 off-road cycle trails, which sum up to 2'600 km. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016, p. 243) Another tourism related project which is funded by the government, is the biosecurity clearance, which ensures the welfare of the environment, flora and fauna, marine life and Maori resources (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2016).

Further by global standards New Zealand is perceived as a relatively green and clean country (Connell, Page, & Bentley, 2009, p. 3). Who first stated this cannot be clearly said but it is of high importance for the marketing of the country says Sean Weaver, environmental studies lecturer at Victoria University. However, the clean and green image also earned critique, as there are a few voices that state it is only pure luck that New Zealand is linked to this phrase. The Ministry for Environment is concerned that the clean and green image will be scrutinized, as there are several severe environmental issues. (Everitt, 2009)

Tourism New Zealand promotes the country at the moment with its "100% pure New Zealand" marketing strategy, which is according to Julia Albrecht (2016) probably the most successful tourism branding strategy that has ever happen. The brilliant slogan was launched 18 years ago and is still doing really well. However contrary to common believes the campaign was not intended to refer to a clean and green status it was meant to promote a 100% authentic New Zealand (Albrecht, 2016).

For example the Maori culture, which is unique and differentiates New Zealand from the rest of the world. Visitors can connect with the country on a deeper level through the interaction with locals and newly gained knowledge about the culture of host communities (Ministry of Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2007, p. 23). Storytelling is part of the Maori culture and tourism can help tribal stories and history not to fall into oblivion (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2013, p. 29). Demand for authentic products which combine traditional values and knowledge is growing, that leads to more potential for Maoris to enter into the tourism market (Ministry of Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2007, p. 23). The native people of New Zealand do already have significant stakes in the tourism sector. Ngai Tahu Tourism, Whale Watch Kaikoura and Footprints Waipoua are just a few examples of Maori owned businesses (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2013, p. 46).

Tourism strategy

Since 1997 when Page and Thron advised that a national sustainable development policy or strategy is required to manage the long-term supply of tourism resources, New Zealand works on a national strategy. It is frequently updated and desired to include environmental, economic, social and cultural concerns. (Connell, Page, & Bentley, 2009, p. 890) Another strategy, which was published due to the research of Page and Thorn (2002), was the New Zealand Tourism strategy 2015. The aim of that paper with its key principles kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (responsibility) was to ensure that future generations could still take advantage of New Zealands' environment. The two terms are written in Maori language, as those behaviours are from significance value in the Maori culture. The organizations who created the Tourism Strategy 2015; Ministry of Tourism, Tourism New Zealand and Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand believed that this could be reached with a specific kind of tourism: "The best kind of tourism for New Zealand is sustainable tourism, that is, tourism that delivers maximum value – economic, social, cultural, and environmental – with as few unwanted effects as possible" (Ministry of Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2007, p. 14). The following four outcomes have been created to reach the desired form of tourism;

- 1.) New Zealand delivers a world-class visitor experience;
- 2.) the tourism sector is prosperous and attracts on-going investment;
- 3.) takes a leading role in protecting and enhancing the environment and
- 4.) works together with communities for mutual benefit.

In the 'tourism 2025 growing value together' strategy published in 2013 only by the Tourism Industry Aotearoa, (TIA), also referred to as Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, the aims have changed to productivity, outstanding visitor experience, air connectivity, insight to drive and track profit and target for value. The main goal of this strategic plan is to make a total of \$ 41 billion tourism revenue in 2025. Aims to minimize environmental issues have been left out completely in this strategy and the focus is more on the increase in spending made by tourist. This should be reached by targeting the right travellers and offering excellent experiences, both based on information gained out of market research. Also the air connectivity is highlighted in the new report as it is seen as a key to access the international visitor market and to provide comfortable travel options within New Zealand (Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2013, p. 20). The difference between the two tourism strategies is explained as follows by Julia Albrecht (2016); the tourism strategy 2015 was done under the previous left wing government and mostly financed by the public sector however the 2015 report was developed by the tourism industry which is obviously more interested in growth and yield management.

Challenges

In order to profit from tourism in the future and maximize the positive impacts and minimize the negative ones New Zealand faces a few challenges. Jobs in the tourism industry are often badly paid and staffed by relatively low skill employees, which leads to relatively low labour productivity (OECD, 2016, p. 241). Industry leaders from the Maori tourism industry criticized that many employees especially in the hospitality sector are not from New Zealand and spend only a few months for a working holiday in the country. That means that managers are often not willing to invest in their development, which reduces the quality of service (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2013, p. 131). To fight this phenomenon the government is working on the reduction of seasonality as well as training possibilities and encourages the co-operation across different sectors. Another challenge is to spread the visitor flow evenly in the country; international visitors tend to visit only certain regions of the country (OECD, 2016, p. 242). Additionally, in a survey in 2007 filled in by 43 local New Zealand authorities (51%) Connell, Page and Bentley (p. 874) found that tourism councils, which lay off the beaten track, were likely to crave for more tourist arrivals, while destination with more than 100'000 guest nights in peak months stated that their area is under pressure from tourism. This shows that Tourism development is not evenly distributed in New Zealand and tour operators like FLT can contribute their part to making off the beaten track destinations better known. Julia Albrecht (2016) states that the physical carrying capacity of Queenstown

Martina Wiederkehr

for example is not reached yet however the value of the tourists' experience would decrease with the increase of tourist arrivals.

2. IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES INTO A TOUR OPERATOR BUSINESS

2.1. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Over the last years people have realized the need of introducing sustainability into the business practices and recognized the benefits this can bring. There are several reasons why companies implement a sustainable business strategy; reducing cost, being different, preserve resources, satisfying customer needs are just a few examples (Weybrecht, 2014, p. 24)

A way to turn a business into a more sustainable one is by implementing the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). According to Business in the Community (2000) the following four areas have been analysed and reported the most by companies; The Marketplace, with the key question of the value of the good and services provided by the company. The environment and issues like carbon emissions and environmental footprint and how resources can be managed more efficiently. The workplace and how to attract educate and keep skilled people. The last point is the community the business is located in and what is given back to the people living in this area (Business Respect, n.d. cited in Young & Dhanda, 2013). In this paper all of the above mentioned areas are included as well, however the part about the benefits for the community is only treated superficially.

So far no global definition for CSR exists, many authors and organizations create their own definitions for publications, which can lead to wrong expectations and frustration for companies who implement CSR but also for the civil society. (SCHNEIDER & SCHMIDTPETER 2012 cited in Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 233 in Rein & Strasdas) For example the World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines CSR as a commitment by businesses “to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life” (UNEP, 2005, p. 8). However their focus lies on the economic development and the environmental part is left out completely. Following, a more accurate definition which respects the three pillars, from the European Commission:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. Corporate social responsibility concerns actions by companies over and above their legal obligations towards society and the environment.

Certain regulatory measures create an environment more conducive to enterprises voluntarily meeting their social responsibility (2011).

One key element that is required to make a business more sustainable is a managing director who fully supports the movement. Without the commitment of the leaders of an enterprise, money and time resources needed for the change in operation of the business are not provided (Balàs & Strasdass, 2015, S. 241 in Rein & Strasdass).

2.2. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOR TOUR OPERATORS

Tour Operators are the intermediary between the destination and the tourist and have thus high influence on the sustainable development of certain regions. However for a long time tour operator businesses disclaimed their obligation towards social and environmental issues as they asserted this belongs under the responsibility of the sub-contracted suppliers or the local Destination Management Organizations (DMO) (Budenau, 2005; Swarbrooke, 1999; Cochrane, 2006; Font & Cochrane, 2005a cited in Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 215).

The Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) was created to highlight community and industry concerns and to indicate that sustainable tourism is not a threat for tourism but an instrument to stabilize the growth. TOI was launched in 2000 and arose out of a cooperation of different tour operators, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the World Tourism Organisation. At current times TOI is not existing anymore as an independent entity but merged with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The announcement about the new cooperation was made in 2014 when Luigi Cabrini, GSTC Chair of the Board statement was promising a sustainable future for the tourism industry:

With the GSTC as the global leader in setting standards for sustainability in travel and tourism, and TOI's focus on the tour operator value chain and synchronization with destinations, the combination of both organizations and their respective strengths will produce a true global champion in sustainable tourism. The mission will remain to develop, promote, and encourage the implementation of credible standards and best practices so that travel and tourism remains the major economic engine it already is, all over the world, in harmony with communities and the environment.

The main goals of the initiative were to improve the sustainable management of tourism and to motivate tour operators to take actively part in the movement towards sustainable tourism management. TOs were advised to look clearly at environmental, social and cultural impacts when creating a tourism product (Tepelus, 2004, p. 99). According to the TOI initiative (2007) and Carbone (2004) there are five core areas where a tour operator can apply sustainable practices; Internal Management, Product Development, Supply Chain Management, Customer Relations and Co-operation with Destinations (Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 216). These five sections will be presented in more details throughout the paper.

Internal Management

In this section everything that concerns the office facilities of a tour operator business is treated. Daily administrative and operational activities of a tour operator are similar to other office-based companies and include energy, paper and water consumption as well as the generation of waste. Different possibilities will be shown how the negative impact of operations can be reduced and at the same time the cost can be minimized (UNEP, 2005, p. 8). The first step to an improvement in office management of resources is an analysis of how much is used, where it comes from and how much it costs the company. Then goals are created, employees involved and progress and success has to be communicated regularly. (Weybrecht, 2014, p. 379) In the tables one to four immediate, short and long term improvements for energy, water, paper and waste consumption are shown.

Table 1 - Energy saving measures

Energy	
Can be implemented immediately by managers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch of lights when not used • Turn of electronic devises like computer and photocopiers overnight • Adapt air-conditioning and heating to a smaller difference to the outside temperature
Short term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install energy-efficient light bulbs • Change your electricity supplier to one that sells energy from renewable sources.
Long term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly check equipment → replace if required • Well insulated building with draught-proof windows • Install presence-detectors for example in toilets that will automatically switch light on and off

Table 2 - Water saving measures

Water	
Can be implemented immediately by managers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taps are not left running when not used
Short term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use biodegradable detergents • Repair dripping taps
Long term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install low-flow aerators and half-flush toilet cistern • Install automatic flush control systems for urinals

Table 3 - Paper saving measures

Paper	
Can be implemented immediately by managers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standard printer settings to double side print • Use preview and only print the pages needed • Reuse paper printed on one side. • Do not send out catalogues and brochures to people who are not interested
Short term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy paper that has a high post-consumer recycled content
Long term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not produce paper brochures anymore

Table 4 - Waste reduction measures

Waste	
Can be implemented immediately by managers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan ahead and purchase multiple products, to save time, packaging waste and transportation cost • Inform employees what is recyclable and place recycle bins next to waste baskets
Short term investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy durable rather than disposable products

Created by the author, sources for tables 1 to 4: Ashmore (2005, pp. 248,249) Weybrecht (2014, pp. 382,383) Mitchell and Water (2005)

Also employment issues are part of the internal management, including labour rights, human rights and staff training. Satisfied and more efficient staff leads to better experiences for the clients. Furthermore, with staff training on sustainability issues their commitment to a sustainability strategy can be deepened and will improve the overall company performance (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005, p. 15).

Product Development

This area includes the choice of destination the TO wants to work with. Important factors to consider are a good environmental management system and a good-quality local labour supply of the destination (Font & Cochrane, 2005a cited in Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 217). Further the selection of components for individual holiday packages, which have low or no negative impact on the environment, economy and host community belongs into this section

(Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005 cited in Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 218). The different components to be considered are the type of accommodation, the method of transport, the type of excursion and activity and the inclusion or selection of food and beverage (UNEP, 2005, pp. 22-27).

There are several ways to collect important information about which destinations and suppliers to choose. Very effective are familiarization trips, during which the tour operators' staff has the possibility to go and visit the destinations and components of the sold packages themselves. Also the post trip communication with tourist, through a feedback form can provide the TO with more information on sustainability issues like tourism-related damage to natural habitats, relationship between tourists and local communities and the standard of infrastructure (UNEP, 2005, pp. 22-27).

Furthermore Font and Cochrane (2005) emphasize that choosing to work together with locally owned businesses can bring benefits to host communities as the money stays within a country or region rather than being lost to leakages (Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 217). If foreign companies or big multinational affiliated groups invest in a destination, profit does not stay within certain tourist regions. Leakages can also occur if consumer goods like food and beverages are imported to satisfy the needs of the tourists (Beyer, 2015, p. 220 in Rein & Strasdas).

