

STAKEHOLDERS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is not a discrete or special form of tourism. Rather, all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable. Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. Tourism is in a very special position to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces — they should be pursued hand in hand as aspirations that can and should be mutually reinforcing. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and reduce the costs of tourism. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development.

Key Words: *Sustainable tourism, social dialogue, stakeholders*

JEL classification: *Q01, Q56, L83*

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide governments with guidance and a framework for the development of policies for more sustainable tourism as well as a toolbox of instruments that they can use to implement those policies. Sustainable tourism development and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various tourist segments. The principles of sustainability refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. It is therefore necessary to strike a

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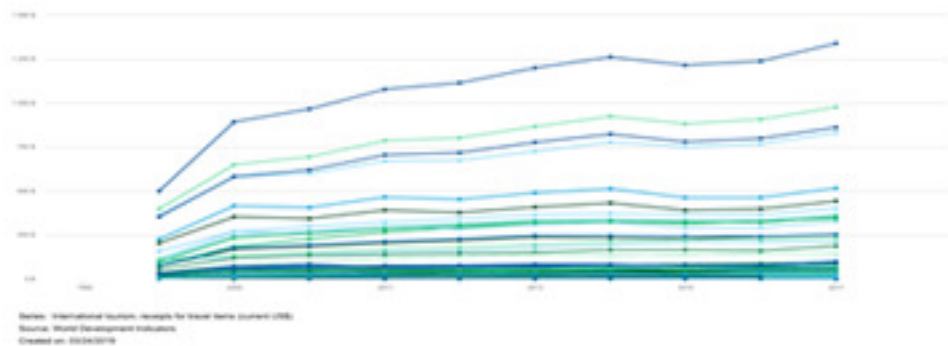
balance between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Making tourism more sustainable within itself should contain the following 12 components objectives:

1. Employment quality
2. Community wellbeing
3. Biological diversity
4. Economic viability
5. Local control
6. Physical integrity
7. Environmental purity
8. Local prosperity
9. Visitor fulfillment
10. Cultural richness
11. Resource efficiency
12. Social equity

What sustainability means for tourism and why governments need to address it. It will introduce some key principles and an agenda for more sustainable tourism, framed around a set of well known 12 Aims of Sustainable Tourism (Figure 1) (World Development Indicators, 2019).

Figure 1: *International tourism, receipts for travel items(current us\$)*



Tourism and sustainability

Big issues are at stake here. Further massive growth is predicted for tourism between now and 2020, providing excellent opportunities for

spreading prosperity, but presenting considerable challenges and potential threats to the environment and local communities if not well managed. **Climate change** is recognized as a major global issue, with significant implications for tourism. There is also an increasing appreciation of the potential role of tourism in addressing world poverty, by bringing sources of income to the heart of some of the poorest communities (WEF, 2015).

International tourist arrivals have almost quadrupled over the past 30 years and domestic tourism has also intensified in most developed and newly industrialized countries. At the same time, tourist movements have spread geographically to reach practically all countries of the globe, becoming for many of them an important economic sector in terms of income generation, foreign exchange earnings and employment creation. Awareness about sustainability issues - which referred originally to the natural environment but now also covers the social, economic and cultural spheres as well as the built environment - also developed significantly over those 30 years. Today, most governments, international development agencies, trade associations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations acknowledge that, without sustainability, there cannot be development that generates benefits to all stakeholders, solves serious and urgent problems such as extreme poverty, and preserves the precious natural and man-made resources on which human prosperity is based. The tourism sector could not remain indifferent to the sustainability challenge of our times.

Sustainable tourism policy makers need to define what tourism sustainability means, what are the effective approaches to developing strategies and policies for more sustainable tourism and tools that will make policies work on the ground. It clearly shows that there is no solution for "one-fit" to address the issue of sustainability in tourism development.

