



# Sustainable Tourism

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Frameworks, Practices, and  
Innovative Solutions

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*Edited by*

Thomas Walker · Ender Demir

Gabrielle Machnik-Kekesi

Victoria Kelly

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macmillan

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# Part I

## Introduction



# 1

## Sustainable Tourism: An Introduction

Thomas Walker, Ender Demir, Gabrielle Machnik-Kekesi, and Victoria Kelly

### Introduction

In 2019, the tourism industry was among the fastest growing in the world (UNWTO, 2020). The United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recorded 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals globally—a 4% increase on the previous year—and predicted a similar increase for 2020 (UNWTO, 2020). In the same year, the industry not only accounted for 10.4% of the global GDP (US\$9.2 trillion), but it was also responsible for significant job creation, with one in four new jobs across the world attributed to the tourism industry, accounting for 10.6% of all jobs (334 million) (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022).

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However, in 2020, the modern tourism industry faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19. The pandemic, which forced the closure of many international borders and brought tourism activities to a halt, had devastating consequences for the industry's growth. Though the UNWTO (2022) reported a 4% increase in international arrivals in 2021, this figure still represented a 72% drop from pre-pandemic times. As 2022 drew to a close, the tourism industry started to rebound, reaching nearly 60% of its pre-pandemic levels of activity (UNWTO, 2022); by the end of 2023, international tourism figures were at 88% of their pre-pandemic levels (UNWTO, 2024). During this transitional recovery period, conversations surrounding sustainable tourism practices have become all the more urgent.

As tourism continues to recover from the severe economic impacts of COVID-19, questions arise as to how this renewed sense of urgency in the industry can be mobilized to the benefit of sustainability. While the tourism industry provides economic and social benefits and has the potential to contribute to sustainable development through job creation and economic redistribution, it also has many problematic side effects. Conventional tourism can encroach on habitats, ecosystems, and wildlife, as well as accelerate extractivist forms of land use and development (Davies & Cahill, 2000).

Experts have voiced concerns as to how the negative effects of such tourism practices could be mitigated as early as 1973 (Berno & Bricker, 2001). The concept of sustainable tourism emerged in 1987 at the World Commission on Environment and Development, where ideas of sustainable development and its implications in tourism first began to burgeon (Berno & Bricker, 2001). The United Nations Environment Programme and World Trade Organization (2005) describe sustainable tourism as making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential processes, and helping conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. Moreover, it respects the socio-cultural heritage of local communities, contributes to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance, and ensures long-term economic operations by providing fairly distributed economic benefits among all participants. The promotion and development of effective sustainable tourism measures not only limit the negative impacts associated with tourist travel, but also inspire ways to conserve and



perhaps even rebuild this important industry in a way that respects cultural difference, economic justice, and environmental preservation. This edited collection collates explorations of both new and long-standing challenges associated with sustainable tourism and aims to reconcile how policies and frameworks can establish a strong foundation for the future of this industry. The tourism industry is multifaceted, as reflected by the interests of its many stakeholders and as observed through the lenses of various disciplines. This book highlights this diversity by presenting chapters which examine tourism's various impacts not only from an economic perspective, but also from an innovation-driven and management-based perspective.

## Overview of Content

The above section briefly introduces the current challenges faced by the tourism industry and highlights that the sector faced many hurdles with regard to sustainability long before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, it can be argued, merely served as a catalyst for the industry's need to address these issues; some of the chapters in this book explore the impacts of this seismic event directly, while others address different, but equally pressing, topics. The book is organized as follows.

### Part I: Sustainable Tourism Frameworks

The first section of this collection explores sustainable tourism frameworks and aims to contextualize sustainability in the ever-growing tourism industry. These chapters are linked in their capacity to propose models and frameworks that consider sustainable tourism specifically with respect to destination.

The section begins with Chap. 2, *Sustainability-Oriented Innovation in Tourism Destinations: Born Ready or Bred for Success?* in which author **Lisa Pace** situates sustainability-oriented innovation within the domain of tourist destinations. Focusing on four core capabilities—leadership, collaboration, marketing capacities, and capabilities for sustainable

innovation management—Pace argues that tourist destinations stand to benefit from strategic development in creating sustainability-oriented innovations that increase the appeal of tourism products.

Chapter 3, *Sustainable Livelihoods and Tourism Businesses: An Overview of the Nexus in Developing Countries*, suggests operational and institutional indicators as well as variables that can be used to understand the relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable livelihoods on a global scale. Author **Annarita Paiano**'s replicable model comprises a valuable tool for tourism sector stakeholders.

Finally, Chap. 4, *Innovations in Luxury Tourism: Developing a Novel Theoretical Framework* offers a mixed-methods study by authors **Vasco Santos**, **Carlos Costa**, **Manuel Au-Yong**, and **Maria Sousa**. They develop an original model that aims to incorporate sustainability into a luxury tourism paradigm for the use of both researchers and industry professionals.

## Part II: Sustainable Tourism Innovations and Solutions

Focusing on technological advances as well as the reinvention of tourism activities, this section explores new and innovative ways to achieve sustainability; local tourism is an undercurrent throughout the section.

