



**SLOW ADVENTURE GUIDELINES**

**A structured approach to creating slow adventure tourism products and experiences and use of the logo**

**MAY 2017**

**Contents**

1. Aim 1
2. What is Slow Adventure? 1
3. What are the Benefits? 2
4. Is my Slow Adventure Product Eligible? 3
5. The Slow Adventure Label 4

1. Assessment 5
2. **Aim**

The purpose of this summary is to formalize a set of guidelines and parameters for tourism businesses which wish to become affiliated to the slow adventure movement and use the associated branding in the marketing of suitable consumer experiences and tourism products.

1. **What is Slow Adventure?**

Whilst *excitement* is no doubt a desirable selling point for most commercial operators, it is not the only source of competitive advantage in the adventure tourism industry. We propose that the qualities of *slow adventure* create desirable and saleable tourism products that appeal to broader, and more affluent, consumer segments.

These qualities may be summarized in terms of:

* Finding psychological *comfort* in the outdoors
* Human-powered *passage* in *nature*
* Where *time* is felt in effort, eating and sleeping

Slow adventure represents a responsible travel choice, where core elements are green forms of transport, a desire to learn about other cultures and environments, the interaction with and understanding of local cultural and natural rhythms, and an appreciation of both place and *one’s place*.

To encapsulate this ethic of care in tourism products, we have created, and trademarked, a quality label which will provide a structured approach for business creation of new slow adventure experiences. This label has been designed to guide the travel choices of visitors who seek to exercise their responsibility through high quality guided slow adventure experiences.

**2.1 Definition of Slow Adventure**

Slow adventure is a form of tourism which avoids the adrenalin-pumping hits of many commercial adventure experiences, in favour of slow, immersive journeys, living in and travelling through wild places and cultural spaces, and experiencing nature in its seasons, its different weather and its variations.

These experiences typically include:

* Human- or nature-powered travel
* Enhanced engagement with place and environment
* Wild or local foods
* Comfort in the outdoors
* Interaction with local people and cultures
* Wildlife-watching

The role of guides, interpretation, and storytelling are essential elements in the slow adventure concept and guiding is most meaningful when carried out in small groups (<15 pax). Slow adventure guides allow visitors to gain privileged insights and knowledge about the nature and culture of the region they have come to experience and to be assured that the people involved in providing their holiday have expertise and local knowledge of the area around them and are committed to the place’s cultural and natural integrity.

1. **What are the Benefits?**

**3.1 Slow Adventure for Businesses**

The benefits for businesses of being affiliated to the slow adventure movement include:

* Promotion through national web site
* Trans-national marketing through [www.slowadventure.org](http://www.slowadventure.org)
* Consumer confidence in your product
* Consumer’s association of your business with slow adventure ethics of care and responsibility
* Use of eye-catching and value-laden logo and brand
* Collaboration with other slow adventure businesses
* Helping to advance the slow adventure movement
* Joining a community of slow adventure ambassadors who share similar values

The above guidelines and parameters are designed to provide a structured approach for the creation of new experiences, so providers can be confident that they are addressing the principals of slow adventure and ensuring the delivery of a quality product.

The slow adventure name and associated logo have been trademarked for use in the EU, as well as in Iceland and Norway. It is becoming an increasingly recognized label internationally for businesses, customers and tour operators.

**3.2 Slow Adventure for Consumers**

Slow adventure is all about creating a lasting impression and sense of purpose for the consumer. These products are highly suited to tourism development in un-spoilt rural and peripheral areas.

Slow adventure activities are less seasonally-dependent, creating potential for year-round employment and income without overloading the natural or cultural assets that the visitor has come to see.

These innovative experiences can be readily marketed to the ever-increasing numbers of more ethically-minded consumers who wish to ensure that their holiday creates positive benefits, both for the environment and the local communities visited.