However, one key universal message highlights: to succeed in making sustainable tourism, it is crucial to work together with all relevant stakeholders, both inside and outside the government. Therefore, although the report is mainly directed at governments, public authorities at all levels are encouraged to distribute their content to those private and non-governmental organizations that have an interest in securing long-term tourism sector success, in particular to a wide range of tourism businesses and their trade associations.

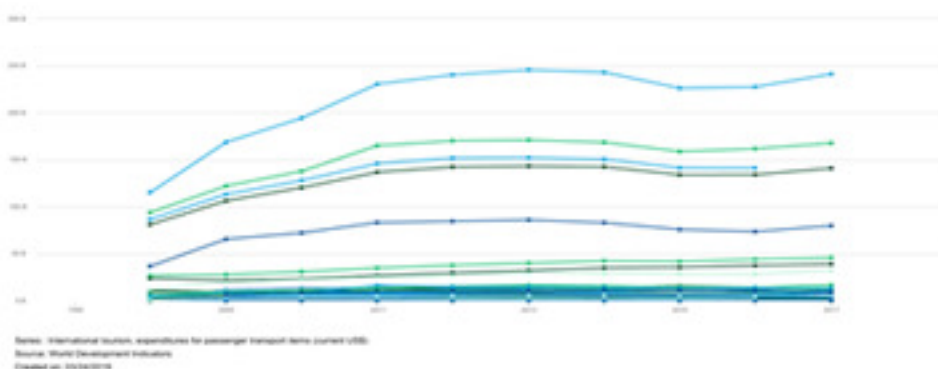
Tourism: dynamism and growth

Tourism is an activity that has grown for around 25% in the past 10 years. It accounts for about 10% of the world's economic activity and is one of the main generators of employment. However, it also has major impacts on natural and built environments and on wellbeing and culture of host populations. In roughly the same period, the concept of sustainable development has become widely accepted as a way to a better future, even though its roots go back to the 1980s. (UNWTO, 2005).

In that sense, creating tourism more sustainable as a guide for policy makers who take into account effects of tourism, both positive and negative. In this context, such a manual examines the ways in which governments, as well as other stakeholders, can develop strategies, policies and tools to maximize the positive effects of industry while minimizing adverse impacts.

Various international conventions and declarations have put forward principles and guidelines for sustainable tourism and the importance of tourism and its sustainability was underlined at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Doods, 2012). Many countries declare that they are pursuing, or want to pursue, policies for 'sustainable tourism'. Despite this interest, there remains a degree of uncertainty over the scope and priorities for making tourism more sustainable and only partial appreciation of how to put this into practice (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *International tourism, expenditures for passenger transport items(current US\$)*



Stakeholders in sustainable tourism

Policy implications of the Sustainable Tourism agenda are the 12 goals for more sustainable tourism that will be considered separately and will identify areas of policy relevant to each. Many different interests can benefit from tourism being made more sustainable: **Tourism enterprises**, while seeking long term profitability, should be concerned about their corporate image, the relationship with their staff, and their impact on the global environment and that immediately around them. **Local communities** are seeking increased prosperity but without exploitation or damage to their quality of life.

Environmentalists are concerned about the harmful impacts of tourism but also see it as a valuable source of income for conservation. **Tourists** are seeking a high quality experience in safe and attractive environments they are becoming more aware of the impacts of their travelling. In seeking more sustainable tourism, governments must recognize the different positions and motivations of these stakeholders and work with them to achieve common goals. Initial motivations and triggers for cooperation are:

- **A fundamental, overarching national policy position**, putting sustainability at the top of the public agenda.
- **A perceived need to change direction from high impact tourism** in order to reduce impacts on the local environment and improve quality of the product offer in line with new market trends.
- **A need to back up a tourism product** and market position that is based on the appeal of the area's natural environment with policy to underpin its good management and future sustainability.

Structures and strategies for more sustainable tourism. This part will be about establishing the right structures through which governments can work with others towards more sustainable tourism, and about the strategies that are required to develop and drive policies and actions. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between national and local structures and existing strategies for sustainable tourism/and improvements especially in the part of promotion organic food and the construction of bio-hotels. This system is based on ecological processes, bio-diversity and practices that are adapted to local conditions (Pejoska Risteska, 2014).

