



2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Efforts to Address Climate Change in Ski Resort Tourism Areas

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Niseko Town

Country: Japan

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Position: Niseko Resort Tourism Association Co. Counselor, Commerce, Industry and Tourism Division, Niseko Town

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.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

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice? Click to add your text

Niseko is a popular destination for skiers from all over the world to experience powder snow, also known as "japow." The secret behind the quality of the snow is that the north wind from the Sea of Japan blows over Annupuri and creates a large amount of dry snow. The dry snow is so fluffy that it does not turn into snowballs when you hold it.

However, due to climate change, the volume of snowfall in 2019 was less than half of what it was two years earlier, and the average temperature in the second half of this century is predicted to rise by about 5 degrees Celsius.

Methods, steps and tools applied

How was the good practice implemented? Click to add your text

Niseko Town is one of the most advanced areas in Japan in terms of residents' self-government and environmental administration. Twenty years ago, it became the first town in Japan to create a basic ordinance for town development (it is rare for a municipality to have a charter in Japan, which is more of a centralized country), and all meetings of the town office are open to the public, so that residents and the government can think about how to govern the region on a common ground. In this context, the town has developed an "environment-conscious town planning" strategy that anticipated the recent trends of decarbonization and SDGs.

In July of last year, Mayor Katayama declared a climate emergency. He stated that the town will continue to take on the challenge of making advanced efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are the cause of climate change, to virtually zero by 2050 through both the "mitigation" of greenhouse gas emissions and the "adaptation" of nature and society to cope with the effects of climate change.

For example, even though reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an urgent issue, it is hard to imagine a life without cars in a low population density area with high snowfall.

However, instead of postponing this difficult issue, Niseko Town has been deepening discussions among the local government, experts and residents for the past two years, referring to the example of Zermatt, Switzerland, where only business vehicles are allowed to run around town.

Furthermore, the town of Niseko has installed heat pumps in several public facilities that use clean energy sources such as geothermal heat, natural hot springs heat, and snow and ice. This has resulted in a reduction of 70 tons of CO₂/m² compared to before the installation.

In addition, in order to prevent the outflow of revenue from greenhouse gas reduction efforts to the outside of the town, Niseko is researching a system to return the revenue from electricity and heat supply to the local community.



In August last year, as a result of these discussions, Niseko Town Corporation was established to help design a model town development district with short travel distances and support local energy projects.

Niseko Town is cognizant of the substantial effect the reduction of CO2 emissions from the tourism industry would have on climate change, and thus is prioritizing the following policy proposals:

- a) Using the tourism tax as a financial resource to support tourism businesses that introduce renewable energy.
- b) A system in which experts conduct energy efficiency and conservation audits and propose specific measures for tourism businesses.

Key success factors

What helped you tackle the issues? Click to add your text

In order to take the project from the planning stage to the implementation stage, it was essential that the town support resident autonomy and promote transparency through the public disclosure of information. The town has cultivated these policies over the past 20 years.

The support of other government agencies and experts who took an interest in Niseko Town's efforts was also very important.

Lessons learned

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome? Click to add your text

Nowadays, no one denies the importance of combating climate change. However, there are many different perspectives on how to approach the issue. As a ski resort region, Niseko is a wide area that includes multiple neighboring municipalities, and it is necessary to have careful discussions with a wider range of stakeholders and to make efforts to gain the understanding of foreign businesses and tourists.

Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards? Click to add your text

The town's efforts to tackle environmental issues based on residents' self-governance have been highly evaluated as a city that is taking on the challenge of pioneering initiatives with high goals toward the realization of a low-carbon society.

Awards received:

- a) Selected as an "Environmental Model City of the Future" (March 2014)
- b) Selected as "SDGs Future City" (June 2018)
- c) Grand Prize of The Japan Times Satoyama & ESG Award, Satoyama Category (September 2019)

Additional references



Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.

Niseko Town website (addressing climate change issues)

<https://www.town.niseko.lg.jp/chosei/kankyo/kikouhendou>

Niseko Town website (Environmental Model City (Global Warming Countermeasures))

<https://www.town.niseko.lg.jp/chosei/kankyo/model/>