Supply Chain Management

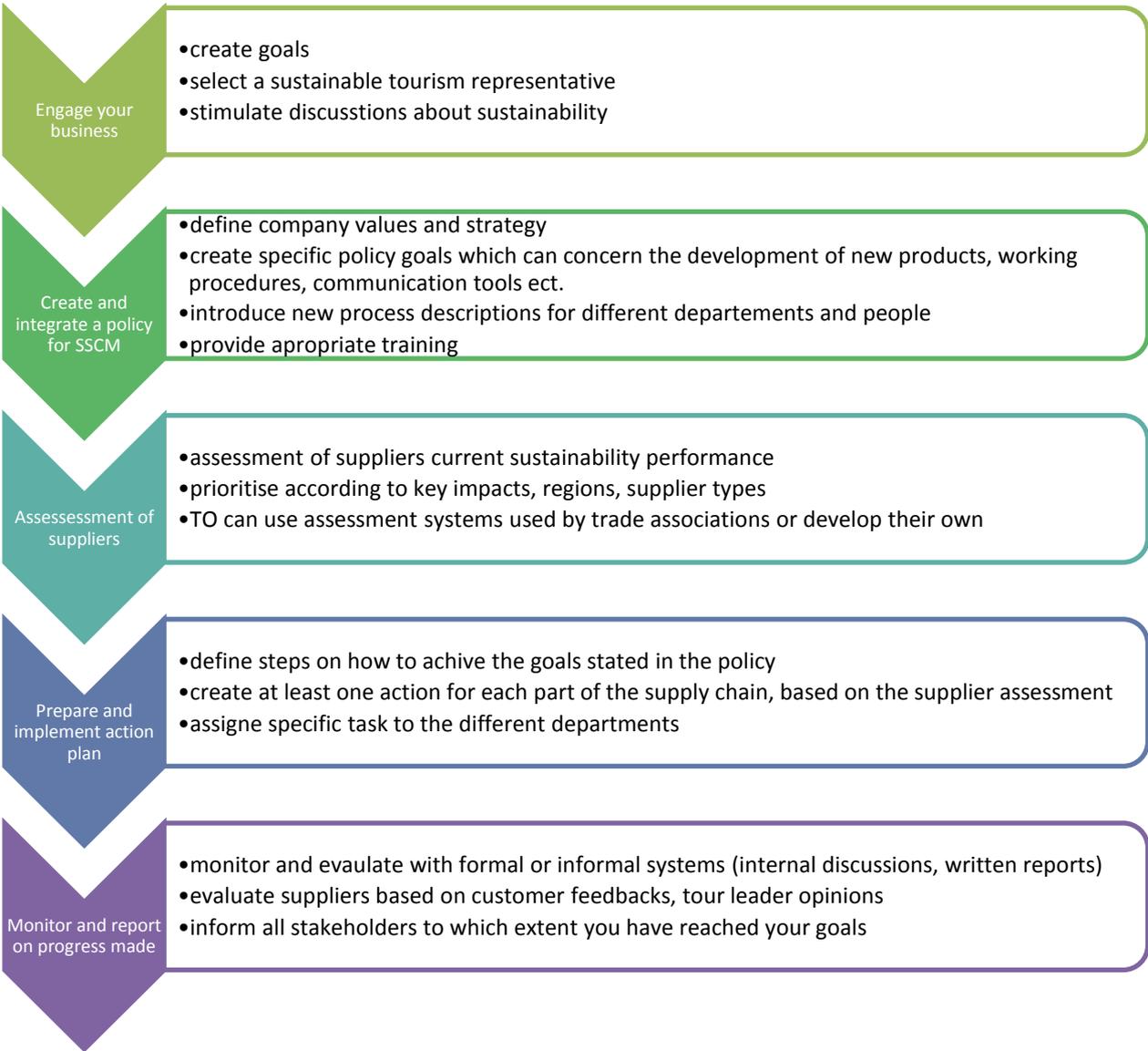
Supply chain management (SCM) was defined by Ho et al. (2002 cited in Schwartz, Tapper, & Font, 2008, p. 299) as:

A philosophy of management that involves the management and integration of a set of selected key business processes from end user through original suppliers, that provides products, services, and information that add value for customers and other stakeholders through the collaborative efforts of supply chain members

SCM is often said to be the key area when it comes to sustainability and tour operators. On one hand a TO has no direct control over its sub-contracted suppliers sustainability performance but on the other hand the intermediary can only be as sustainable as his suppliers and the products they sell (UNEP, 2005, p. 29). The supply chain includes not only the sub-contracted suppliers such as accommodation, transport and activity providers but also some indirect contractual partners like restaurants, bars and souvenir shops. To take influence on

the whole supply chain a close relationship with all its partners is indispensable. The TO should analyse its partners in terms of sustainability and support them wherever needed. However if a sub-contractor is not willing or not able to fulfil the minimum criteria the cooperation should be terminated. (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 250-251 in Rein & Strasdas) The following image shows the steps for the implementation of a sustainable supply chain management (SSCM).

Figure 3 – Sustainable Supply Chain Management



Source: Adapted from Schwartz, Tapper and Font (2008, p.305)

Customer Relations

Tourists are not aware of how they might affect the destination they visit, partly because they escape from their everyday life and suppress their responsibilities for a while and partly

because the impacts are relatively small and only cause consequences when they occur repeatedly (UNEP, 2005, p. 37). Tour operators cannot only influence their suppliers but also their customers. By providing the tourists with information about local habits and culture the tour operator lays the first steps to a smooth interaction between the host community and the travellers. If the customer has a deeper knowledge his willingness to adjust to local customs is bigger (Khairat & Maher, 2012, p. 219).

Furthermore the travel company can add information about public transport, biodiversity and sustainable activities. This information about sustainability can be repeated on several platforms as among others the website, brochures and pre-departure booklets. It is important to spread knowledge about sustainability issues and how clients can actively take part in this movement (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 251 in Rein & Strasdas) .By asking the customer for feedback on environmental and social performances of the visited destinations, the tourists' awareness of sustainability can be increased. Further if the feedback is transferred to local suppliers and destination management organizations, the tourists can actively contribute to future improvements. Another important factor for a successful long-term customer relationship is to guarantee that health and safety standards are met and to handle all the personal and financial data discretely (UNEP, 2005, p. 37).

Co-operation with Destination

The business of a tour operator depends strongly on decisions local and national tourism stakeholders make, for example the creation of green areas, development of pedestrian areas, seafront refurbishments and the construction of waste management systems are all factors that influence the product of a TO (UNEP, 2005, pp. 50-53). Additionally the destinations require tour operators to sell their products. Thus a good relationship between the local community, local suppliers, local authorities and tour operators is the key to a successful sustainable development of a destination. (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 252 in Rein & Strasdas) Even though it is difficult for tour operators to generate a high profit, as their margins are relatively low, some companies chose to express their commitment by supporting the local community with funds towards environmental protection or social development of the region (Tepelus, 2004, p. 104). Another way of fundraising is to add a contribution fee towards a sustainable project on top of the package prize or to animate customers to donate money for a specific project. It is important to financially support a project over a period of at least three to five years in order generate a genuine impact on sustainable development (UNEP, 2005, pp. 50-53).

3. PORTRAIT OF FIRST LIGHT TRAVEL

3.1. PRESENTATION OF THE COMPANY AND ITS FIELD OF ACTION

First Light Travel is an online travel agency, located in the centre of Auckland, which organizes tailored self-drive tours and group tours, mainly in New Zealand but also in Australia and some South Pacific islands. The contact with the clients is via email and over the phone, as the agents deal with overseas customers. Only occasionally the tailored itineraries are marketed through further intermediaries, most of the packages are sold directly to the end consumer (Baumscheiper, 2016). Nigel Williamson and Brent Narbey, two passionate travellers themselves, created the company in 2001. The initial idea of FLT was to offer a real experience of New Zealand the way the owners wanted to present it. The agency has been growing in the past 15 years and is now one of the leading online sales travel agencies in New Zealand with 18 permanent employees and six interns (Narbey, 2016).

FLT offers customized group and self-drive tours with individualized itineraries to clients from all over the world. Through their extensive network of accommodation and activity suppliers FLT's travel agents are able to build clients a tailor made tour. In addition the company also sells packaged tours from other tour operators. In Enigma, a software written for FLT more than 2000 suppliers with different products are stored. This booking, back office and reservation tool is used by FLT and Moa Trek only (Baumscheiper, 2016).

The company only sells its products online and uses its website as the biggest marketing tool. The tours proposed on the website are only ideas and not fixed products. Clients can choose from adventure, nature and cultural tours to food & wine itineraries depending on interests, time and budget. The website traffic is monitored very carefully and product adaptations are made according to the generated clicks. At the moment a lot of time and money is invested in a new website which will be published shortly (Narbey, 2016).

First Light Travel shares its office location with Moa Trek, a leading company for small group bus tours for elderly people from New Zealand, Europe and the United States. The collaboration between the two companies is very close, the office facilities are shared and also meetings with external suppliers are carried out together. As the companies are rather small they are not divided into strict departments. The agents take care of the clients' needs, the accountant handles the invoices and accountancy and the managing directors are responsible for the websites and the marketing (Baumscheiper, 2016).

According to Brent Narbey, the managing director, the target market of FLT can be described as American and European people, 55+, university educated, either retired or hard

working and interested in outdoor activities. Hiking is the most popular activity but also nature tours, for example dolphin watching, diving, caving and biking are high in demand. However, when First Light Travel started business in 2001 their clients were mostly active and adventurous and ranged from backpackers to luxury seekers. To ensure a long-term existence FLT tried to increase the commission earned by selling more up market products when it comes to accommodation. With this change in strategy also the target market was adapted (Narbey, 2016).

In addition, FLT operates the following three further divisions; “Absolute New Zealand” which offers luxury travel through New Zealand, “Island Escape” which promotes tours in the South Pacific and the third one is “First Light Travel Australia” with tours and self-drive itineraries in Australia. Furthermore the company owns a dive shop in Auckland (Baumscheiper, 2016).

FLT is certified with an Enviro Silver Award by Qualmark, New Zealand tourism’s official quality label.

Even though First Light Travel considers itself as an online travel agency the author decided to apply the analysis characteristics of a tour operator business. As according to Camelia Monica Tepelus tour operators bring buyers and sellers together and put together travel packages, which are sold at a package price directly to public or through travel agents. Whereas travel agencies generally only sell single items or already finalized ‘off-the-shelf’ packages (2004, p. 102). These descriptions show that FLT’s daily business does accord with TO practices.

3.2. MISSION STATEMENT

First Light Travel has so far neither published an official mission statement nor communicated one amongst the employees (Narbey, 2016). An accurate chosen mission statement is beneficial in several situations. In the article ‘Organizational Mission Statement Guidelines Revisited’ the following points are stated as main application areas; first it serves as an “umbrella” (mystrategicplan.com, 2011) under which all organizational decisions and endeavours must fit, second, as a means for motivating employees (e.g., Vogt, 1994), and third, as a statement for communicating to stakeholders what the organization is doing (e.g., sound-business-practices.com, 2005, Bartkus, 2000) cited in (Powers, 2012, p. 281). If sustainability is part of the corporate structure it should be part of the mission statement as well (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 247 in Rein & Strasdas). When creating an effective mission statement,

according to Powers (2012, pp. 282-284) and Barringer (2009, p.92) following rules should be respected:

- Describe what makes your company different, describe your reason for being
- Be honest
- Everyone involved in the company should be able to relate to the statement
- Longevity, the mission should not need frequent updates
- Keep it short; the simpler, the better

The answer to following questions will support the author in writing an appropriate mission statement. Imagine why a customer buys and interacts with FLT helps finding out what makes the company unique. Also it is important to know the added value the company brings to clients, employees and owners (Berry, n.d.).

Why do clients purchase a FLT package? For most clients it is the only time they come to New Zealand so they want it to be a trip of their lifetime and rather leave the planning work to professionals (Taylor, 2016).

What differentiates the company from other tour operators? FLT wants to position itself as an adventure expert, who offers adventurous trips however, the term adventure, is very difficult to grasp and can best be defined as something challenging to the individual (Narbey, 2016).

How are the lives of clients improved and what positive effect has FLT on the communities and the environment? FLT wants to show the clients a real NZ experience (Narbey, 2016) which means the agents do not just sell standardized products but rather assure that every single client will have the best possible holiday by including their personal knowledge about the country and sensing the clients' desires (Taylor, 2016). By personal knowledge it is meant that people working for FLT have tested the activities and visited the different destinations and accommodations. The sales agents accompany the clients before, during and after the trip and many friendships have been developed during that process. Clients do not need to invest a lot of time into digging through all the possible choices presented online and are provided with important information about the country, visa, insurance and medical issues. (First Light Travel, 2014a)

FLT supports companies that are dedicated in taking positive actions to preserve the environment, especially biodiversity matters are a concern of the Managing Director. Also the

cooperation with small and medium locally owned businesses is of high importance for the company (Narbey, 2016).

What does FLT for its employees? Staff members can work independently and have fair working conditions, if it comes to marketing or product decisions their opinions are taken into consideration. Further, employees that live in remote areas have the possibility to work from home, if they do not own work facilities, like a computer and a phone the company provides those (Narbey, 2016).

What is driving Brent and Nigel to continue doing business? After seeing the world, the managing directors want to present their home to the world. Narbey (2016) states that being the number one online travel agency in New Zealand which sells packages only online through a well build up website without losing a lot of money to intermediaries makes him very proud.

Mission Statement: We strive to create individualized vacations by maintaining close communication with you so we can best share our knowledge and experience as travellers. We bring you off the beaten path and into the guidance of locals who know New Zealand uniquely and will be there to shape your adventure as well as your comfort.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC

In the following chapter the aims of the thesis will be presented as well as the problematic and the research question.

Problem

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important worldwide also within the tourism industry of New Zealand. First Light Travel Limited (FLT) has already taken some measures to increase their sustainability practices, mainly in the management of their office. They try to use as little paper as possible, share their facilities with another company and encourage their employees to cycle to work or to use public transport. However they have not analysed their business strategy and tours in terms of sustainability.

Objectives

One of the aims is to identify the standpoint of FLT towards sustainability, which includes the assessment of the already taken measures and the motivation to go beyond. Further the purpose of this paper is to provide FLT with recommendations for concrete improvement measures for product development, communication as well as for the business management in general. Part of the results presented will be a mission statement, which will be formulated, based on the core values of FLT. Further a catalogue with criteria for the development of sustainable tours will be elaborated. Following research question will lead to the above-formulated aims:

How well performs First Light Travel in terms of sustainability? How can the company operate more sustainable, better manage the supply chain and develop products with predominant positive social, environmental and economic impacts?

