

# ***AIEST Competition***

## ***“Airport Museum of Sustainability”***

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# 1. Questions dealt within the contribution

“Only if we understand the complex processes behind the great challenges of our time, we can develop new forms of an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable way of life.”<sup>1</sup>

This statement is the starting point of our idea for the Aiest competition.

Why should people change their behaviour if they don't know what is happening to the world and what is causing the damage? Why should people change their way of living if they don't know that they are responsible? How should people lead a more sustainable life if they don't know any alternatives to what they are used to? These are all questions that are one reason (among many others) for the lack of sustainable behaviour in our society. “I didn't know!”. How can we meet this lack of knowledge and awareness? With education, a key player in the fight against the climate crisis. People have to understand the process behind the climate crisis and know that they can make a change themselves. We cannot afford to “not know” anymore!

To come up with a concept that tackles the problem of ignorance and raises awareness about the importance of sustainability, especially within the tourism sector, we asked ourselves following questions:

- Where and how can we reach tourists with less interest and awareness about sustainability?
- How can we educate about sustainability in a fun, interesting and meaningful way?
- How can we make clear that everyone can make a difference in a simplistic way?

## 2. Our innovative solution: The Airport Museum of Sustainability

Using the Design-Thinking method as a guideline in the idea generating process, we came up with an innovative concept: The Airport Museum of Sustainability (AMS).

Reaching tourists is not an easy task. When they are at their destination they might have a set program. They want to relax, explore, do some sightseeing or start an adventure. They don't want something to interrupt their plans and most likely don't plan to educate themselves about sustainability on their holidays. Choosing to offer this exhibition at an airport is beneficial as it is a perfect location to approach our desired target group. Ideally, a tourist is concerned with sustainability at an earlier stage of the customer journey and decides not to fly if it's possible. But those who choose to fly out of convenience, because it's faster or cheaper also don't tend to be concerned about sustainability in general. These are the people we want to reach.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/de/thema/forschung-fuer-nachhaltigkeit>

## 2.1. Goals

The AMS is not meant to be a campaign against flying. The aim is to give people a wider perspective on sustainability and show more options on how to approach the current issues. How to lead a more sustainable life by making little steps. Showing them that everybody counts, that everybody is responsible and that everybody can make a change. We want to achieve that by using a creative and interactive concept for people of all ages. Especially for children, airports can be quite boring and have rather few offers for kids to spend their time. In the AMS, children can engage in a fun activity and learn something at the same time. The AMS gives people the possibility to use their waiting time in a meaningful way. Rather than strolling through expensive shops or sitting at the gate for hours, they can now educate themselves and keep their children occupied.

## 2.2. Content of the exhibition

The largest part of the AMS consists of the section of visual illusions. Here visitors will experience optical illusions that are visually linked to some topics mentioned above. Another section that is dedicated to energy consumption contains different devices and gadgets that generate electricity by using physical strength. As mentioned at the beginning, addressing younger generations is very important. Therefore, the AMS also comes with a kids section dedicated to fun and interactive educational games. The museum also offers temporary exhibitions as well as a donation and feedback section and a sustainable shop.

### 2.2.1. Visual illusions

As a reference, we took examples from the “Museum of Illusions” (MoIA) in Athens, Greece, showing how the entertainment section could be constructed<sup>2</sup>. “The Museum of Illusions in Athens brings you a space suitable both for social and entertaining tours into the world of illusions which has delighted all generations.”<sup>3</sup>

One of the exhibits in our museum could be a recreation of “Plato’s intense Gaze” from the MoIA, where instead of Plato watches you no matter where you stand, the visitors could look at Friday for Future figurehead Greta Thunberg, accompanied with some information why exactly she is looking at you, who she is and what she does for the environment.



Another suggestion is the so-called vortex tunnel makes it “really hard simply to make a step forward through a rotating cylinder – on a completely stable and flat surface.”<sup>4</sup> The inside covering of the cylinder



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.museumofillusions.gr/en/exhibits/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.museumofillusions.gr/en/about-us/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.museumofillusions.gr/en/exh/the-vortex-tunnel/>

can be a deep sea motive covered with some visual light effects. Half of the performance the water is clear, blue and unpolluted followed by a transition in the second half, when the water becomes yellow and soiled along with trash next to the sea animals. After you finish the tunnel there can be a quiz about what happened to the water and why it is so dirty and what causes problems like these.

