Title of the Story:  Good Practice Story “Route of the Waters”

Destination Name:  (include any state, province or region)
Gaspar – Santa Catarina

Country:  Brasil

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Nomination Category:  (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)
☐ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☒ Nature & Ecotourism
☐ Islands & Seaside
☐ Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID -19
☐ Post COVID -19 recovery
☐ One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one) Click or tap to choose

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals?  https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

For further information on Tourism for SDGs:  http://tourism4sdgs.org/

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices here
DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Away from the downtown, a countryside neighborhood called Belchior, stands out due to its abundance of water resources. This region was settled German immigrants that worked on their small plots of land and has built a history of success and prosperity starting in the 1970’s.

Taking advantage of the constant visitor’s influx, mostly local at that time, that went there looking from a place to relax and play in the water of its many creeks around the immigrants’ properties, they saw an opportunity to create and infrastructure to welcome those visitors that could be developed into a business model. It was clear that conservation of the land, waterways and the essence of the properties and its people had to be taken into account in their sustainability plan.

With the increase of the infrastructure, also came the challenges related to environmental conservation, impact reduction, costs, professionalization of the labor, economically feasibility due to saisonality, since the parks would be open only during the warmer months.

This made clear the need for Best Practices applied at the parks, based on their size, related to environmental conservation, compliance with regulations related to land preservation, as well as the application of new technologies for power generation and the availability of opportunities to the families of the community.

Hotel Cascanéia has has solar energy and is expanding its Resort structure by 50% to serve visitors in all seasons of the year within the lush Atlantic Forest called Resort ECOAR. All parks and establishments in Rota das Águas have selective garbage collection for correct disposal. (attached photo)

Methods, steps and tools applied

Through land and water conservation and following the regulations in place, applying sustainable policies like selective waste recycling.

Investments in new alternatives for power generation and water utilization such as solar energy have made the parks more ad more attractive.

Investment in more than 4 kilometers of bike paths on the Rota das Águas, promoting cyclotourism and rural tourism.

Due to the number of visitors to Rota das Águas, there was a large increase in the number oh open shops. Todar is has more than 259 business active, we highlight settler, sausage and smoked foods that have become a commercial opportunity for families in the region. Marketing, attracting more customers, developing the community, generating jobs and income.
Key success factors

Motivation due to the constant growth in number of visitors year over year.

The hiring of a team and external companies specialized in implementing new practices.

Constant increased investment in expansion, new structures, always targeting to increase the quality of the visitor experience.

The geographical location was favorable for this type of enterprise.

The implementation of practices such as waste recycling, waste treatment and the correct disposal as is called by regulations.

Giving a segment in the sustainability policy with family business, we conducted the Rural Tourism Course, in which the participants were able to plan and have knowledge of the management and actions that can make their business opportunities through sustainability. (attached folder)

Lessons learned

Limiting the amount of simultaneous visitors, to be able to deliver an adequate level of quality service. Make the correct investments in a continuous manner, with the proper care for the land and water conservation practices to keep the place attractive to tourists.

The biggest challenge is the seasonality of the business, which is being addressed by investments in other areas such as the hospitality, trail events and others that can spread the return to the business throughout the year, always having a connection with nature.

Since this involves small family properties, it was necessary to venture out to find support in more professionals in this area to help implement the adequate practices.

The Gaspar city is located in the Hydrographic Region Vale do Itajaí, more specifically in the Hydrographic Basin of the Itajaí River, considered the largest Atlantic basin in the state of Santa Catarina, located in the domain of the Atlantic Forest, of which the most significant are found remaining in the Itajaí range.

We are committed to our rivers and springs, we have quality water, we work with wastewater treatment and water reuse. We have the Municipal Basic Sanitation Plan where we have the diagnosis and actions for the care of our water.

Results, achievements and recognitions
Cost reduction by using solar energy generation
- Generation of the 483.96 MWh
- Savings of R$ 256,496.19
- Reduction in 256.50 tons CO2 emissions.
- Prevented deforestation of 6577 trees
- Created 4 Km of the bicycle path

Land and water conservation, keeping the installations attractive, bei able to use this as a differentiating factor.

Became an attractive enterprise with a healthy economic feasibility, that not too long ago was only managed by small families, to today welcoming over 250.000 tourists a year. Today there are 8 installations in total, between parks and waterfalls.

Due to the tourist influx, it brought new opportunities to the community, such as the development of the Route of Smoked and Encased Meats, Micro Breweries, Distilleries, small fisheries and others.

We created the 1st Job Fair to recruit ond select people for job opportunities in the water parks, having several open positions such as: Diner attendant, Cashier, Cupkeeper, Waiter, Kitchen Assistant, Cook, Recreational, Guardian, Water Slide Monitor, HR Assistant and others.

Additional references
Video about Gaspar - 86 years old - https://youtu.be/pCXgxaCUhpc
Video about the Water Route - https://youtu.be/HXVWXfpoQtM
Photovoltaic video cards - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqT2AXt3KoI
Photos and videos of the city of Gaspar and private equipment - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CQWtT1c7JY4OZg1mTRreLS0TA_ptDtMi?usp=sharing
Job Fair – https://www.facebook.com/events/1130838523790595