4.2. METHODOLOGY

In this paper both primary and secondary sources were used. Secondary research, also referred to as desk research, is a quicker and inexpensive way to find data on the Internet or in libraries. Sources like academic reports, books, government statistics and website information belong into this category (Hague, Hague, & Morgan, 2012, p. 32). In this report secondary data in form of academic articles, books and Internet research were used as a basic to generate questionnaires for the primary data collection and to give a general overview of the researched topics. With the help of primary data a deeper knowledge of First Light Travel and the tourism industry of New Zealand could be gained.

For Primary data collection the following two research approaches, qualitative and quantitative research, are often used in studies. Qualitative research provides insight into a theme or situation and is usually presented in verbal form while quantitative research is used to measure and count data and usually is presented in form of statistics (Hammersley, 2013, p. 12; Malhotra, Hall, Shaw, & Oppenheim, 2010, p. 116). The main purpose of this research was to gain insight into how business is done at First Light Travel and to find out the companies' point of view towards sustainability, more precisely said, the opinions and beliefs of different employees and the management. This can be reached best with the application of the qualitative research approach. Also to gain more knowledge about the characteristics of the tourism sector in New Zealand s qualitative expert interview suited best.

Data collected

In order to gain more knowledge about First Light Travel several written documents and reports have been analysed. Among others communication documents for suppliers and clients and Qualmark² quality evaluation reports of FLT have been looked at. According to Uwe Flick it is important to consider for what purpose the documents had been written in first place (2009, p. 261).

Several expert interviews have been conducted, an overview of the questioned persons is presented in table one. The questions were prepared beforehand and based on knowledge gained from secondary research. The interviewer followed the prepared guideline and interposed questions in order to receive more information about certain topics. The interviews, conducted in English, were recorded and transcribed. The interviews with the three FLT employees were held in person, the ones with Julia Albrecht and Niki Dent were conducted over Skype as the travel distance was too large.

² Qualmark belongs to Tourism New Zealand and is a well know symbol for quality

Table 5 Overview of interview partners

Interview Partner	Function	Knowledge
Brent Narbey	Managing Director, FLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business strategy • Core values
Jo Taylor	General Manager, FLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client advisory experience • Human resources insight
Anne Baumscheiper	Product Manager, FLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with suppliers • Booking system and administrative knowledge
Julia Albrecht	Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management, University of Otago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of tourism industry in New Zealand • Sustainability practices in the tourism industry
Nicki Dent	Sales Manager, Rotorua Canopy Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Values of Rotorua Canopy Tours • Insight in the forest conservation program

Source: Own representation (2016)

To receive additional comments on prior mentioned documents and to assess different standpoints towards sustainability several expert interviews with FLT staff have been conducted. The first interview was held with Brent Narbey the Managing Director of the company. He was one of the founders of FLT, 20 years ago and is the head of the marketing department. He can highly influence how FLT enhances its sustainability performance and has a deep knowledge about the past and current times values of the company and is therefore a valuable interview partner. Furthermore an interview with Jo Taylor has been carried out. Taylor is the General Manager of the company and responsible for the hiring process, staff training and sales numbers of the sales agents. Her experience in clients' consultancy and human resource insight proved to give valuable insights for this thesis as well. To contemplate the interaction with different suppliers the Product Manager, Anne Baumscheiper, has been questioned. She deals with existing partners and also prospects for possible new working relationship. Further she takes care of administrative tasks and is responsible for the interns working at FLT, from hiring to training them appropriately for their tasks and duties.

To gain a deeper insight into the tourism industry of New Zealand an expert interview with Julia Albrecht was conducted. She is Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management at the University of Otago and a member of the executive committee of BEST.EN (Building Excellence in Sustainable Tourism) was conducted. The interviewee was selected because of her presumed knowledge about tourism in New Zealand in general and especially her interest in sustainable matters. Julia Albrecht has published articles in leading academic journals such as the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. Lately she has been researching the area of visitor management, nature-based attractions as well as tourism in winegrowing regions.

Canopy Rotorua Tours has been selected as a good practice example due to their efforts in the conservation of flora and fauna in the region of Rotorua. In order to receive more information about the history and to understand the motivation and purpose of the company better, an interview with Niki Dent was undertaken. She is the sales manager of the company and in close contact with the founders as well as the tour guides and clients.

Observations and personal knowledge the author has gained during the six month working for FLT as an intern have been used to complement the data gained from documents and interviews.

Data analysis

To analyse the collected data the grounded theory coding method introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 has been chosen. The goal of coding is to organize a document according to different categories and course of time to understand the content better (Flick, 2009, p. 309). According to Christiane Schmidt this analytical strategy combines the theoretical background knowledge with the conducted primary data (2000, p. 253). The selected FLT documents and the interview transcripts have been coded according to different categories. Codes have been allocated to sentences and whole paragraphs. When applying the grounded theory method, deductive and inductive analysis is involved (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) cited in (Patton, 2015, pp. 542,543). In this paper the deductive analysis is used to compare the business practices of FLT with sustainability theories and sustainable business guidelines. The inductive analysis is applied to generate improvements and product developments.

Limitations

Due to the time frame of a bachelor thesis the author will constrain on concrete improvements for FLT and not develop an action plan towards a sustainable business strategy. First Light Travel is a medium sized company with 18 employees. Their business strategy and core values are not documented in a written paper but anchored in the head of the managing

directors and communicated within the team. Due to this the analysis is based on interviews, website information, Qualmark reports and FLT information booklets written for clients respectively suppliers. Moreover it was difficult to find appropriate interview partners, some desired interviewees were not available due to preparations for the next high season or restructuring measures.

5. RESULTS

5.1. ANALYSIS OF STRATEGY

In the following chapter the results of the analysis of First Light Travel according to the theory seen in chapter one to three is presented. The structure accords with the chapter 'sustainable business management for tour operators'. Each sub item is followed by improvement suggestions.

5.1.1. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

First Light Travel already has several energy, water and paper saving measures taken and they are very motivated to develop and apply further tools to minimize their negative impacts on the environment (Narbey, 2016).

In the Qualmark report issued in 2013 it was written that FLT applies a switch off policy, which means all the electronic devices are switched off during the night. However Brent Narbey denied this practice by stating that only the lights and the air conditioner are out at night time. Further Narbey states that the electronic equipment is checked regularly and energy-efficient light bulbs are installed. However as the electricity is provided by the landlord FLT does not know what kind of energy is used, neither who is the supplier. Also renovating the building cannot be seen as part of First Light Travels duties as the company is only a tenant in that property (Narbey, 2016).

The cost for water supply is included in the rent that is why FLT has no figures about their water usage. Nevertheless several measures to reduce water usage and pollution are in place, for example half-flush toilet cistern are installed and biodegradable cleaning agents in use (Qualmark, 2013). Further there are no dripping taps and water is switched off when not in use. Also the dishwasher is only started once a day to reduce the water wasted by several cycles and employees are encouraged to make use of the dishwasher and not rinse every single item by hand (Baumscheiper, 2016). It is assumed that low-flow aerators are not in use as the managing director and other staff did not know what is meant by that term.

The vision of the managing director, Brent Narbey (2016), is to turn his company into a paperless business. Travel vouchers should no longer be printed out and sent to clients but made available to clients via an application on their mobile phone. Due to own observations the author knows that the company is already advanced when it comes to paper usage. The printer settings are set to double sided and black and white plus environmental friendly paper is used. One side printed pages, which were not correct, are reused as scrap paper and employees are encouraged to print as little as possible. A second screen is provided to facilitate

working without paper copies (Qualmark, 2013). The company uses their website as their marketing tool which means they have no need for brochures and promotional flyers also the supplier data is stored electronically, brochures from subcontracted suppliers are usually sent back to them as FLT has no need for them (Qualmark, 2013).

Two recycle bins are provided in the office location of FLT and according to Anne Baumscheiper (2016) everyone knows what belongs in to these containers. Several keyboards and computer mice are powered by batteries, FLT provides rechargeable batteries that are shared and charged all in the same spot. Further offices products are ordered and replaced by only two responsible people in the office in order to better coordinate the requests, which saves time, packaging waste and transportation costs (Baumscheiper, 2016).

The office and most of the facilities like printer are shared with Moa Trek. Money can be saved when sharing an office location as well as the environmental impact can be minimized. However when deciding to implement saving measures into the office also the partner company has to be persuaded, this can prolong the already complicated journey towards sustainability practices even more.

Improvements

- ✓ **Switch-off policy**
- ✓ **Inform interns about recycling rules**

To reduce the energy consumption FLT is advised to go back to their switch off policy that was executed in 2013. Further air-conditioning and heater should be adapted to the outside temperature and only differ by a couple of degrees. As a short-term action, it is recommended to talk to the landlord about the energy provider he purchases from and to encourage him to swop to a renewable energy supplier.

As FLT has many international interns working in the office for a few months plus the recycling rules are very different in New Zealand, it would be useful to hang up a sign above the recycle bins stating what goes into that particular bin.

5.1.2. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Currently 18 people are working for FLT and the number of employees is assumed to grow over the next few years. Out of those 18 employees 10 are part-time employed. Only about half of the staff is regularly in the office as FLT provides the possibility to work from home. Some employees live in rural areas with poor public transport connections or even in other big cities like Wellington or Nelson. Home office gives mothers a possibility to continue

working and also reduces pollution impacts, as no daily journey to work has to be undertaken. Further the company appreciates its staff and promotes long-term work relationships; employees who have to move to other cities due to personal reasons are encouraged to continue their employment. What makes this possible is a server, which provides access to work files and programs from outside the office. The employees can plan their workload independently; one of the requirements is to attend the weekly meeting either via Skype or with personal attendance in the office (Baumscheiper, 2016).

New staff is trained, by more experienced employees, which includes an introduction into Enigma, the companies own system. All the information about work processes and guidelines is also stored in a folder called 'bible' which is accessible on the server. In case a member of the staff is unsure about work processes or what activity or accommodation to include in the packages, Anne Baumscheiper the Product Manager or Jo Taylor the General Manager is always keen to help out (Taylor, 2016). The team spirit at First Light Travel is well established. First Light Travel gives the opportunity to gain work experience and insight to several students from all over the world. The internship is unpaid and travel and living expenditures have to be covered by the interns themselves. Furthermore external sales training is not provided at FLT as the company is rather small and Jo Taylor (2016) states: "A sales person has to be born with sales skills it cannot be learnt through courses." However as seen in chapter 1.2.3 employees should be given the possibilities to personally develop and enhance their skills. The training should be beyond task-related knowledge and focus on holistic development and constant learning of the sales agents (Cron et al. 2005 cited in Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Di Mascio, 2012, p. 141-143). Which means staff should be trained on how to deal with different cultures, clients and how to persuade possible clients to book with FLT.

Currently the employees know little about sustainability, they are not trained in this matter. Nevertheless they are encouraged to recycle, to print as little as possible and to cycle to work. The managing director, the general manager and also the product manager of FLT are mainly informed about the environmental dimension of sustainability. They agree on the point of view that sustainable tourism in New Zealand is important, as nature is the most important selling factor and needs to be perceived (Baumscheiper; Narbey; Taylor, 2016). Jo Taylor (2016) states that she grew up with the knowledge about sustainability issues, she was taught to not litter and to recycle. In her opinion people in New Zealand are environmental friendly. Brent Narbey (2016) believes that the tourism industry is more sustainable than the current export leader, the dairy industry, because they pollute rivers and streams.

When it comes to hiring new employees, FLT priorities locals, preferably with experience in the tourism industry (Taylor, 2016). However the current staff is very diverse in terms of nationality, cultural and academic background. People of New Zealand, Maori, European and Chinese descent are employed. One employee for example came from the hospitality sector and had no prior knowledge in the tour operator business. His fellow sales agents trained him on the job (Taylor, 2016).

Improvements

- ✓ **Choose a person in charge of sustainability**
- ✓ **Educate staff about sustainability matters**
- ✓ **Create Sustainability spirit in the company**

A person in charge of sustainability issues should be elected. The first step would then be to educate this specific employee externally. The sustainability manager could then set up a practice with the rest of the staff to bring everyone onto the same level of knowledge. The duty of the sustainability responsible would also be to motivate the rest of the company to take action in office and supply chain management. It also has to be guaranteed that the staff can enhance themselves, which can be reached by regular internal and external training sessions.

In order to stimulate the attention towards sustainability a competition could be started and discussed in the weekly team meeting. For example the presentation of a sustainable supplier the staff came across, including the benefits of that specific offer for clients.

Another point that can be discussed and improved is the rewarding system for interns. By providing them with housing, food or a little salary satisfaction level and motivation could be increased. Also a lot of living equipment is bought and discarded due to the amount of interns arriving and the short period of time the international students live in Auckland. A specific idea is that FLT rents a house and provides the equipment and furniture so that up to 6 people could live in that place at once.

5.1.3. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

FLT is mainly specialized in inbound travel to New Zealand, which means they are not very flexible with changing from one destination they offer to the next one. Brent Narbey grew up in New Zealand but only after coming back after years of living overseas and working in the tourism industry in England and Africa he and his business partner Nigel Williamson decided to sell New Zealand to foreigners. The aim was to show the tourists a real expe-

rience of New Zealand, which included everything Narbey and Williamson loved doing themselves. They went out and travelled through New Zealand and tested all the different activities and accommodation themselves so they knew the country and what they were selling very well (Narbey, 2016). At the moment the owners do not travel as much anymore but their agents and interns are still very often on the road and test new products and accommodation options (Narbey; Taylor, 2016). In order to expand their business they decided a few years ago to also sell products in Australia and the Pacific Islands. A trip extension to Australia is regularly booked, however vacations on the islands have been sold only occasionally. Currently the demand is increasing as many honeymoon travellers want to include a stopover on the Pacific Islands in their package (Baumscheiper, 2016).