Tourism and Sustainable Development Relationship

This special relationship arises because, unlike most other sectors, the consumer of tourism (the tourist) travels to the producer and the product. This leads to three important and unique aspects of the relationship between tourism and sustainable development:

- **INTERACTION.** The nature of tourism, as a service industry that is based on delivering an experience of new places, means that it involves a considerable amount of interaction, both direct and indirect, between visitors, host communities and their local environments.
- **AWARENESS.** Tourism makes people (visitors and hosts) become far more conscious of environmental issues and differences between nations and cultures. This can affect attitudes and concerns for sustainability issues not only while travelling but throughout people's lives.
- **DEPENDENCY.** Much of tourism is based on visitors seeking to experience intact and clean environments, attractive natural areas, authentic historic and cultural traditions, and welcoming hosts with whom they have a good relationship. The industry depends on these attributes being in place.

This close and direct relationship creates a sensitive situation, whereby tourism can be both very damaging but also very positive for sustainable development. On the positive side, tourism can:

- **Provide a growing source** of opportunities for enterprise development and employment creation as well as stimulating investment and support for local services, even in quite remote communities.
- **Bring tangible economic value** to natural and cultural resources. This can result in direct income from visitor spending for their conservation, and an increase in support for conservation from local communities.
- **Be a force for inter-cultural understanding** and peace.

Conversely, tourism can:

- **Place direct pressure on fragile ecosystems** causing degradation of the physical environment and disruption to wildlife.
- **Exert considerable pressure on host communities** and lead to dislocation of traditional societies.
- **Compete for the use of scarce resources**, notably land and water.

- **Be a significant contributor** to local and global pollution.
- **Be a vulnerable and unstable source of income**, as it is often very sensitive to actual or perceived changes to the environmental and social conditions of destinations.

The net result is that all those involved in tourism have a huge responsibility to recognize the importance of its sustainable development. Tourism has immense power to do good. Yet it can also be the vector for the very pressures that may destroy the assets on which it relies. Developed without concern for sustainability, tourism can not only damage societies and the environment, it could also contain the seeds of its own destruction.

For governments, tourism policies that address economic, social and environmental issues, and which are developed with an awareness of the potential both for harm and for benefit, can channel the forces resulting from the sector's dynamic growth in a positive direction. For the hospitality industry, accepting this responsibility is not only for good citizenship, but should be backed up with a strong element of self-interest, since any damage done to the natural, cultural or social environment of the destinations can lead to their eventual destruction or loss of value as a tourist product.

In economic terms, sustainability can guarantee that the key factor is already mentioned: "sustainability of enterprises and activities and their ability to maintain in the long run. The shaping of sustainable tourism addresses the process of developing a tourism strategy that encompasses sustainability and identifies some of the strategic choices that need to be made. It reviews the product and selects the market, and introduces tools that can be used to develop the impact of tourism, the operation of tourism enterprises and the behavior of visitor ***Promoting sustainable consumption*** - Sustainability is not just about the side of the offer. Equal attention should be paid to the impact on the model and the impact of consumption. This means an influence on the scope and nature of tourist demand, the choice of tourists as a product, and their activities and behavior (Pejoska Risteska, 2017).

Pursuing multi-stakeholder engagement - Sustainable tourism is about local control, but also about working together. All those implicated by tourism should have an opportunity to influence its development and management. This may involve formal partnerships or looser

arrangements, as well as strengthening and utilizing local democratic structures.

Ensuring ongoing progress - Adapting to changing conditions. Adaptive response and management is an important aspect of sustainable development. Tourism is sensitive to external conditions in terms of its performance and the level of its impact. Global threats, such as climate change and terrorism need to be considered in planning for future tourism and in introducing risk management policies.