1. **Is My Slow Adventure Product Eligible?**

There are a number of core criteria for SMEs seeking to offer a slow adventure experience. A slow adventure MUST incorporate:

* Human- or nature-powered journeys (excluding transfers)
* An inspiring connection with the outdoors
* Environmental and cultural interpretation
* Local, wild or slow food
* Elements of storytelling, to convey the importance of the above elements

In addition, it is DESIRABLE that a slow adventure incorporates some or all of the following elements:

* Outdoor engagement:
	+ Practical outdoor skills e.g. bushcraft, fishing, making camp, foraging
	+ Greater cultural interpretation - local/indigenous traditions, heritage, stories, music, crafts
* Natural wellness:
	+ Physical
	+ Emotional e.g. mindfulness
* Herbal medicine
* Wildlife tracking/watching opportunities
* Outdoor living

A slow adventure should be a minimum of one-day, or a multi-day experience.

* For a one-day experience it should consist of the following:
	+ Activity/activities
	+ Locally produced food and drink
	+ Guided when possible
	+ Rural location
	+ Connection with culture, heritage and community
	+ Transition from one element to the next is seamless
* For a multi-day experience it should consist of the following:
	+ Accommodation which has an affinity with the surrounding nature
	+ Locally-produced food and drink
	+ Guided when possible
	+ Rural location
	+ Connection with culture, heritage and community

In both cases, *the experience should be the result of a collaboration* *between local SMEs*, and the physical and emotional connections between the different elements should be communicated to the consumer. In exceptional circumstances, individual SMEs which offer a range of clustered experiences (incorporating an activity, plus accommodation and food for example), or which offer a single experience which ‘ticks the slow adventures boxes’, may be permitted to use the logo and brand; this will be at the discretion of the local slow adventure representative. SMEs wanting to offer slow adventure tourism products need to review their product portfolio making sure that the core criteria do not clash with other products offered by the enterprise.

Please note: motorised vehicles are only accepted as part of transfers between the various elements and should not be the main activity

1. **The Slow Adventure Label**

The label includes the logos below. A white version is also available and may be used on a photo or darker background.

 

**5.1 How to Use the Label**

The slow adventure tourism label can be applied to travel and tourism products that fit the criteria and are part of a cluster which forms experiences for the visitor. For example, an experience combining overnight accommodation camping, guided canoe trip, outdoor dining would be eligible as a slow adventure and the logo could be used to promote this. It is recommended that a cluster incorporates a minimum of three products that fit the slow adventure criteria.

However, if an SME provides multiple activities, some of which do not meet the slow adventure criteria, the logo cannot be used freely to promote all of these products. The logo should only be used next to the qualifying slow adventure experience.

**5.2 Who is Behind the Label?**

The label was developed as part of a Northern Periphery and Arctic programme project, aimed at improving and extending the marketing of slow adventure businesses. The countries involved are Finland, Sweden, Norway, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Iceland. For more information see: [www.saintproject.eu](http://www.saintproject.eu).

1. **Assessment**

**6.1 Revision and Renewal of Criteria**

Slow adventure tourism is committed to a policy of continuous improvement. To enable this process, it is therefore essential that all criteria are in continuous development. We will continue to work to improve all aspect of the criteria and will consult providers who have been awarded the label.

**6.2 How Do I Apply?**

Businesses wishing to apply to use the slow adventure brand and logo must contact the national representative in the first instance:

* Scotland: Sara Mair Bellshaw sara.bellshaw@whc@uhi.ac.uk
* Finland: Tanja Pohjola tanja.pohjola@naturpolis.fi
* Iceland: Arndís Lára Kolbrúnardóttir arndislk@hi.is
* Ireland: Sinead McDermott smcdermott@leitrimcoco.ie
* Northern Ireland: Seanna Gillespie seanna.gillespie@derrystrabane.com
* Norway: Jorunn Grande jorunn.grande@nord.no
* Sweden: Evelina Åslund Bäck Evelina.AslundBack@miun.se

In order to use the brand and logo in their promotional material:

* Applicants must deliver a product or service within the criteria in section four.
* The product must be part of a package developed by a cluster of local businesses and promoted as such.
* The product or service must be a guided, or organized self-guided, experience.

The national representative will need to assess the suitability of your slow adventure itinerary against the criteria in section four. This may include a site visit, as appropriate.

It is the intention to facilitate the process leading to certification of slow adventure in as fair and transparent manner as possible.