First Light Travel sells mainly self-drive tours but also has a few group bus tours in the product range. The TranzAlpineExpress and the ferry between the two islands are frequently included in clients travel itineraries. When it comes to accommodation, the preference of Narbey would be to cooperate mainly with locally owned small B&Bs, however in peak season the number of tourist arrivals is too high to accommodate everyone in a Bed and Breakfast (Narbey, 2016). For activities, the rule the company follows is; that they arrange everything according to client wishes. Even though the managing director does not support activities like motor biking or quad biking and would not actively promote them he is still willing to arrange them for clients (Narbey, 2016). Food and Beverage is not part of the packages created and sold by FLT and can only be controlled by its sub-contracted suppliers.

The Tour Operator is interested in how the clients experienced their trip. The customers are requested to fill in a feedback form at the end of their vacation. Useful comments about different suppliers are saved into the v-card in the outlook system. Every subcontracted partner has his own V-card, where conversations, rates, contact details and feedbacks are stored. FLT takes the feedbacks of clients seriously; their general policy is to end the cooperation with suppliers after the third negative client statement (Narbey, 2016). But before that Narbey passes on negative client feedbacks to the affected providers. However he states that usually there is no hope for them as it is a tough business and good quality is a must.

Improvements

- ✓ **Promote and sell less known and less crowded places**
- ✓ **Consider purchasing hybrid or low consumption cars**
- ✓ **Offer limited product range of activities**
- ✓ **Amend feedback form with the addition of clear questions about sustainability**

Due to marketing efforts and good reputation FLT should continue to sell the destination New Zealand, however within this big destination are many smaller regions where it lies in the power of FLT to decide on which places they want to lay emphasis. As seen in prior chapter tourism development in New Zealand is not spread evenly. First Light Travel could help less developed regions with sufficient infrastructure to receive a higher amount of visitors. One of the rules in the Sustainable Tourism Policy in the information booklet for customers states that FLT wants to bring clients to off the beaten track locations (First Light Travel, 2016). However still many tour proposals on the website include places like Milford Sound and Mount Cook. To go beyond the company should consider the carrying capacity when designing the tour ideas and market itself as a tour operator that shows special, unknown but not less beautiful places.

Different car options than the traditional one should be considered. At the moment not many operators offer hybrid cars and distances are too big for electronic cars but the evolvments in this market should be followed. Another option would be to purchase a few hybrid cars and rent them out for self-drive tours.

Stricter criteria in terms of type of activities offered should be implemented. As a first step the activities with negative impacts could be taken away from the website and sales agent should not actively recommended them anymore. Later on when sufficient alternative products will be found, FLT can completely remove them from their product range. In table 6 examples of non-harming and harming activities are displayed.

Table 6 – Harming and non-harming activities

Non-harming activities	Activities with negative impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiking - Kayaking - Cultural activities - Educational trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scenic flights - Off-road driving - Heli-Hike - Jet boating - Cruises

Source: Own representation (2016)

So far the feedback form includes only following question in connection to sustainability: “Do you have any comments or suggestions on how First Light Travel can improve its Environmental Tourism Policy?” (First Light Travel, 2014b) The Tourism Policy of FLT can be viewed in appendix II. Out of personal working knowledge the author knows that clients who submit feedback often leave this question empty. This leads to the assumption that customers do not fully understand what is required from them in this section. Following more straightforward and easier formulated questions are proposed to add to the existing feedback form instead:

- How was the standard of infrastructure in the places you visited? Was there a place that outbalanced the rest or could not keep up with the average infrastructure provided?
- Did you learn something new during your trip? If yes by which suppliers and how have you been educated?
- Did you notice any activity and accommodation provider which was engaged in environment and community, if yes which one and how?
- What places, if any, gave you the impression to be overcrowded by tourists?

5.1.4. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

The Supply chain is not managed strictly so far. Every agent can add new suppliers into Enigma when they wish to include their products into a specific client itinerary. The management decides afterwards if a long time work relationship is promising, which would include the generation of contracts. Currently the product management department sorts its suppliers, the project is called supplier streamlining. The criteria are regular bookings, up to date information and rates and good feedback in the past. 2000 sub-contractors are too many for a rather small company and First Light Travel could profit from higher commission if more bookings per supplier were generated. New suppliers are usually discovered through own

experiences, recommendations from friends or clients. Some suppliers send emails including product information or ask for a possibility to hold a sales presentation at the tour operators' office. Baumscheiper states she digs for information about new suppliers and their offers as she wants to assure that the FLT clients will have a good time. However she only considers sustainability issues when she can choose between two or more similar suppliers. In that case she prefers to work with smaller, more individualized, locally owned companies, which protect the environment. In general the main criterion is reliability, FLT has to count on the persistence of the booking and the agreed rates. Some accommodation or activity providers are booked only once due to special client requests (Baumscheiper, 2016).

Improvements

- ✓ **Assessment of suppliers in terms of sustainability**
- ✓ **Trying to influence suppliers to improve their practices**
- ✓ **Streamline suppliers according to assessments**
- ✓ **Keep staff up to date through communication in team meetings and sustainability tick mark**

Some steps of the sustainable supply chain management have already been covered in the improvement sections of other topics earlier in this paper. It is important to create clear goals, which can consider various areas of business. One goal in connection with sustainable supply chain management is the assessment of all suppliers in terms of sustainability. As a start website research can be done, by sales agents directly when looking for appropriate products and by the product manager when receiving new offers and when updating rates. A further step is then the assessment with the help of a questionnaire sent to current suppliers. The questionnaire should cover the criteria presented in chapter 5.2.5.

It still has to be decided how FLT organizes the order of the assessments executed; for example by type of supplier or by region. It could be combined with the supplier-streamlining project as for this project the continuation of the cooperation with different suppliers is discussed as well. After the results of the different assessments will have been analysed, specific actions will be formulated; for example to contact different suppliers which do nearly meet the desired standard and advise them how to improve. Further to quit cooperation with suppliers that do not meet the minimum criteria straight away. Improvements made should be communicated to the whole team during the weekly meeting. Additionally a new tick mark should be added to Enigma, one which indicates that this supplier meets the sustainability criteria of FLT. Also the assessment form should be saved in each v-card and updated every

two years. A basic table could be added into enigma so that agents see the strength of suppliers straight away and can add details if they come across during product research or communication with providers. An example for accommodation suppliers is presented in table 7.

Table 7 – Overview of implemented sustainability measures

Criteria	What is done
Waste management	Company recycles
Energy reduction	Uses renewable energy
Water reduction	Nothing
Locally owned	Owner from Nelson

Source: Own representation (2016)

5.1.5. CUSTOMER RELATION

Before clients arrive to New Zealand they are provided by FLT with a booklet called: *Essential New Zealand – Troubleshooting Tips and Advice for your Holiday* (2016). Within this document useful information to smoothen the trip can be found. It includes practical and administrative chapters such as: Visa, airport and money matters as well as informative and educational parts for example in the chapter facts about New Zealand or the ‘Environmental Protection and how you can help’. Some information regarding the Maori culture, customs and language is provided. Visitors know what to expect in terms of culture tourism and should be able to pronounce names of places, which are often written in Maori language, when asking for directions. Also the laid back characteristics of Kiwis is mentioned which indicates customers to acclimatize to a relaxed pace of how things are handled in New Zealand already beforehand.

Also safety issues are treated in the booklet including driving rules, sun protection and swimming/no swimming advices. Furthermore the following information regarding privacy policy regulation is published on their website: “At First Light Travel we understand that our users are concerned as to the use of personal information provided, and we therefore assure you that your privacy is of utmost importance to us.” (First Light Travel, 2014c). The following measures are taken to assure that; personal information is used to contact clients during the booking period and can be utilized for market research and promotional information, but is

never sold or rented to third parties. Customers are also informed about cookies and Google adverts and how this might affect them (First Light Travel, 2014c).

The feedback form which was already mentioned in the part about product development can not only help the tour operators in deciding on which destinations they want to focus and the suppliers in improving their offer but also raise the awareness of clients towards sustainability issues. The newly added questions lead the clients in the right direction and animate them to think about several sustainability issues.

Improvements

- ✓ **Communicate sustainability practices of FLT**
- ✓ **Give specific advises what customers can do**
- ✓ **Provide more knowledge about the Maori culture and appropriate behaviour**

First Light Travel is concerned about their ecological impact, this can be communicated on the website and in the information booklets for clients and suppliers. By adding the fields FLT is already good at and presenting the goals for the future a direction of evolvement can be shown. The vision and what is already done should be clearly separated, to avoid being implicated with green washing. Greenwashing means to market a product or a company as sustainable friendly when in fact it is not sustainable (Patterson, 2015, pp. 106,109). Further FLT could add a CO2 compensation fee for flight tickets, on top of the package prize and communicate to their clients that the company already took care of their contribution towards a healthier environment.

The sustainable tourism policy that is currently used in the information booklet is suggested to be updated. It raises questions regarding what exactly is meant; for example could be mentioned what kind of local conservation efforts are supported and why they choose to bring tourist to off the beaten track locations. Also it is advised to present the sustainable tourism policy to potential clients already before they made the decision to book with FLT so it would belong in the about us section on the website.

Further the *New Zealand Environmental Care Code* published in the Essential New Zealand booklet (First Light Travel, 2016) could be expanded. So far customers are made aware of how to behave when interacting with the natural environment. The rules mentioned are simple and could be written more specific to achieve a more significant success. For example underneath the part; *remove rubbish* clients could also be indicated that rules and regula-

tions for recycling are different from council to council followed by the request to obey those. And the paragraph *respect our cultural heritage* would be clearer if examples of places with spiritual and historical significance would be presented and also a guideline for how to interact with locals could be added under this section.

Another thematic, which belongs into the environmental protection, is a summary of the unsustainable activities mentioned in an earlier chapter. First Light Travel writes in their sustainable tourism policy: "Itinerary design which has utmost regard to minimizing impact on the local environment and improving it wherever possible." (First Light Travel, 2016). This means it would be appropriate to also inform clients how to minimize the generation of carbon emissions. Another sentence that FLT presents in their sustainable tourism policy is; "We seek to support locally-owned New Zealand guiding operations who can demonstrate to us a similar passion for the natural environment." (First Light Travel, 2016). Also for this part further detail is required. An approach would be for example to explain the customers the phenomenon of leakage, which could raise their awareness and they might be motivated to make a difference by eat out in small restaurants and shop locally.

5.1.6. COOPERATION WITH DESTINATION

No direct cooperation with destination management organizations is practiced at First Light Travel. The company only works together with their sub-contracted suppliers located in the different regions. The TO depends on the infrastructure provided by destinations and can profit of the countries general interest in the tourism industry. Even though FLT is a leader in the online travel agency market its sales volume is not big enough to have significant influence on a destination (Narbey, 2016).

According to Brent Narbey (2016), FLT does not make enough profit to fund various projects, however if this will be the case in the future he is planning on investing money in conservation projects. Nevertheless a few years ago the company had launched a tour, which when booked by clients, generates money for an orca research trust operated by Dr Ingrid Visser, a scientist specialized in orcas. The managing director met her during the time he was actively involved in the dive shop. As she described her problem he decided to create a tourism product that would bring her money for the protection of the 250 orcas living around New Zealand. The tour was operated twice as a group tour and yielded around \$80'000 the first time carried out. As it was too challenging to find enough interested people to run the tour it is now operated as a self-drive tour and the profit is still paid to Dr Visser (Narbey, 2016).

Improvements

- ✓ **Stronger cooperation with destinations**
- ✓ **Animate customer to pay contribution fee towards a sustainable project**

First Light Travel could get in contact with various destinations in order to see how far the carrying capacity is advanced and what places they would like to promote further as they already have sufficient infrastructure to host tourists.

As is it difficult for tour operators to generate enough profit to fund local communities and various project a small voluntary contribution fee could be added on top of package prizes. Customers would be informed to which projects their money goes to and could maybe even visit the area during their trip to New Zealand.

5.2. PRODUCT ANALYSIS

In the following chapter an existing FLT tour proposal is analysed in terms of sustainability and improvement suggestions are provided. As a basic for this analysis, the in table 8-11 presented criteria was applied. The chosen criteria are based on literature research specified in the following four chapters as well as supported by the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for hotels and tour operators from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) published in 2012.

5.2.1. HOSPITALITY

The hospitality industry is a very important part of the tourism industry and provides many job opportunities. (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 253 in Rein & Strasdas) In New Zealand 152,910 people are employed in this sector (Statistics New Zealand, 2015, p. 77). If a hotel is managed well it can bring positive impacts to a region. Locals can profit from new job opportunities and small and medium businesses, which can supply the hotel with products from new sales channels. But not every employment option brings wealth to a region, fair working conditions inclusive salary, provided education and career opportunities are compulsory in order to generate positive impacts (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 257 in Rein & Strasdas).

Another important part when looking at the sustainability performance of a hotel is how well the building fits into the area. Is the same architecture style used, does it keep scale with its surrounding buildings and are local materials used to build it (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 299-300)?

Equally important is the location of the accommodation; if it is close to public transport emission generation can be minimized (Strasdas, 2015, p. 64).

The hospitality sector uses a huge amount of resources and generates waste due to the infrastructure it uses to host and nourish guests (Weaver, 2006, p. 85). A good start would be to measure the consumption of resources and then slowly switch to renewable energies and water saving facilities (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 254-255 in Rein & Strasdas). The use of local and seasonal products as well as a limited number of offered menus and no buffet option minimize the waste and the emission generated. (Strasdas, 2015, p. 64) Also important is to inform guest and staff about ways to minimize the CO₂ and waste generation, for example by reduce, reuse, and recycle indications and encouragements to use public transport and to switch off lights and devices if not in use (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 255-256 in Rein & Strasdas).