Undertaking continuous monitoring using indicators - Sound management of tourism requires readily available evidence of changes in impact over time, so that adjustments to policies and actions can be made. Indicators that relate to sustainability aims and objectives should be established to monitor the condition, performance and impact of tourism. Cost effective monitoring programmes should be put in place.

Guiding principles and approaches - The development and implementation of sustainable tourism policies should be based on a number of overall principles and approaches. Some of them are inherent in the principles of sustainability, while others have been identified over time by those working in the field. Planning and development of tourism should not take place in isolation. Tourism should be considered as part of the sustainable development of communities, along with other activities. Consideration should be given to its impact on other sectors, in terms of competitive use of resources and mutual support. Excessive dependence on the economy and society of tourism should be avoided. A holistic approach is also to take into account all the influences and relationships within the tourism sector itself and to consider how all public policies can affect or be affected by tourism.

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Planning for the long term - Short term approaches should be avoided and the long-term view encouraged, with resources committed accordingly.

Where possible, actions should be self-sustaining. Projects that are structured around short term inputs and finance must take account of how initiatives, once started, can be maintained into the future.

Addressing global and local impacts - impacts on the local environment and communities are often apparent. It can therefore be easier to gain support for policies that address these local impacts rather than for policies that address global issues. However, the sustainable development of tourism should pay equal attention to global impacts, especially with respect to pollution from tourism (such as greenhouse gas emissions) and the use of nonrenewable resources. Such global impacts also have a direct effect on tourism itself (Gössling, 2002).

Considering functional alternatives - Consideration should be given to whether the same function can be performed and the same result achieved by doing things in a way that has more positive and less negative impacts on resources. For example, in a strategy to improve visitor satisfaction by adding further recreational opportunities, preference should be given to those options that bring the least environmental and social impacts and the highest economic returns.

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Instruments for more sustainable tourism

Instruments for more sustainable tourism. A detailed description is given of a set of tools, and of how they can be applied by governments. They include the use of sustainability indicators, planning, infrastructure provision, legislation and regulations, and a set of voluntary and facilitating instruments.

Governments, the market and the industry's view - Governments should recognize that interest in the sustainability of tourism is growing amongst many private sector enterprises and within visitor markets. They should take account of this when seeking to persuade the tourism industry to take sustainability more seriously, pointing out the advantages for attracting

new business and the overall profitability of a more sustainable approach (Eurostat, 2016) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: *Nights spent by European citizens*

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Germany	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
France	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Italy	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Spain	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
United Kingdom	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Poland	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Czechia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Hungary	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Slovakia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Slovenia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Lithuania	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Latvia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Estonia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Belgium	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Netherlands	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Austria	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Sweden	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Finland	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Denmark	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Ireland	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Portugal	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Greece	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Cyprus	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Bulgaria	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Romania	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Croatia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000
Serbia	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000	1,121,000

Source: *Eurostat (2016).*

Understanding tourists' attitudes - more than a niche market response-

Governments should recognize that interest in the sustainability of tourism is growing amongst many private sector enterprises and within visitor markets. They should take account of this when seeking to persuade the tourism industry to take sustainability more seriously, pointing out the advantages for attracting new business and the overall profitability of a more sustainable approach.

Understanding tourists' attitudes - more than a niche market response-

Governments need to understand what is important to tourists if they are to influence their behavior effectively. It has been suggested that tourists are not generally interested in the sustainability of the trips they take, and that this is a major constraint on the pursuit of more sustainable tourism. However, the interpretation of tourist response depends on the nature of the questions asked. For example, although studies of the ecotourism market (e.g. those carried out by the WTO) have concluded that this is indeed a small (albeit growing) niche market, such surveys attempted specifically to identify tourists and tour operators that were looking for, or selling, special interest holidays involving nature observation and concern for conservation as a primary motivation for the trip. Wider surveys that have attempted to assess the degree to which general consumers are interested in the interrelationship between their activities as tourists and the environment and host communities (rather than their response to the

concept of sustainability as a whole) suggest a far wider relevance in the market place.

