Title of the Story: Improving Convenience by Bus Operation

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Nomination Category: One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one) GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

*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.unsd.org/](https://www.unsd.org/)

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: [http://tourism4sdgs.org/](http://tourism4sdgs.org/)

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices [here](http://tourism4sdgs.org/).
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
Niseko has exploded in popularity with Australian skiers, taking pride in offering some of the best powder snow in the world. However, once visitors arrived at JR Niseko Station on the Hakodate Line, the gateway to the resort, transportation was limited to taxis and there were often long waits in the station waiting room to get to one’s accommodation. The transportation around the ski resort was also limited to taxis, making it difficult for visitors to get to restaurants and spa facilities in downtown Niseko.

Methods, steps and tools applied
In response to the above issues, the Niseko Resort Tourism Association launched a public circuit bus service in 2013. The service is operated in winter, which is the highest season. Departing from JR Niseko Station this bus provides transportation between hotels, ski resorts and dinner locations. The aim of this project is to increase the satisfaction of tourists by widening the scope of their activities and to expand the economic ripple effect of tourism consumption to the entire area. Brochures were produced in Japanese and English that provide information on restaurants around the bus stops. The 7 million yen operation was outsourced by the Niseko Resort and Tourism Association to Niseko Bus in 2018. Niseko Town is subsidizing the project.

Key success factors
By including not only ski resorts but also hotels and tourist facilities on the bus route, the bus service attracted people with a variety of interests including skiing, dining, and shopping. In addition, the bus is free to ride for residents and is thought to have raised awareness about the benefits of increased tourism.
Lessons learned
By operating the circuit bus, local administration came to understand the importance of secondary transportation in rural areas as well as the potential for both increased consumption and wider economic benefits. There are many rural areas that can only be reached by taxi, but the introduction of these buses has highlighted the potential for tourists to discover new resources such as hot springs and restaurants. Niseko Town has linked the bus service to events of interest to tourists, such as Scenic Night and Niseko Japonica to attract tourists.

Results, achievements and recognitions
This circuit bus was successful in reducing congestion in the waiting room at the station, increasing the attractiveness of the whole area by offering day trips to hot springs and restaurants in the city center, and stabilizing the economic ripple effect. The Tourism Association used to be closed when the last JR train arrived and tourists could not receive information about the bus even if they wanted to ride it. To solve this problem, the hours of the tourist information center were extended during the circuit bus’s operating period. The route may be adjusted according to the user’s needs, changing the order of the bus stops.
Since buses for tourists are also a means of transportation for residents, there is a certain level of understanding from residents. Also, there was almost no impact on taxi drivers.

Niseko Round Trip Pass 2019 results
- Number of people who used the Niseko Pass: 2,740
- Number of applications for free passes by residents of Niseko Town: 279 (total number of users: 427)

Additional references
*Niseko Resort Tourism Association: https://www.niseko-ta.jp/en/
*Niseko circuit bus brochure: See no.2 reference1