5.2.2. ATTRACTION & ACTIVITIES

Attractions are often inseparable connected with certain destinations. They are the main reason why tourists visit an area and can shape the type, location and volume of tourist activities and thus the sustainability of tourism in this region (Weaver, 2006, p. 92).

Local culture and customs are an important part of the uniqueness of a tourism offer. Tourists should be introduced to local customs and have the chance to interact with them in an appropriate manner (UNEP, 2005, p. 27). Tourism demand is moving towards an authentic presentation of culture in New Zealand (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2013, p. 29). However according to Weaver (2006, p.93) authenticity is a wide term, it depends if the attraction is genuine or an imitation, both can be sustainable it depends on how it is presented and communicated to visitors. Imitations should not be sold as real and vice versa. In New Zealand Maori tourism is often presented as a show to many tourists at once, however according to Julia Albrecht (2016) the companies are mainly owned by Maoris and it is their decision how they want to present their culture and what they regard as an authentic reproduction.

What is often underestimated is the transportation to the locations in which the specific activities take place. Adventure and nature tourism takes often place in rural areas and is only reachable by energy wasting vehicles like helicopter, speedboat or off-road cars (Strasdas, 2015, pp. 63-64).

Tours, which are unethical, should not be offered to clients, for example off-road tours in sensitive areas or swimming with dolphins in captivity (Balàs & Strasdas, 2015, p. 249 in Rein & Strasdas).

5.2.3. TRANSPORT

All the tourism products require the transportation of people, as the services cannot be delivered to the homes of the consumers (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 288). The transport sector generates the highest amount of greenhouse gas emission; 75% of the total tourism CO₂ emission derives from transportation. Within this sector by far the highest impact has the aviation industry. Only 17 % of all the trips are undertaken by plane but cause 40% of all tourism related CO₂ emission, in comparison 34% of tourist journeys undertaken are by rail and bus and generate only 13% of all CO₂ emission (Hall & Gössling, 2009, p. 19-20). Thus for short distances air transportation should be avoided, rather bus, car or rail transportation should be used (UNEP, 2005, p.26). The choice of means of transportation by the tour operator is limited in terms of infrastructure supply of the host destination (Klein, 2015, p. 185 in Rein & Strasdas). In New Zealand many bus companies are available for tourist including Naked Bus, InterCity and Kiwi Experience, which approach over 300 cities around the country. A hop on hop off option is often available, travellers are able to stop any time and get back on to the bus whenever they want (Tourism New Zealand a, n.d.). Also a few scenic train routes are bookable which include the TranzAlpine, Coastal Pacific and Northern Explorer line (KiwiRail Scenic Journeys, 2016). Limited availability throughout the year and only a few departure dates negatively affect the convenience of this mode of transportation.

If air transportation cannot be avoided CO₂ compensation can be paid however many travellers do not use this compensation service (Strasdas, 2015, p. 36), therefore it should be actively promoted by tour operators or included into the package prize. Other means of transport, which have been used more often lately and generate at least the same amount of emissions as air transportations are campervans and cruise ships (Strasdas, 2015, p. 63).

But not only the generation of CO₂ emission is a negative impact of the transport sector also the noise pollution and the use of non-renewable resources such as oil and coal influence the environment badly (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 288). Alternative options are gas, hybrid or electronic cars. A few rental companies like the electro rental company bluecars (Blue Cars Ltd., 2016) already exist in New Zealand. However the market of electronic cars is not developed enough to do a self-drive journey through New Zealand. The cities and thus location to charge the car are too far from each other according to Julia Albrecht. Another option is a hybrid vehicle, an automobile that includes two power sources, gasoline engine and an

electric motor. This option is still quiet and clean however it does not require charging the battery as often as an electric car as it also runs with the gasoline engine. The benefits of a hybrid vehicle are fuel efficiency, less emission and less dependence on oil. The negative impacts on the other hand are high costs and limited space inside the vehicle (Fuhs, 2008, pp. 2,4,40,41,73).

5.2.4. TRAVEL ROUTE

Destinations, which are far away from the countries of origin of most of their visitors, like New Zealand, are in conflict to respect all the dimensions of sustainability. Already the journey to the final destination generates a high amount of pollution which impacts the environmental dimension negatively however if tourists would boycott those tourism destinations the other two dimensions would suffer. An approach to solve this problem, though by far not optimal is the appropriate relation between length of stay and distance of travel. The German organization *forum anders reisen* suggests a stay of more than 14 days for flights of more than 2'000 km (Klein, 2015, p. 184 in Rein & Strasdas). The flight distance from London to Auckland for example is 18'383 km and from San Francisco to Auckland 10'521 km (Air Miles Calculator, n.d.). Considering only the travel in the destination the route should be focused on exploring certain regions in depth rather than rushing from one place to the other (Swarbrooke, 1999, pp. 293,294). Further Tour operators should spread the knowledge about less visited and less famous places in order to spread the visitor flow, (UNEP, 2005, p.27) which would better distribute the economic benefits of tourism (Albrecht, 2016).

5.2.5. QUALMARK

Qualmark is reputable quality label in New Zealand, it is awarded by New Zealand tourists' official quality assurance organisation. They provide different kind of quality labels, which assure that the businesses receiving them, meet appropriate quality standard and environmental criteria. The company states that all of the accredited businesses meet social and environmental criteria however a more profound investigation on sustainability issues is done for the Enviro Awards. Three different Enviro Awards; Gold, Silver and Bronze, are existing (Qualmark, 2016). The descriptions of the different Enviro Awards are vague and no clear distinction can be made, thus in the assessment of the suppliers in this paper, to hold the Bronze Enviro Award is set as a minimum requirement.

5.2.6. CRITERIA CATALOGUE

The following Criteria Catalogue was designed for the sales agents of FLT in order to give them an overview of sustainable issues to consider when creating a customized tour for their

clients. The criteria are selected as it is examined to be possible to determine on website research and personal contact with the suppliers. Some suppliers are already better known among the sales agents due to sales presentations and personal interaction but it cannot be generally spoken for the whole supply chain. Sustainability is not a very important factor when it comes to choosing new suppliers to work with (Baumscheiper, 2016). Also the staff is very free when it comes to designing a new itinerary, the main point to consider is the client and his wishes and desires (Taylor, 2016). The only assistance for agents so far was a priority tick mark in Enigma which was awarded for excellent prior experiences. For the moment, the Criteria Catalogue is aimed to provide the employees of FLT with a general overview of what belongs into the matter of sustainability and to provide them with ideas what could be checked. On the long-run it can be used to undertake more profound research via email, telephone and personal interaction with the suppliers when they come to the FLT office for sales presentations.

Table 8 – General Criteria

General	
Criteria	What has to be fulfilled
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms are taken to reduce waste • Waste is separated and brought to recycling collections • Guests are informed how they can minimize or recycle waste
Energy reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable energy is used • Energy saving facilities are used • Guests are informed how they can minimize energy use
Water reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water saving measures are taken • Guests are informed how they can minimize water use
Locally owned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners are residents of the country
Local employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are residents of the destination they work at
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members are regularly trained in diverse matters (e.g. water savings, etc.)
Involved with a sustainable project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company supports local community for example the local infrastructure and the social community development in the area of education and health and sanitation • Support of any sustainability project all over the world
Enviro Qualmark certificated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The company has at least an Enviro Bronze label

Table 9 – Accommodation Criteria

Accommodation	
Criteria	What has to be fulfilled
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The building style has to fit into its surrounding (size, architecture)• The building is aesthetical attractive
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close to public transportation access or shuttle service provided• Not situated where wildlife or natural environment is damaged
Food & Beverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of regional, seasonal and fair-trade products wherever possible• Serves local dishes

Table 10 – Activity Criteria

Activities	
Criteria	What has to be fulfilled
Minimize pollution / CO2 emission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers that use renewable energy like electro, biodiesel • Clients are picked up and transported in a bus rather than with individual cars • Favour activities which do not generate greenhouse gas emissions, like hiking, kayaking, cultural activities • Do not actively promote activities like Heli-hike, scenic flights and jet boating
Authentic representation of the culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maori people are involved in the planning and execution of the cultural presentation
Education of tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about wildlife, the area or culture is part of the product
Responsible wildlife interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wildlife is respected and not exploited • Information for customers how to interact with the wildlife is provided
Responsible natural environment interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid environmentally fragile areas • Information for customers how to interact with the natural environment is provided
Small groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book small group tours

Table 11 – Transportation Criteria

Transport	
Criteria	What has to be fulfilled
Minimize pollution / CO2 emission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent cars that use renewable energy like: electro, biodiesel • Do not actively promote campervan
Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote to discover one part of the country rather than itineraries that rush through the country • Do not suggest to take the airplane for short distances • CO2-compensation for flights that are not avoidable - and for own business flights • Propose to visit less visited and less know areas with appropriate infrastructure
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend your clients to take the train and buses for parts of their vacation

Source table 8 to 11: Own representation (2016) from sources in theory 5.2.1-5.2.5 and GSTC, 2012

5.2.7. FLT TOUR PROPOSAL

Figure 4 – Travel route of proposed tour



Source: Enigma Tour Proposal (2016)

As a first application attempt of the Criteria Catalogue, a tour that could have been sold to First Light Travel clients was analysed. The tour proposal was based on the tour *A Quick New Zealand Fix – The South Island*, which is published on the website (First Light Travel, 2014d). According to Jo Taylor (2016) a sales agent and general manager at FLT a website tour is never sold exactly how the client sees it at first glimpse on the website. The agents generate value by putting themselves in the clients position and by sensing what matches best to the individual client. Therefore the website tour idea was amended with activities and accommodation options which have been sold the most in the year 2015. Afterwards the website of every single component of the tour was examined in order to find information about the requirements of the criteria catalogue.

Due to time restrictions of the thesis none of the suppliers were contacted personally. Further with this method it could be illustrated how much the agents can find out by simply clicking through the website. It has to be apprehended that this was not the perfect method to define if the suppliers chosen at first hand were thoroughly sustainable. Most of them covered some parts of the Criteria Catalogue and did not provide any information to other issues. There was also much room for interpretation open as for example the Holly Homestead B&B states on their website under the heading environmental policy: *“Moderation is good. We all need to be sensible about enjoying what we already have, to ensure future generations will also enjoy Planet Earth, Mother Nature and all its beauty.”* (Holly Homestead B&B, n.d.) Further information or any concrete examples are not presented. There was also a difference in the website presentation and professionalism of the small companies compared to the big enterprises. However as a starting point and to receive an overview of the sub-contractors business activities and values the websites served well.

To remain part of the proposed tour the suppliers had to reach minimum half of the required criteria. In order to be fair, criteria, which were not applicable to certain suppliers, were not considered. For example for B&Bs run only by the owners, no assessment about their employees was done. Further, more suitable accommodation and activity providers have replaced the rejected suppliers. Some of them have already been sub-contracted by FLT others are recommended by the author to start a business relationship with. Following changes, marked in green in Table 12 had been made to the proposed tour:

✓ Crowded placed replaced with less known regions

With Mount Cook and Milford Sound, two very popular and busy places have been replaced by less visited locations. Instead of Milford Sound the tour brings tourists to Doubtful Sound a less crowded but also very beautiful fjord. The Mount Cook region receives many

visitors, especially in the summer months, however many other great walks are available in the area between Christchurch and Queenstown and it is also possible to catch a glimpse of this massive mountain from further away. Sofie Liu (personal communication, 22 October 2016) a travel agent at FLT recommended the Lake Ohau region as it is according to her a beautiful area with many hiking possibilities. The area just started to attract little more visitors recently. However Liu stated that it did not happen often that clients specifically asked to visit more remote places. They come to New Zealand once in their lifetime and want to see all the well-known highlights of the country.

✓ **Activities with negative impacts replaced by less-harming activities**

The change of location from Milford to Doubtful Sound did not affect the supplier who offered the tour at first place. Real Journeys reached the minimum criteria, they have a Qualmark enviro award and contribute funds towards projects that support habitats, recovering species and clean up initiatives (Real Journeys, 2016). However the proposed tour included flying and will be exchanged by a kayaking, cruise combination. In Franz Josef Glacier, a heli-hike was planned also this activity was exchanged by a practice, which generates less carbon emission. Franz Josef Glacier Guides the operator of both, the original and the replacement option is owned by the Maori tribe, Ngai Tahu. The company plants tree to offset their carbon footprint and assists the local school and play group with activities. The new tour chosen is a guided walk on which customers learn from the experienced and well-trained guides about the glaciers' history and the Maori legend of Ka Roimata o Hinehukatere (Franz Josef Glacier Guides NZ, 2016).

✓ **Accommodation options with a big negative impact replaced by more sustainable accommodation suppliers**

Out of all the accommodations in the first tour proposal only Holly Homestead B&B in Franz Josef Glacier has been replaced, by Rainforest Retreat a more sustainable option. Rainforest Retreat has an amazing reputation when it comes to environmental care. They have taken several measures to minimize negative impacts, among others they did build the facility around native landscape, use low energy and low wattage lights, and shop locally. Further guests are informed how they can contribute positively in sustainability matters (Rainforest Retreat , 2016). Holly Homestead B&B did not reach the minimum criteria mainly due to lack of information on their website. It is possible that this B&B location is sustainable, and will be reinserted after the supplier assessments had been carried out. Also the accommodation in Mt Cook has changed to a suitable one in Lake Ohau, however this was only due to the change in location and not due to the performance of the hermitage hotel Mt Cook.

✓ Hybrid car is rented

As a means of transport a hybrid car from Avis was chosen, however it should be noted that their supply on hybrid cars is very limited and they are only available on request (Avis Rent A Car System, LLC, 2016), which means it can occur that another fuel-efficient car has to be booked as an alternative.

