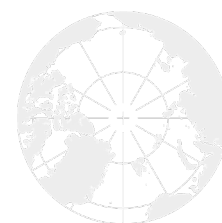




Photo: Peter Lindstrom, Visit Greenland

# Community-Specific Guidelines



## Guidelines for the Development of Community-Specific Guidelines

Tourism is growing in the Northern Hemisphere. As numbers grow in both small and sometimes remote areas new to tourism, as well as in more urban communities, there may be a need to pay attention to cultural and social interactions between visitors and locals.

AECO – the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators – promotes best practices among most of the expedition cruise operators who provide tourism to the North Atlantic and High Arctic regions. AECO's objectives are designed to ensure environmentally friendly, safe, and considerate tourism. The association and its members strive to set the highest possible operational standards. Included in these objectives is the pledge to ensure value and sustainability in the interaction between the operators and their guests, and with the communities visited.

One of the several initiatives taken by AECO is the development of community guidelines for visitors to the North Atlantic and High Arctic regions. This work has been undertaken in cooperation with Visit Greenland, Visit Svalbard, the Northern Norway Tourist Board, and Cruise Iceland, with financial support from the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation.

These guidelines, Guidelines for the Development of Community-Specific Guidelines, are general and apply in most North Atlantic and High Arctic communities, and will be implemented in the tourism work by all partners, as far as possible.

In addition to the general community guidelines for the vast North Atlantic and High Arctic regions, some communities may find the need to develop community-specific guidelines. Community guidelines provide visitors with community-specific information, which can occasionally include special cautions and considerations that visitors should be aware of in that locale.

For operators and guests visiting, it may be beneficial if different community-specific guidelines are developed from a common template, making them more easily recognizable from one place to another.

This guideline aims to provide such a template to those communities that wish to develop community-specific guidelines. It should not be misunderstood as an unalterable way of developing community-specific guidelines, but rather as helpful advice and inspiration for those who would like to undertake such a project.

## Working Process: Who to Involve

When developing community-specific guidelines, it is recommended to involve local stakeholders who are engaged in tourism, as well as others who might have an interest or a say in the process.

In addition, it is recommended to consult stakeholders who represent and cater to visiting guests, such as tour operators or tourism associations. If there is a local tourist board or tourist office, this entity may be well suited to take the lead in such a process. However, it is also recommended to consider involving community councils.

## Working hours and costs

It is up to each community to decide the level of work and resources to dedicate to such a project, but developing community-specific guidelines does not need to be very resource-intensive. When the text is agreed upon and ready, one can employ professionals to design and lay out the guidelines. However, much can also be done without such involvement.

## Content

**Below is a list of what may be useful to include in community-specific guidelines:**

- Community Name
- Location: The community's latitude and longitude position
- Map: A small map showing the community's location within the larger region or the world
- Introduction: A large representative picture of the community. Remember to include the name of the photographer, if possible.
- Heading: A heading for the introductory text, ideally something descriptive of the community.
- Introductory Text: Provide general information about the area and the people living there. Include the number of inhabitants, traditions, ways of life, and history. Consider questions visitors may have. What would you like visitors to know about your community?
- Visitor Map: A map of the area visitors are likely to walk around in. Indicate places of significance and interest. Highlight areas visitors should avoid (e.g., because they are vulnerable, protected, or restricted) and areas of interest (e.g., attractions, viewpoints, nature, and installations). This does not need to be a complete "tourist map" but can also point visitors to shops, markets, museums, etc., especially if the community lacks an additional tourist map.
- Guidelines: A section on how you ask travelers to behave when visiting your community. General community guidelines will cover normal issues, but if there are specific behaviors or considerations you expect from visitors, list them here. For example, some communities may have limited supplies, such as fresh food. If you want visitors to consider what they purchase in local shops, include this information. If the community faces challenges in handling or disposing of garbage, the guidelines could encourage visitors to bring back their own trash whenever possible.
- Images: Additional pictures as illustrations may be helpful. Descriptive text or captions for the images are also beneficial.
- Helpful Tips: A section for "helpful tips" can direct guests' attention to things not covered on the map or in the guidelines, such as events, ceremonies, special traditions, and so forth.
- Credits: Include the name of the organization or entity responsible for creating the guidelines, along with a contact address for questions and feedback.