### 2.2.2. Physical activities

This section is dedicated to electricity. Here the visitors will learn about electricity generation and consumptions of different countries and different households. Through several devices visitors will be able to generate electricity with their own muscle power. This section should show them how much effort it is to generate small amounts and therefore how valuable electricity is.

One device could be the “Stromvelo”<sup>5</sup>, which is similar to a spinning bike. The visitors could have for example 30 seconds to generate as much electricity as possible and see the result on a screen. To make it competitive they are shown if they achieved a high or low rank or if they even scored the record of the day. Their generated amount of electricity then goes to a virtual pot or safe that visualises how many people have participated and how much electricity was generated in total. To have a better imagination of how much the individual and the



collective generated it should be visualized by examples such as: “You generated XX kWh. That is enough to power a lightbulb for XX minutes. Since the 1st of January 2020 all visitors together generated XX kWh. That could supply an average household in Germany with XX hours of energy.” Presenting this fact and comparing the consumption of wealthy and developing countries should make people more aware of how valuable electricity actually is and that it should not be wasted. As an additional gadget the “Stromvelo” can be combined with virtual reality goggles. While the visitors are riding on the bike they are shown a video of 2-3 minutes.

### 2.2.3. Kids section

The kids section should for one counteract the lack of offers dedicated to the amusement of children and for the other provide educative and fun games. The goal is to transfer the meaning of climate change and its driving processes. They should learn how valuable and fragile flora and fauna are and how they are affected by human actions. Since especially children are fascinated by animals, topics about biodiversity can be perfectly used to stimulate their curiosity. Next to a playground designed according to the theme of flora and fauna there are interactive videos and games provided on touch screens.

One game could be “Guess the animal”. Speakers play the sound of an animal and the children have to guess which animal makes that sound by taping one of the options they are given on the screen. After the right guess they will get a short video or audio sequence that explains why and how this animal is endangered by climate change.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ebike-news.de/stromvelo-zuhause-selbst-strom-erzeugen/3680/>

Another example could be a chain of short videos that explain the climate change step by step. Questions in between the videos will engage the kids and lead them to the next video. Another game could be “Memory” with the 17 sustainable development goals set by the UN. The children have to find the illustration and the matching description as it is shown here with the example of the third goal “Health and wellbeing”.<sup>6</sup>



#### 2.2.4. Temporary exhibition

Besides, to our permanent program the museum provides room for different types of artists that want to create their own art in an authentic and aesthetic, but still educational way to all the visitors. Thus, in a separate section young artists, collectives or even students from Berlin can present their individual projects as a temporary exhibition. The museum’s purpose is not just a contact point for sustainable enlightenment, but also offers space to artists that need physical resources for their work. Choosing their own topic, the designers can feel free to show any environmental related one implemented in installations, architectural pieces or even classical paintings. The exhibitions will be exchanged 3-4 times per year and as a financial support, if the visitors are interested in donating for the artists, there will be an option by the end of their visit.

#### 2.2.5. Donation section

As one of the final steps, just before our visitors turn back into waiting passengers, we propose a section for several possibilities to donate. Not for the museum itself, but for organizations that are trying to improve miscondacts visitors should be aware of now. They don’t have to, since the museum won’t charge the guests for entrance either. However, we want to appeal to people’s compassion and besides knowing that everyone can make an impact in their all day lives, the donation section is an addition for making a change in that right moment before they leave. Depending on what the visitor regards as the most urgent matter that needs support, they can decide which specific organization they want to aid. Since we don’t want to overwhelm the guests with organizations, the options should not exceed more than 4.