5.2.8. NEW TOUR PROPOSAL

Table 12 – Daily itinerary for new tour proposal

Day	Destination	Activity and supplier	Accommodation
1	Christchurch	Arriving and picking up car rental from Avis: Hybrid	Lilac Rose Boutique Hotel, Christchurch
2	Lake Ohau	Individual hiking	Lake Ohau Lodge
3	Queenstown	Gondola Ride and Traditional Maori Haka with Dinner, Skyline	Novotel Lakeside
4	Doubtful sound	Kayak and Cruise, Real Journeys	Novotel Lakeside
5	Franz Josef Glacier	Free day	Rainforest Retreat
6	Franz Josef Glacier	3 h hike, Franz Josef Glacier Guides	Rainforest Retreat
7	Christchurch	Journey by TranzAlpineExpress	Lilac Rose Boutique Hotel, Christchurch
8	Christchurch	Go back home	

Source: own representation (2016)

5.2.1. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The following supplier is outstanding strong in the environmental dimension of sustainability and also performs satisfying in the other two dimensions. The good practice example is presented in this thesis to illustrate a sustainable supplier that could be included in the website itineraries of FLT. Further the values and the vision of Rotorua Canopy Tours are very inspiring and demonstrate what positive impacts can be generated by a single dedicated supplier.

Rotorua Canopy Tours

Rotorua Canopy Tours is New Zealand's only native forest zipline canopy tour company. It is located in the Dansey Road Scenic Reserve, which is government land, protected by the Department of Conservation (Canopy Tours Rotorua, 2016). The tourism company was created in 2008 with the purpose of doing something good for the environment. Nicki Dent (2016), the sales and marketing manager of the company states that most other tourism op-

erations try to reduce the negative impacts they have on the environment whereas Rotorua Canopy Tours uses tourism to raise awareness and generate funds for conservation projects. James Fitzgerald the founder and owner of the company grew up in a family where environmental protection and the New Zealand forest was of high importance. He always had in mind to start his own business. Fitzgerald knew that ziplining as a tourist activity was quiet successful all over the world but he intended to make it a more meaningful experience (Dent, 2016). The main purpose should lay on education about biodiversity and the interaction with nature rather than about the adrenaline and providing the longest and fastest run. Tourists are exploring the forest in groups of ten people. On their tour they are informed about the development of the forest, how it was before people arrived and how the predators of the native birds took over. Further they are also introduced to methods, which balance the nature and eradicate those predators (Dent, 2016).

The employees are highly valued at this company, the owner stated in an interview at the local business awards that one of his biggest achievements is the amount of the staff that had bought property since they had been employed by him. He is proud that he is investing in staff and providing them opportunities for development. Further all of the conservation work is done by the staff, so they are not only talking about it they are actually doing it (Dent, 2016). In order to get rid of the possums and rats, which have been destroying the habitat of the native species, Canopy Rotorua started the trapping program in 2013 with money raised from the Zipline tours. Within a few weeks over 800 animals had been caught and amazing successes could be celebrated; for example in 2016 a rare striped skink³ and some pacific geckos had been spotted in the area. (Canopy Tours Rotorua, 2016) Rotorua Canopy Tours goes beyond the impact they have through their own conservation project, they also sell the exactly same traps they use and encourage people in the neighbourhood to follow their example (Dent, 2016).

When it comes to stakeholders, the company looks into how sustainable their suppliers are; for example they sell fair-trade, organic cotton made souvenir shirts, reusable coffee cups and stainless steel water bottles. However on the demand side of their business, to which the cooperation with travel agents and tour operators belongs, sustainability issues are not considered. Nicki Dent (2016) states that they do not filter agents according to their environmental engagement however she noted that more bookings are generated through companies with environmental interests as they already target customers with interest in this matter.

³ a native lizard which has not been seen in the forest for at least two decades

What FLT could learn from Rotorua Canopy Tours

What is very inspiring is the purpose behind the business idea. The company operates with the aim to protect the forest and to educate people. First Light Travel would have to look at this in a wider angle for example their aim could be to increase the positive impact they bring to the environment, community and economy of New Zealand. With this target in the back of their heads they could increase their willingness to set boundaries when it comes to harmful activities and to educate clients about sustainability issues.

5.3. DISCUSSION

When it comes to measures taken within the office management, FLT is already quiet advanced. Their main focus lies on the reduction of the paper usage but also water and energy saving measures are taken. However when talking about the supply chain management the company is less interested in taking action and differentiating itself from other tour operators. This conclusion was formulated due to several statements in the interviews and the work experience of the author. For example the General Manager states that sustainability issues are not considered at all when creating a tour proposal for clients. Further according to the product manager, only if there is a choice of providers, sustainability issues are taken into consideration for the decision making process. However some principles in the SMC of FLT are positive, for example their preference of working together with small locally owned and operated companies.

Also the work atmosphere is healthy; many of the employees have already been working for FLT for several years. On the one hand the possibility to work from home demonstrates that FLT is obliging, technically advanced and trusts its employees. On the other hand it is also a cost saving measure, as less workplaces and electronic equipment needs to be provided. The on the job training process is well developed, nevertheless sustainability matters are not part of the training. As seen in chapter three the company would achieve a higher success if every staff member is educated on sustainability matters and thus more committed. Additionally FLT has an excellent client service. The company assures the safety of clients and handles their personal data discretely further it provides important information about the country prior to the trip.

Further it is positive that the management chooses not to promote activities like motor biking, which harm the environment however the clients' wishes are considered of higher importance than the companies' values and principles. Everything is done in the attempt to please the customers. Although it is important to satisfy the customers it has to be accepted

that not every customer can be pleased in order follow the sustainability strategy and to stay credible. The companies' sustainable tourism policy earns similar critique; it is vague and not followed strictly. The intentions are positive, should however be rewritten, truly believed and communicated amongst employees, clients and sub-contracted suppliers.

Regarding the adaptation of the website tour it can be said that the attempt to make this tour more sustainable was connected with some difficulties. The tour is not long enough for international tourists, could however be sold to people who want to combine a visit of family and friends or business trips with exploring the country. Further the trip is a combination of well-known places and does not include any hidden spots. Both of these critics are reflected in the way the itinerary is market on the website:

Short of time but want to maximize your experience in New Zealand's South Island, well with-out going over the top and leaving you breathless at the end of your journey, we have compiled a couple of New Zealand Short Break self-drive itineraries that allow you to see and do those iconic New Zealand site-seeing and activities New Zealand is famed for - the Must-do's (First Light Travel, 2014d).

However it would also be risky to generate a fully sustainable tour and upload this next to all the persisting tour ideas without looking at what could be done to improve those. It could be perceived as green washing by attentive customers when only one tour is presented as sustainable. As it is already advised in an earlier chapter, activities with a big negative impact on the environment should be removed from website tour ideas, as well as overly crowded places. The promise to bring people off the beaten track should be noticeable in every single tour suggestion. Additionally in a category called 'maximize positive impacts' or 'your contribution to a healthy New Zealand' sustainable tour options could be presented.

CONCLUSION

With the help of the theoretical part of this thesis realizable suggestions to improve the strategy, the products and the supply chain management have been given.

It has been noted during the development of this paper that First Light Travels current business strategy already includes positive parts; such as their cooperation with local businesses, the possibility to work from home and the education of their customers, for example about Maori pronunciation. However when directly confronted with the question about the strength and future plans of FLT in sustainability matters only the paperless strategy and how to improve this further was mentioned by several interviewees. This shows that for FLT staff and management the environmental dimension is connected the strongest with the term sustainability. Furthermore it is hard to grasp with which intention First Light Travel approaches sustainability issues. It has been noticed that the company is very strong in issues that not only have positive impacts on the environment, community and economy but also do save money.

Most important, before any improvement suggestion can be implemented the matter of sustainability has to be seen and understood as a whole. The company has to realize what influence their strategic decisions have on the community and the environment. In order to change the strategy significantly; patience, time and financial resources are required. Sustainability cannot be implemented into a business strategy overnight. It is also important to look beyond the companies' office management and direct actions, as a tour operator can only be as sustainable as its suppliers.

The following limitations should be considered when looking at the improvement suggestions: When looking at resource management no numbers were measured, only the willingness to reduce the amount of usage was considered. Further, the people interviewed had their own personal definition about sustainability, which was reflected in their answers and led to partial improvement suggestions from their side. Further it was intended to lead FLT to an attainment of a Qualmark Enviro Gold award. However during the development of the thesis it has been established that it cannot clearly be said which standards exactly need to be reached, to earn a gold award. It is neither written on the document with the criteria nor to be found on the official Qualmark website. This makes it on the one hand impossible to define clear aims and on the other hand blurry for customers to see the difference in the variety of Enviro Awards the Qualmark institution awards. Also FLT is satisfied with its current status as a silver award holder and uses mainly for marketing purposes. Every company with Qualmark certification is listed as priority on the Tourism New Zealand website (Narbey,

2016). Additionally no Tour Operator, which sells a sustainable tour through New Zealand, was found. Due to this Canopy Tours Rotorua a supplier FLT works with on a regular basis was examined and analysed more profoundly.

The overall objectives of the thesis have been reached; A better overview of the attitude of FLT towards sustainability could be gained further it has been illustrated where and how First Light Travel can improve their sustainability practises. Some of the improvement measures are easy to implement and in the power of the tour operator, for example the reintroduction of the switch off policy or the education of the staff in sustainability issues. However other parts like the product and supplier management require more time and further research would facilitate the realisation of the suggested improvement ideas. Additionally further research, with exact numbers could be done on the influence of FLT on the economy, the environment and the community. For example the actual carbon footprint FLT has could be calculated.

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APPENDIX I – GUIDELINE FOR INTERVIEW WITH BRENT NARBHEY

Steps before the official start of the interview

- *introducing myself*
- *introducing (briefly) the topic*
- *asking for permission of recording*
- *asking if for any reason the person would like to stay anonymously*

Interview questions

1. How would you define sustainability?

Brief definition of sustainability to make sure we have the same understanding of this term:

“Forms of tourism which meet the needs of tourists, the tourism industry, and host communities today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

It is very important to create the appropriate balance and interaction between the three following aspects:

*Social equity: human rights, justice, gender equality, cultural diversity
example: ensure that all stakeholders (TO, suppliers, tourists) are treated fairly, equal employment chances, protect the maori culture*

*Environmental protection: natural environment, energy, biodiversity, forest, ...
example: no paper policy, switch off lights when not needed, bike to work, raise tourist awareness of environmental issues*

*Economic development: economic growth, poverty reduction, energy efficiency and conservation, waste management, employment, education
example: the money should stay in NZ so that the countries economy profits from FLTs business, stimulate rural and regional development go off the beaten track.*

Questions for the generation of a Mission Statement

2. What was your motivation when you decided to create FLT, did it change over the years? *Future plans?*
3. How would you describe the added value for the clients of FLT ?
what does FLT better than its competitors?

General Questions about FLT

1. How would you define the target market of FLT?
Where are they from?
How old are they?
Why do they choose FLT?
On what activities are Clients interested?
How long do Clients stay at one place?
What do you think is the main reason for Clients to come to NZ?
2. What is important when you choose new suppliers to collaborate with?
Do you have specific criteria they need to fulfill? Also in terms of sustainability?
3. Why did you decide to become Qualmark certificated? Do you want to reach Qualmark Gold certificate?
Marketing reasons?
4. Where do you see potential for improvements in terms of sustainability?
Office, staff, products? Are you willing to invest time and money in this matter?

Questions to 'Responsible Tourism Checklist' from Qualmark & 'Essential New Zealand' booklet

5. How do you encourage your partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to sustainable development and management of tourism? (stated in Sustainable Tourism Policy)
6. What do you mean by: All of our partners are involved where practical in local conservation efforts and we believe that in journeying to New Zealand you are contributing to a valuable alternative natural economy in sustainable tourism? (stated in Sustainable Tourism Policy)
7. I read that you support the orca research project, how? Also you mention that you are involved in supporting a range of local conservation efforts, what exactly is meant by that?

APPENDIX II – FIRST LIGHT TRAVELS’ SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY

New Zealand has been described by National Geographic as a 'world in miniature'. New Zealand is a land of incredible natural wonders with a unique ecosystem featuring many species found only on these islands. Like other parts of the “New World”, New Zealand’s natural environment has seen fundamental changes with the arrival of modern European cultures with many introduced species which have often harmed the endemic species – and human activity which has degraded much of the original native forest and habitat. There are however many positives. New Zealand has long taken an environmentally enlightened stance in international affairs and its tourism industry is 10, possibly 15 years ahead of many countries who might otherwise consider themselves to be leading in responsible eco-tourism.

First Light Travel has a well-developed Leave-No-Trace ethic in New Zealand. We are involved in supporting a range of local conservation efforts. Most of all however, we believe that joining one of our journeys will inspire you to be a passionate advocate for New Zealand’s unique wild places should they be under threat in future. We are passionate about wilderness and wild places and it is a real privilege to share the landscapes, flora and fauna with our clients. We greatly value these assets and are absolutely committed to operating in a manner which conserves and enhances our natural environment.

Our business activities and trip operations are purposefully designed to minimise environmental impact carbon emissions. We will encourage our partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to sustainable development and management of tourism, and will work with them and share information to assist in this. We seek to support locally-owned New Zealand guiding operations who can demonstrate to us a similar passion for the natural environment. All of our partners are involved where practical in local conservation efforts and we believe that in journeying to New Zealand you are contributing to a valuable alternative natural economy in sustainable tourism.

Policies

All of our trips in New Zealand are committed to the implementation of the following environmental policies:

- Itinerary design which has utmost regard to minimising impact on the local environment and improving it wherever possible.
- Location choice – we have deliberately sought to design our journeys in the regions where you are most likely to be inspired to become an ambassador for New Zealand’s wild places in the future.