They point to:

- Very high levels of concern for environment and society in destinations, where the issue is likely to directly affect the tourist's own wellbeing (e.g. cleanliness of the water and levels of safety).
- High and growing levels of interest by tourists in visiting natural and cultural sites during their holidays, and the authenticity and educational value of such experiences. This applies to general holidaymakers as well as to those with a specialist interest.
- Large numbers of tourists expressing concern about the impact of their travelling, both through their own actions and in their choice of tour operator or service provider.
- Considerable willingness to pay more to support local environments and communities

Corporate Social Responsibility in the tourism sector - There is a general trend amongst private sector businesses to recognize their responsibilities to society beyond their traditional functions of generating wealth and profit. Governments can use this growing awareness when developing industry-related policies and activities and as a lever to achieve industry involvement and buy-in. In companies, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means adopting transparent business practices that are based on ethical values. It has started to gain ground and many companies already include social and environmental commitments in their core mission statements. Some adopt triple bottom line reporting, whereby social and environmental results are measured and reported next to financial results.

The crucial role of government

Governments have a crucial role to play in the development and management of tourism and in making it more sustainable. The level of government engagement in tourism varies considerably across the world. Contacts with governments on sustainability nevertheless reveal that most are, at least nominally, seeking to pursue Sustainable tourism. This applies equally to developed and developing countries, though the emphasis may be different.

In developing countries, interest in sustainable tourism is more likely to be linked to poverty alleviation and the funding of conservation; in the developed world, issues of rejuvenation and visitor management are more prominent. Whatever the motivation of governments, their role relates only partly to their own actions. Tourism is primarily an activity carried out by private sector enterprises, and it is their actions, together with those of tourists, that are responsible for most impacts, positive and negative.

A primary function of government in fostering more sustainable tourism is therefore to create an environment that enables or influences the private sector to operate more sustainably, and influences patterns of visitor flows and behavior so as to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts of tourism.

The key reasons for the importance of the role of government are as follows:

- Much of the sustainability agenda is about areas of public rather than private concern. Although the private sector is beginning to recognize its responsibility, it cannot, on its own, be expected to take a lead on these issues.
- In all countries, the tourism sector is fragmented into many thousands of businesses, mainly micro or small enterprises. Collectively their actions can make a difference, while individually they cannot, so coordination is needed. Furthermore, very small businesses often need external support and advice if they are to change their operations successfully to meet a new agenda.
- Governments are responsible for many functions that are fundamentally important to the sustainable development of tourism, such as land use planning, labor and environmental regulations, and the provision of infrastructure and social and environmental services.

Many governments are already actively engaged in supporting tourism through marketing, information services, education and in other ways, often through joint public-private frameworks. These functions need to continue and to be more closely aligned with sustainability objectives. These arguments and functions are applicable at both national and local government levels. In many countries, many of the objectives and actions that governments are pursuing can be said to be in line with sustainability, and there is considerable recent interest in relating tourism policies to wider sustainable development or poverty reduction strategies. However,

as has already been pointed out, the understanding of what the sustainable development of tourism entails, and even the terminology, is not consistent between governments. A more systematic approach to link sustainability aims and principles to policies and tools is needed.

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and the private sector – the business case for the Goals

Private companies are key players in the tourism sector. They include accommodation providers, transport companies, tour operators, attractions, destinations management companies, technology companies and many more. Given that every tourism destination relies on a well-functioning society, a healthy environment and a stable economy, the private sector has a large role to play in ensuring all three of these conditions. Businesses must aim to generate profit, take care of the environment they operate in and create a positive social impact. They can lead tourism towards a more sustainable by embracing sustainable models and practices that do not undermine profitability; and on the contrary, make business sense. Yet, in order to become more competitive, companies need to operate in a supportive policy framework.

Improving performance by measuring impact

In many countries, tourism companies have not set criteria for measurability of economic, social and environmental impacts. For tourism businesses to play a more significant role in realizing the SDGs, they must be able to measure their progress, benchmark themselves against comparable businesses and incrementally improve their performance.