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.dieglorreichen17.de/g17-de?pk\\_campaign=nachhaltigkeit&pk\\_kwd=Nachhaltigkeit%2C%20Biodiversitaet&pk\\_source=google.de&pk\\_medium=Textanzeige](https://www.dieglorreichen17.de/g17-de?pk_campaign=nachhaltigkeit&pk_kwd=Nachhaltigkeit%2C%20Biodiversitaet&pk_source=google.de&pk_medium=Textanzeige)

## 2.2.6. Shop and feedback section

Next to the exhibition areas the AMS has its own sustainable shop. There visitors and travelers have the opportunity to buy authentic, hand and homemade products made by local craftsmen and women, farmers, artists or even indigenous people. The focus lies on independent professionals and small businesses. As long as the products are produced, traded and transported in a fair and sustainable way, they can be offered in this shop. Regional products like sweets, cheese, oil, liquors, soap, jewelry, paintings, clothing, wood and stone work could be found here. By buying something in this shop visitors support small local businesses and take home an authentic souvenir that represents the destination.

At the entrance of the shop would be a feedback section. Here the visitors of the AMS can rate the exhibition and leave their positive and/or negative opinion about the museum. Through their participation, they will receive a small discount for the sustainable shop. This way people should be encouraged to leave feedback that will help the AMS improve.

## 2.3. Financing

Focusing on Berlin, which would be a suitable location for such a Museum, we researched some options for financing. First of all, the council of Berlin provides several municipalities that financially support cultural projects. Regarding the purpose of the museum which is sustainability, the Senate for Environment, Traffic and Climate Protection offers the program BENE (Berliner Programm für Nachhaltige Entwicklung) for sustainable development in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> There, EU-cofinanced grants support companies and public carriers in Berlin with the goal to improve the sustainable growth in Germany's capital.

Furthermore there is the Senate for Culture and Europe which provides an amount of 600.000.000 € each year for Berlin's cultural sector<sup>8</sup>. They mainly focus on supporting non-profit organisations, which is a good approach here, since the museum will be free of charge and based on donations. The last Senate in Berlin that serves as a financial funder is the one for Urban Development and Living, because the museum represents both culture and sustainability. They have already established since 2002 12 cultural facilities for the younger generation in Berlin, which will be one of our targets, too.

Besides, are some associations located in Berlin that focus either on sustainable or cultural promotion. Holding a view on the environmental aspect the "Bundesvereinigung Nachhaltigkeit" makes an effort when it comes to different projects in educational institutions<sup>9</sup>. Our last reference as a sponsor for the museum has to be the association "Kulturprojekte in Berlin". They even organized the pop-up exhibition for the opening of the BER "Der Raum vom Fliegen" and might be interested in a permanent cultural section at the BER<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.berlin.de/senuyk/umwelt/foerderprogramme/bene/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.berlin.de/sen/kultur/foerderung/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://nachhaltigkeit.bvng.org/arbeitschwerpunkte/bildung-fuer-nachhaltige-entwicklung-bne/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.kulturprojekte.berlin/projekt/pop-up-ausstellung-der-raum-vom-fliegen/>

### 3. Conclusion and open questions

Museums that deal with the topics of climate change and sustainability are very rare. Especially in the field of tourism, concepts like the one presented in this paper can't be found anywhere. The AMS is a unique concept offering fun and education to people of all ages. It addresses an issue of utmost importance and raises awareness not just about environmental but also social sustainability. The AMS would be a pioneer and set an example not just for other airports but for other suppliers within the tourism sector. For example, hotels and museums could be inspired to integrate this topic into their offer.

Nevertheless, there are still some questions that remain to be answered when it comes to implementing the AMS in an airport. Questions regarding logistical issues are: Where exactly should the museum be placed in the airport and how much space would it take? The area just after the duty free would be the optimal location because every traveler would pass it. But is there enough space? How could the visitor flow be managed if there are too many? Or if there are just a few visitors, how can we attract more? Another question is: Could the AMS be designed in a way that makes it a complete autonomous museum (apart from the shop)? If not, how much staff does it need? And what are the opening hours? Furthermore, which issues of safety and security would this project face and what measures need to be taken?

Good management and a close cooperation with the airport could solve these open questions and clear the way for an innovative concept. A concept that would enhance the stay in every airport and be an enrichment for every visitor and in the long run for our whole society.