- Our Group Tours – We maintain genuinely small group sizes (maximum 12 persons) which minimise the environmental and social footprint of our trips.
- A destination based approach which reflects the carrying capacity of tourist locations with an emphasis on undiscovered and off the beaten track locations.
- A focus on experiences which require human power e.g. trekking, mountain biking in preference to vehicle based itineraries.
- A policy of “leave no trace” which is relevant to wild camping, flora and fauna, waste disposal, visual and noise intrusion and other land users.
- Client briefings on environmental awareness, responsibilities and practice with particular emphasis on highlighting local environmental issues/threats. An opportunity to offset carbon emissions arising from international air travel.

APPENDIX III – TOUR SUGGESTION QUICK FIX



Quick fix adapted with popular suppliers



Day 1 - Christchurch 'The Garden City'

Christchurch – ‘A city rebuilding’. The gateway to the South Island, is recovering from devastating earthquakes. Witness as the city creates its future – combining restoration of damaged historic icons; today’s highly praised temporary 'cardboard cathedral' and 'Re:Start' shipping container shopping precinct; understand the vision of how the new vibrant city will be more of a joy to visit than ever before. Christchurch is an ideal base for day excursions to view Kaikoura’s whales, scenic French settlement Akaroa or the mountain scenery at Arthur’s Pass.



Discover Christchurch Double Decker City Tour

Join the classic 1960’s London Open Top Double Decker buses for a fun and informative tour of Christchurch. Learn about Christchurch’s fascinating history from the pioneering days through to modern day times and learn how Christchurch is recovering from the devastating February 22 earthquake, which has now become a major event in New Zealand’s history. On tour you will view some of the areas affected by the earthquakes, see how Christchurch is preserving some of its iconic heritage buildings and hear about the exciting vision to rebuild and restore the inner city. Your experience includes a tour around central Christchurch on New Zealand’s only Open Top Double Decker and a 2 hour Tour on a closed top Double Decker visiting places of interest in greater Christchurch.



Lilac Rose Boutique Bed and Breakfast

The Lilac Rose is a charming 100 year old villa, located a convenient 7 minutes from both Christchurch Airport and the Christchurch city centre. As a guest at the Lilac Rose you can enjoy generous hospitality and spacious rooms with stylish decor, antiques and fresh flowers. The beautifully furnished guest rooms have comfortable beds, luxury linen, flat screen TV/DVD player, a bar fridge & tea/coffee making facilities. Each has a private bathroom with modern amenities and toiletries, bath robes and plush towels. Complimentary wireless internet and a dedicated laptop are available for exclusive use.



Day 2 - Travel 4hrs 45 mins to Mount Cook National Park - A Fantasy Land of Ice and Rock

Mt Cook National Park is known for its exquisite alpine beauty and is home to the highest mountain in New Zealand, Mt Cook. Its Maori name, 'Aoraki' means 'cloud piercer' and at 12,016ft (3,755m) it towers above the surrounding snow-covered peaks in the park. A third of the park is covered in permanent ice and snow and the mighty Tasman Glacier is the longest glacier outside of the polar regions. Glacial melt gives the lakes their beautiful milky, turquoise colour and there are many walks in the area to take in the dramatic beauty. This is the very heart and soul of a World Heritage and National Park wilderness playground. Ice, snow, hidden valleys, lakes and glaciers offer golden opportunities for discovery, relaxation and adventure.



The Hermitage Hotel

Discover the spectacle and drama of New Zealand's Mount Cook (Aoraki), National Park from the splendour and comfort of The Hermitage Hotel and Mount Cook village, for an encounter you will never forget. Ringed by magnificent snow capped peaks of the Southern Alps, the Hermitage Hotel is a world renowned tourist destination and has been an icon of superior accommodation and dining since 1884. From an intrepid journey through glacial valleys to a mouth-watering culinary dining adventure, The Hermitage Hotel is the perfect 'base camp' to encounter your alpine experience. Just 55 kilometres from the Lake Pukaki turn-off in the majestic Mackenzie Country, Aoraki Mount Cook Alpine Village is nestled amongst some of the world's most stunning scenery. Here, the 216 room hotel offers the complete holiday experience.



Day 3 - Mount Cook Half Day Alpine and Bush Hike

The Mount Cook Encounter is a guided half day walk up the Hooker Valley, providing breathtaking views of some of New Zealand's highest and most enthralling peaks. Enjoy a stunning 11 km (6.8 mile) trek along over mostly flat terrain (there are some rocky bits) to the terminal lake of the Hooker Glacier. The journey encompasses an Alpine Memorial and passes over the turbulent Hooker River by Swing Bridge to unsurpassed vistas of Aoraki Mount Cook's south face and the surrounding glaciers. Your guide will point out the unique features of this alpine world as you enjoy lunch in the shadow of New Zealand's and Oceania's highest peak, standing at 3,754 metres.



Note: There are 2 high Swing bridges' that need to be crossed – Please contact us if this is an issue.

For those who want a little more let your guide introduce you to one of the bush tracks in the native forest, or even challenge yourself with a sharp climb to finish your day. Aoraki Mount Cook National Park is a walker's paradise, and the possibilities are endless.

Note: Operates November to March

Travel 3 hrs to Queenstown - Adventure Capital

Queenstown, located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by the magnificent Southern Alps, is New Zealand's most celebrated destination. Offering a wealth of accommodation to suit all travellers, there is huge diversity in the experiences to be enjoyed – from adrenaline activities such as bungee jumps and sky diving, adventurous excursions like jet-boating and hiking through to superb golf, gourmet food and wine tours or romantic hot air ballooning. Numerous day excursions are available, from the 'eighth wonder of the world', Milford Sound; Glenorchy's stunning scenery at the head of Lake Wakatipu, or to the historic towns of Central Otago. Queenstown itself has an excellent range of shops, restaurants and nightlife to enjoy. One thing is certain: you won't run out of things to do.



Novotel Lakeside - 2 nights

Novotel Queenstown Lakeside is the most centrally located 4-star hotel on Queenstown's lakefront. Step outside your door and into the heart of Queenstown with easy access to all that this premier four season lake and alpine resort has to offer. The hotel offers delicious New Zealand influenced dining options, WIFI access and complimentary Apple Mac stations, a spa pool as well as professional and friendly staff that make Novotel Queenstown Lakeside the perfect hotel for your Queenstown visit.

Spacious, contemporary in design, and adaptable, the Novotel room is truly a place for living. The 273 rooms are perfect for all your needs. You can stay in a standard room or upgrade to one of our Garden, Premium or Lakeside rooms to enhance your stay.



Gondola Ride and Traditional Maori Haka with Dinner - Queenstown

The Skyline is reached by Gondola cableway which whisks you smoothly up 450 metres as Queenstown drops away below. Breathtaking views from the top extend almost full circle, from Coronet Peak around to The Remarkables and on to Cecil and Walter Peaks on the other side of beautiful Lake Wakatipu. Then its time to experience a traditional Maori Haka. Journey through the mythical legends and step into the world of Maori. Feel the spirit of our proud history celebrated in traditional song & dance. Experience the fearsome haka and the stunning poi display. A unique live show performed by Queenstown's leading Kapa Haka group before having dinner accompanied with the best views in the country.



Day 4 - Return Scenic Flight and Cruise the Beautiful Milford Sound

Today, board a twin engine aircraft for your scenic 35 minute flight to Milford Sounds. During your flight there are panoramic views of the spectacular alpine scenery including glaciers, rivers, lakes and rainforest. On reaching Milford Sound, enjoy a full length cruise of the fiord in modern, purpose built vessels. The vessels offer excellent viewing of waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and wildlife with large windows, spacious decks and comfortable lounges. Commentaries are provided in several languages and interpretation handouts are available in eight languages. A range of lunch options and complimentary tea and coffee is available on all vessels.

At the completion of your cruise, return to Queenstown by plane. Transfers are provided to and from your accommodation to Queenstown airport.



Day 5 - Travel 5 hrs to Franz Josef Village

Franz Josef village is small (only 500 locals) and is located only ten minutes from the Glacier. The Franz Josef is a glacier located in Westland National Park on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. Together with the Fox Glacier 20 km to the south it is a unique in the fact that it descends from the Southern Alps to just 200 metres above sea level amidst the greenery and lushness of a temperate rainforest. The glacier is currently 12 kilometres long and terminates 19 km from the Tasman Sea. The glacier exhibits a cyclic pattern of advance and retreat, driven by differences between the volume of meltwater at the foot of the glacier and volume of snowfall feeding the neve.



Holly Homestead B & B Franz Joseph Glacier

Originally a farmhouse built for the Paganini family in 1926 and now lovingly restored and extended. This impressive colonial homestead is now perfect for guest comfort with a touch of luxury. Conveniently located 1.5km north of the Franz Josef village, a short drive or an easy 20 minute walk. A delicious full breakfast will get you started each morning. Holly Homestead has five stylish guest rooms. Only after you have stayed, will you come to understand the pleasure that South Westland can bring.



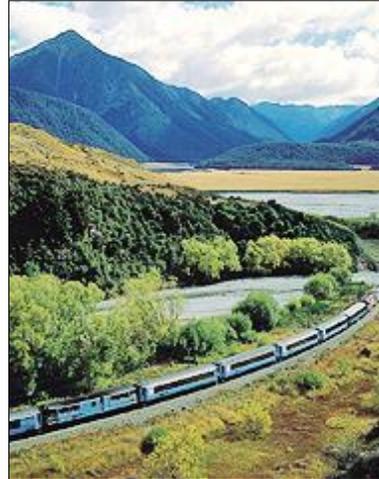
Day 6 - Franz Josef Glacier Heli Hike (2 Hours Hiking)

The rugged West Coast is hemmed between the Tasman Sea and the imposing Southern Alps, making for spectacular contrasts in the surrounding scenery. Franz Josef Glacier, found in the stunning Westland National Park, is one of the most spectacular glaciers in this region. Combine an awesome scenic helicopter flight over the glacier with a unique two hour guided walk amongst the ice caves, pinnacles and seracs of this pristine, alpine environment. You'll see the extraordinary colours of the ice-flow from above and then up close, on an unforgettable guided walk. (Flights in and out) Duration 3 hours.



Tranz Alpine Train Journey - Greymouth to Christchurch

Rated as one of the top six scenic train journeys in the world, the famous Tranz Alpine train will take you deep into the heartland of the South Island... a coast to coast journey through some of the world's most extreme and beautiful scenery. The Tranz Alpine winds its way over massive viaducts and through spectacular gorges and river valleys, tracking slowly across the country's greatest mountain range, the Southern Alps. It stops in the heart of the



Southern Alps at Arthur's Pass before descending to the Canterbury Plains and on to Christchurch.

Lilac Rose Boutique Bed and Breakfast – same accommodation as night of arrival

Day 7 - Free day and flight home

APPENDIX IV – SUSTAINABLE TOUR



Sustainable tour

Day 1 - Christchurch 'The Garden City'

Christchurch – ‘A city rebuilding’. The gateway to the South Island, is recovering from devastating earthquakes. Witness as the city creates its future – combining restoration of damaged historic icons; today’s highly praised temporary 'cardboard cathedral' and 'Re:Start' shipping container shopping precinct; understand the vision of how the new vibrant city will be more of a joy to visit than ever before. Christchurch is an ideal base for day excursions to view Kaikoura’s whales, scenic French settlement Akaroa or the mountain scenery at Arthur’s Pass.



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Day 2 - Lake Ohau - Mackenzie Country

Lake Ohau in the Mackenzie High Country is cradled between the Ohau Range to the west in the Main Divide and the Ben Ohau range to the east. In summer it is endowed with fine weather and long daylight hours and in winter with reliable snow. At the end of the ski season this spectacular region continues to deliver with stunning wilderness areas to be explored by walking, hiking or biking (Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail) further up the valley or around the Lake Ohau Lodge.



Lake Ohau Lodge & Snow Fields

This small family run business incorporating both the Lake Ohau Lodge and Ohau Snow Fields has been operated by the Neilson family since the mid 1980's. They have a passion for this outstandingly beautiful, yet stark landscape and a strong desire to see it's special environment preserved.



Day 3 - Travel 3 hrs to Queenstown - Adventure Capital

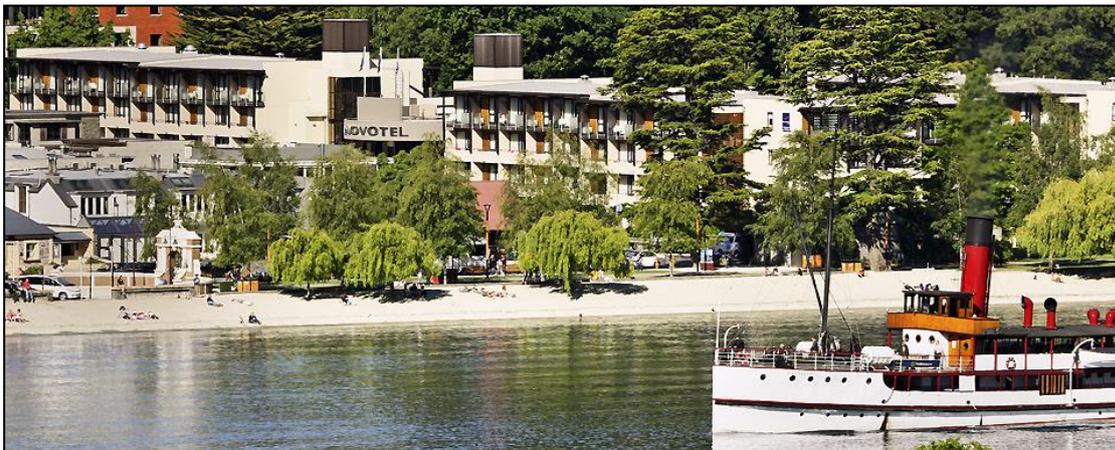
Queenstown, located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by the magnificent Southern Alps, is New Zealand's most celebrated destination. Offering a wealth of accommodation to suit all travellers, there is huge diversity in the experiences to be enjoyed – from adrenaline activities such as bungee jumps and sky diving, adventurous excursions like jet-boating and hiking through to superb golf, gourmet food and wine tours or romantic hot air ballooning. Numerous day excursions are available, from the 'eighth wonder of the world', Milford Sound; Glenorchy's stunning scenery at the head of Lake Wakatipu, or to the historic towns of Central Otago. Queenstown itself has an excellent range of shops, restaurants and nightlife to enjoy. One thing is certain: you won't run out of things to do.