At the country level, UNWTO's Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) Initiative, as well as statistical capacity building and knowledge sharing are also necessary to inform evidence-based decision making and policies. Launched with the support of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Initiative aims to develop an international statistical framework for measuring tourism's role in sustainable development, including economic, environmental and social dimensions (WTO & UNDP, 2017).

Creating an enabling environment for increased private sectoring investment Policymakers can strengthen SDG engagement and

commitment from the private sector, financiers and investors by devising supportive policy frameworks and providing smart subsidies and incentives that are conducive to increased competitiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability. Furthermore, the private sector – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which represent the bulk of the tourism sector – must be sensitized and given access to knowledge and capacity, including in new technologies that encourage investment in greener and more sustainable businesses. In those areas where voluntary action is not sufficient, the public sector needs to define clear targets, enabling policies and smart incentives that support and guide sustainable business activities and foster innovation. Furthermore, integrated and inclusive policies and strategies are needed to expand local production in the tourism supply chain, reinforce local capacities and remove barriers to trade (WTO & UNDP, 2017).

Conclusion

Competitiveness is the key business driver of sustainability: Since many activities are related to the business case for sustainability, companies are most likely to engage on SDGs where they can also improve their business results, which in most cases includes efficiency measures. Yet, the mitigation of negative impacts must go beyond resource efficiency and include more drastic measures along the entire tourism value chain.

Effective management requires consistent measurement of impact: While the tourism private sector can contribute to all activity its impact is still difficult to measure given that there is no universal means by which travel and tourism businesses and destinations can measure and monitor their progress or contribution towards the SDGs.

There is little awareness of the economic benefits of sustainability: Tourism enterprises, SMEs in particular, often lack awareness of how efforts and investment in sustainable business operations can also significantly boost competitiveness and profitability, while increasing customer and host community satisfaction.

Support to tourism must go beyond development cooperation: A number of frameworks can help leverage funds for sustainable tourism. The Enhanced Integrated Framework and the Sustainable Tourism Program can be powerful means through which tourism authorities can channel further resources to tourism. Public-private and multi-stakeholder

partnerships in tourism can also be effective ways to strengthen the engagement of the private sector and other tourism stakeholders in achieving the SDGs.

Recommendations

Recommendations for tourism policy:

- Participate in the design of national SDG strategies and ensure high priority for and integration of sustainable tourism in national policy-making and development planning institutions, as well as policy coherence and integration across inter-linked sectors;
- Devise more inclusive tourism policies by ensuring active participation of and transparent consultative processes with all tourism stakeholders;
- Design and implement a National Tourism Export Strategy to reinforce capacities and strengthen tourism value chains for enhanced local economic impact; and
- Assess and monitor tourism's contribution and commitment to the SDGs at both national and sub-national level and advance timely and systematic measurement and monitoring of tourism's impact by engaging in the Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) Initiative;

Recommendations for tourism private sector:

- Share experiences, good practices and lessons learned among tourism companies, and especially SMEs, to support evidence-based decision-making in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that impact on the SDGs;
- Continue investing in people, technologies and ICT so as to increase resource efficiency, reduce operational costs and minimize the footprint of the sector; and
- Increase local purchasing of goods and services along the tourism value chain to prevent 'leakage' and to enhance competitiveness and maximize positive local impact.

Recommendations for the international development community and global tourism stakeholders:

- Support the efforts of all tourism stakeholders and ensure that countries and the private sector can maximize their impact towards the SDGs through tourism;
- Build closer dialogue with global development partners from the UN System, including UNWTO, UNDP and other International

Organizations, as well as non-traditional donors to facilitate tourism's contribution to the SDGs;

- Strengthen public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships to reinvigorate the means of implementation for the SDGs through tourism; and
- Ensure effective cooperation among all major stakeholders, including government at the national, sub-national and local level, the private sector, destinations and communities, to increase the understanding of the cross-cutting impacts of different activities across the tourism value and supply chains.

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