KNOWLEDGE HUB - GUIDELINES

Good practice guidelines for sustainable astrotourism

Version 1.0 · Public summary · CANSTAR WP1

These guidelines collect the practices that Atlantic Area destinations are applying today to develop astrotourism without losing their night sky. They are written for destination managers, local authorities and tourism businesses, and they are deliberately short: fourteen practices, each with what to do, what it costs and how to know it worked.

1. Plan the sky before the product

- Map the sky quality of the territory before designing any offer. A certified measurement (Sky Quality Meter, all-sky camera or satellite data) is the only defensible baseline.
- Set a light pollution ceiling in the local planning rules, not in a voluntary charter.
- Designate the observation areas and publish their coordinates: visitors value certainty more than comfort.

2. Light only what is needed, when it is needed

- Replace the street lighting of the access roads first: it is the cheapest lumen saved and the most visible improvement for the visitor.
- Use warm colour temperature (below 2700 K), full cut-off fixtures and timed dimming after 23:00.
- Agree a monitoring protocol with the municipality: a single night per season is enough to detect regressions.

3. Build the offer with the businesses that already exist

- Astrotourism does not need new hotels; it needs hotels that switch off their facade at night.
- Train reception staff to explain the sky, the season and the weather: the first question of the visitor is always 'will we see anything?'.
- Create a simple certification badge with clear criteria, and renew it every two years.

4. Measure, publish, repeat

- Count visitors, nights sold and satisfaction, but also the number of fixtures replaced: that is the indicator that convinces a council to keep funding.
- Publish an annual one-page report per destination. Comparability across the Atlantic Area is worth more than local detail.

How to use this document: each practice is independent. A destination with no certification yet should start with section 1 and stop there for the first year.