Chapter 5, *Recreation in Forests: Implications from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, showcases the importance of recreational tourism, which became painfully apparent during the course of the pandemic. Authors **Patricia Poehler** and **Monika Bachinger** examine visits to forests in Germany during the COVID-19 pandemic to explore the possibility that domestic travel to green spaces can enhance well-being. Based on their findings, the authors propose relevant destination management strategies.

In Chap. 6, *Staycations: A Sustainable Tourism Solution?*, **Gianna Moscardo** adopts a system thinking approach to conceptualizing “staycationing” as an alternative to recreation and tourism. Moscardo proposes decision-making strategies that can encourage staycations and thus more sustainable tourism practices.

Continuing the thread of local tourism, Chap. 7, *Local Tourist Shopping: How Purchases in a Destination Can Contribute to Sustainability*,

uncovers how shopping experiences both contribute to the appeal of various tourist destinations and have the potential to exacerbate tourism's unsustainability. Authors **Alba García-Milon** and **Emma Juaneda-Ayensa** propose local tourist shopping as a concept that can enhance tourism's overall sustainability and make recommendations for fostering this practice.

Further building on this section's focus on locality, Chap. 8, *The Role of Smart and Experimental Tourism in Sustainable Development*, evaluates Portugal's preparedness to engage with a rapidly changing tourist sector in the wake of COVID-19 and in the midst of technological change. Author **Silvia Fernandes** argues that through smart city acceleration programs, the Internet of Things (IoT), and augmented reality, the country can increase its resilience and encourage sustainable practices.

Finally, in Chap. 9, *A New Tool for Smart Tourism Destinations: Indicators of Sustainable Intelligence*, **Yaiza López-Sánchez**, **Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández**, and **José Luis Durán-Román** nuance the relationship between smart tourist destinations (SDs) and sustainable tourism indicators through their own model that incorporates tourists themselves in SD sustainability. The authors base their "Indicator of Tourists' Sustainable Intelligence" on a two-round Delphi survey and provide useful information on the sustainable management of SDs.

### Part III: Sustainable Tourism Policies and Practices

This final section of the book analyzes existing global policies and practices in place regarding sustainability in tourism activities. The chapters determine the efficiency of these practices and offer suggestions with regard to global policy making.

The section begins with Chap. 10, *Tourism Views and Experiences of Micro- and Small Enterprises in Northern Finland and Russian Karelia during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Border Operations Perspective*, in which authors **Katariina Ala-Rämi** and **Kyllikki Taipale-Eräväla** share the experiences of Finnish and Russian micro-tourism entrepreneurs during the pandemic and before the invasion of Ukraine, showcasing both challenges and opportunities of cross-EU border tourism. The

authors also recommend ways to increase economic activity and rural revitalization.

In Chap. 11, *Environmental and Tourism Policies for the Decarbonization of the Tourism Sector*, **Yoshihiro Hamaguchi** suggests that, in spite of sustainable tourism's increased traction, the tourism sector remains carbon-intensive. Through a literature review of the topic, Hamaguchi uncovers controversies surrounding the tourism-led growth hypothesis (TLGH) and proposes environmental and tourism policies that could activate the decarbonization of the tourism sector, particularly in the context of increased travel at this stage of post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

In chap. 12, *Can Tourist Taxes Make Tourism More Sustainable?*, authors **Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández**, **José Luis Durán-Román**, and **Yaiza López-Sánchez** employ a case study of an Andalusian tourist business transitioning to sustainability to explore which factors and variables impact customers' "willingness to pay." The authors' findings contribute to our understanding of sustainable destination management and tourist experience management.

Finally, Chap. 13 concludes this section by analyzing policies at the nexus of walkability, gender, spirituality, and travel in Bodh Gaya, India. In *Walking in Bodh Gaya: A Gendered Approach to the Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Policies*, authors **Deepika Chandra Verma**, **Janardan Krishna Yadav**, and **Meenakshi Prasad** build on findings from a focus group and offer suggestions with respect to urban planning and the management of local/tourist dynamics.

While dedicated to various topics, there are noticeable trends and patterns across chapters in different sections. In addition to the pandemic serving as a throughline for multiple studies and as the main focus in Chap. 10, place-specific models and solutions, as represented by Chaps. 5 and 12 (among others) provide valuable insights, especially when considered alongside more macro-scaled studies, exemplified by contributions including Chaps. 3 and 11. Building on concepts of place, Chap. 9's focus on destination can effectively be contemplated alongside Chap. 6's study of staycationing. In addition, the central role played by management and governance, as Chaps. 2 and 4 illustrate, is a recurring theme in the collection. The cultural and affective appeal of tourist sites is

sensitively presented in Chaps. 7, 8, and 13, the latter introducing the key concern of how gender intersects with sustainable travel considerations. With broad geographic representation and a rich variety of thematic explorations, this collection of essays shares fresh findings while providing the basis for further research on the vitally important topic of how to experience the wonders of travel while doing so sustainably.

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# Part II

## Sustainable Tourism Frameworks