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Day 4 - Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise ex Queenstown

Doubtful Sound located in a World Heritage Area, is an overwhelming place. You can feel the power of nature here - the remoteness, the wildness and the peace. Known for its wilderness and wildlife, Doubtful Sound is the second largest of the 14 fiords in Fiordland National Park and it is three times longer and 10 times larger than Milford Sound. When you discover Doubtful Sound you will be struck by its silence – a silence broken only by birdsong, or maybe the rushing of a distant waterfall. Your starts by coach in Queenstown, and you will travel along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Manapouri township. From here, you'll cruise across the crystal waters of Lake Manapouri to West Arm before crossing the alpine route of Wilmot Pass through some of Fiordland's most dense rainforest. On reaching Deep Cove, grab your kayak and get ready for three hours paddling, exploring the waterways of this serene and isolated fiord. There is plenty of time available to explore points of interest and view the spectacular alpine scenery including waterfalls, rainforest and mountains all the way out to the Tasman Sea. It is home to Bottlenose dolphins and fur seals and when in season, the rare Fiordland Crested penguin. A Nature Guide with specialist knowledge of the region's history, flora and fauna provides detailed interpretation in English.



Day 5 - Travel 5 hrs to Franz Josef Village

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Rainforest Retreat – 2 nights

Immerse yourself in the spectacular view of mountains and bush scenery of New Zealand's west coast. Rainforest Retreat offers a unique getaway with options suited to various budgets and needs of the world-weary traveler. Rainforest Retreat is located in the Franz Josef Glacier village, in the heart of New Zealand's Glacier Country, which is situated on the South Island's West Coast and is part of the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area. Rainforest Retreat has a resident Naturopath and Massage Therapist to soothe away any aches and pains from a day out on the ice. Sit back and relax after a day on the ice in sauna or swim spa.

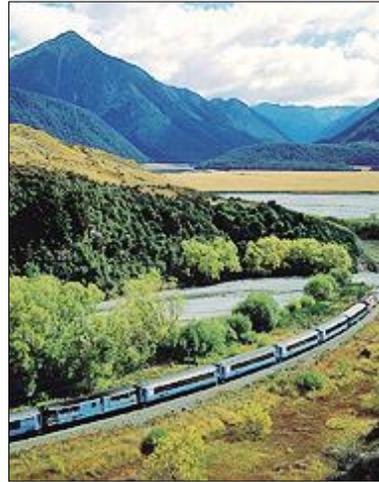
Day 6 - Franz Josef Glacier Valley Walk (3 Hours Hiking)

The rugged West Coast is hemmed between the Tasman Sea and the imposing Southern Alps, making for spectacular contrasts in the surrounding scenery. Franz Josef Glacier, found in the stunning Westland National Park, is one of the most spectacular glaciers in this region. The Franz Josef Glacier Valley Walk will take you up alongside the mighty Waiho River bed, following the glacier's path as it winds its way through this remarkable landscape. Here you will learn about the glacier's history, see what this majestic giant leaves behind, and learn the legend of Ka Roimata o Hinehukatere. Near the terminal face, after a brief climb you will be rewarded with spectacular views of the glacier's rapidly changing terminal face.



Day 7 - Tranz Alpine Train Journey - Greymouth to Christchurch

Rated as one of the top six scenic train journeys in the world, the famous Tranz Alpine train will take you deep into the heartland of the South Island... a coast to coast journey through some of the world's most extreme and beautiful scenery. The Tranz Alpine winds its way over massive viaducts and through spectacular gorges and river valleys, tracking slowly across the country's greatest mountain range, the Southern Alps. It stops in the heart of the Southern Alps at Arthur's Pass before descending to the Canterbury Plains and on to Christchurch.



Lilac Rose Boutique Bed and Breakfast – same accommodation as night of arrival

Day 8 - Free day and flight home

APPENDIX V – ANALYSE OF SUPPLIERS

Accommodation

Lilac Rose Boutique Hotel, Christchurch					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management		x			
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x				
Local employees			x	only the owners work at Lilac Rose Boutique Hotel	
Training of staff			x	only the owners work at Lilac Rose Boutique Hotel	
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Qualmark certificated		x			
Accommodation					
Building	x			The Lilac Rose is a charming 100 year old villa that has been completely restored to offer luxury bed and breakfast accommodation	
Location	x			close to public transport, provide bikes to explore christchurch	
Food & Beverage	x			serve home made goods and organic yoghurt	
Total:	4	3	2		9
					3.5

The Hermitage Mt cook hotel					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of yes ticks required
Waste management		x			
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned		x		owned by Aoraki-Mt Cook Alpine Village Ltd	
Local employees			x	is far away from the next village all the employees live on site	
Training of staff	x			are educated but not in sustainable matters	
Involved with a sustainable project	x			http://www.himalayantrust.co.nz and Aoraki Mount Cook Museum Trust:	
Qualmark certificated	x			enviro gold award	
Accommodation					
Building	x				
Location	x			the building is already around for 200 years, it has been rebuild and renovated several times	
Food & Beverage	x			uses local products, serves international menus	
Total:	6	2	1		9
					4
Novotel Lakeside					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of yes ticks required
Waste management	x			recycling of paper, glass and food waste	
Energy reduction				energy saving light bulbs in rooms and reception area	

Water reduction				water flow regulators, reuse of towels suggested to guests	
Locally owned		x			
Local employees		x			
Training of staff	x			staff is trained on environmental protection	
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Qualmark certificated		x		No but planet 21 silver award	
Accommodation					
Building	x			fits in surrounding	
Location	x			city center in walking distance, parking is free for hybrid cars	
Food & Beverage	x			fresh and seasonal, international meals	
Total:		5	4	0	9
					4.5

Holly Homestead B&B Franz Joseph Glacier

General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of yes ticks required
Waste management		x			
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x				
Local employees			x	only owners work for Holly Homestead B&B	
Training of staff			x	only owners work for Holly Homestead B&B	
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Qualmark certificated		x			
Accommodation					
Building	x			nice architecture, not built for tourism purpose	

Location	x				
Food & Beverage		x			
Total:	3	4	2	9	3.5
Lake Ohau Lodge					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of yes ticks required
Waste management	x			described in sustainability report	
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x				
Local employees		x			
Training of staff					
Involved with a sustainable project	x			Ohau Conservation Trust (www.ohau.org.nz),	
Qualmark certificated	x			qualmark gold award	
Accommodation					
Building	x			already existing buildings were used to create the lodge, transported in 1951 from lake pukaki to Ohau	
Location	x			remote, but already there for a long time, can only be reached by car	
Food & Beverage	x			buy from local suppliers	
Total:	7	1	0	8	4
Rainforest Retreat					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of yes ticks required

Waste management				Our crew try to reduce waste by double side using paper, recycling envelopes and dispose of packaging in appropriate bins. We also separate all our rubbish	
Energy reduction	x			All lights which need to be left on for long periods are low energy and low wattage, are on timers, or are motion sensor sensitive. We only use Energy Star rated equipment where possible.	
Water reduction				We have shower restrictors and conduct regular maintenance checks to ensure none of our taps, toilets and pipes are leaky, reducing any water wastage.	
Locally owned		x			
Local employees		x			
Training of staff		x			
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Qualmark certificated	x				
Accommodation					
Building	x			Rainforest Retreat was built around its native landscape. We designed and built our buildings around its natural architecture to conserve as much of our native plants and trees.	
Location	x				
Food & Beverage	x			Our crew endeavor to buy our products from local sources which both supports employment in our community and reduces the distance our goods must travel to reach us.	
Total:		5	4	0	9
					4.5

Activities

Hop on hop of hassle free tours					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management		x			
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned		x			
Local employees	x			guides are kiwis	
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Training of staff		x			
Qualmark certificated		x			
Activities and attraction					
Minimize pollution	x			Hassle-free Tours operates its entire fleet on Biodiesel made from recycled cooking oil.	
Authentic representation of the culture			x		
Education of tourists	x			clients are informed about history of christ-church	
Responsible wildlife interaction			x		
Responsible natural environment interaction			x		
Small groups	x			small groups	
Total:	4	5	3		12
					4.5

Mount cook half day alpine bush hike provided by Hermitage Hotel					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management					
Energy reduction		x			
Water reduction					
Locally owned		x		owned by Aoraki-Mt Cook Alpine Village Ltd	
Local employees			x	is far away from the next village all the employees live on site	
Involved with a sustainable project	x			are educated but not in sustainable matters	
Training of staff	x			http://www.himalayantrust.co.nz and Aoraki Mount Cook Museum Trust:	
Qualmark certificated	x			enviro gold award	
Activities and attraction					
Minimize pollution	x			only walking tours are offered	
Authentic representation of the culture			x		
Education of tourists	x			guide provides information about flora & fauna and local history	
Responsible wildlife interaction		x			
Responsible natural environment interaction	x				
Small groups		x		minimum is 2 guests but no information to the maximum number of guests is provided	
Total:	6	4	2		12
Gondola Ride and Traditional Maori Haka with Lunch or Dinner - Queenstown					

General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management					
Energy reduction		x			
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x			the company is already existing for 50 years but it is a limited company	
Local employees	x			maoris are performing at the show	
Involved with a sustainable project		x			
Training of staff	x			All employees undergo a 2 day induction programme which includes information on the current sustainability practices.	
Qualmark certificated	x			enviro award gold	
Activities and attraction					
Minimize pollution	x			gondolas are used for the transportation of tourists	
Authentic representation of the culture	x			presented by Maoris	
Education of tourists	x			tourists are informed about the Maori culture	
Responsible wildlife interaction			x		
Responsible natural environment interaction			x		
Small groups		x			
Food & Beverage	x			the company buys locally whenever possible	
Total:	8	3	2		13 5.5
Return Scenic Flight and Cruise the Beautiful Milford Sound - Real Journeys				company good but flying and location will be exchanged	

General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management					
Energy reduction	x				
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x			Family owned business	
Local employees		x			
Involved with a sustainable project	x			contribute funds to support habitats, recovering species and clean up initiatives	
Training of staff		x			
Qualmark certificated	x			enviro silver award	
Activities and attraction					
Minimize pollution		x		the activity includes flying and a cruise tour	
Authentic representation of the culture			x		
Education of tourists	x				
Responsible wildlife interaction	x			monitors local bird population	
Responsible natural environment interaction	x			does coastal clean-ups around Fiordland	
Small groups		x			
Total:	7	4	1		12
Franz Josef Glacier Heli Hike (2 Hours Hiking)				company good but flying will be exchanged	
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management	x				

Energy reduction					
Water reduction					
Locally owned	x			owned by Ngai Tahu which is a maori tribe	
Local employees		x			
Involved with a sustainable project	x			the compnay plants tree to offset carbon footprint and is assisting the local school and play group with activities	
Training of staff		x			
Qualmark certificated	x			enviro gold award	
Activities and attraction					
Minimize pollution		x		the tour includes flying up the glacier with the heli	
Authentic representation of the culture			x		
Education of tourists	x			clients are informed about glaciers history and history of maori legend	
Responsible wildlife interaction			x		
Responsible natural environment interaction	x				
Small groups	x			small groups	
Total:	7	3	2		12
					5

Transport					
Avis, Toyota Camry (Hybrid)					
General	Fulfilled	not found or not fulfilled	N/A	Information provided	Minimum amount of 'fulfilled' required
Waste management	x			All new Avis car wash systems recycle and reuse at least 80% of wastewater. In addition, Avis recycles used motor oil, oil filters, parts and brake cleaner fluids at our corporate maintenance facilities.	
Energy reduction					
Water reduction					Waste water is used
Locally owned		x			
Local employees		x			

				Avis is proud to support worthwhile charitable initiatives in the communities we serve. Among those organizations assisted in recent years are: Jackie Robinson Foundation, Women's Business Enterprise Foundation , Airport Minority Advisory Council, NY/NJ Minority Development Council, ...	
Sustainable projects	x				
Qualmark certificated			x		
Transport					
Pollution and emission	x			eco friendly cars, Supports carbon offsetting initiative, encourages carbon offsetting and green driving	
Use of Resources	x			Our specialty Eco-Rides fleet is especially earth-friendly because it's exclusively comprised of hybrids or SmartWay Elite certified vehicle. Avis now has gas/electric hybrid vehicles in our Eco-Rides fleet.	
Total:	4	2	1		3

AUTHOR DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I have carried out this final research project on my own without any help other than the references listed in the list of references and that I have only used the sources mentioned. I will not provide a copy of this paper to a third party without the permission of the department head and of my advisor, including the partner company with which I collaborated on this project, with the exception of those who provided me with information needed to write this paper and whose names follow:

Brent Narbey, Managing Director First Light Travel

Anne Baumscheiper, Product Manager First Light Travel



Martina Wiederkehr