

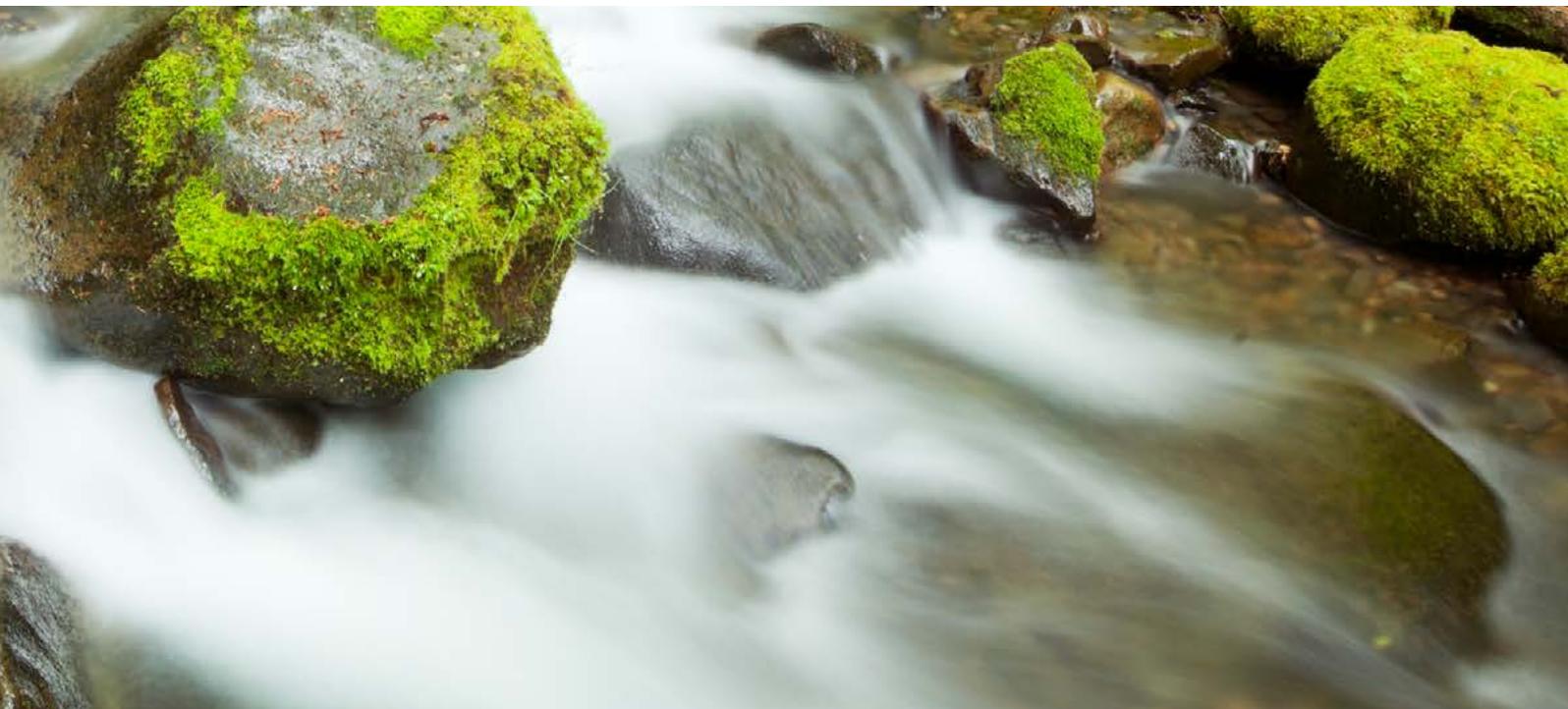


**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

ONE PLANET VISION FOR A RESPONSIBLE RECOVERY OF THE TOURISM SECTOR



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ONE PLANET VISION FOR A RESPONSIBLE RECOVERY OF THE TOURISM SECTOR

#RESPONSIBLERECOVERY

#BUILDBACKBETTER

#RESTARTTOURISM



ONE PLANET VISION FOR A RESPONSIBLE RECOVERY OF THE TOURISM SECTOR

The One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector builds on the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism¹ released by the Global Tourism Crisis Committee on 28 May 2020 with the objective to support tourism to emerge stronger and more sustainable from the COVID-19 crisis. The vision is shared by the members of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme and partner organizations.

It calls for a responsible recovery of the tourism sector from the COVID-19 crisis. A recovery which is founded on sustainability, to build back better, and which therefore can underpin the resilience of the tourism sector.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has caused unprecedented socio-economic impacts and, at the same time, raised our awareness of the role sustainability needs to play in our everyday life and economic activities. Tourism, one of the hardest hit economic sectors, might face a decline of 58% and 78% in international tourist arrivals during 2020 and has 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk.² There are additional impacts, which are still difficult to quantify, such as

pollution or threats to the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity, all directly linked to tourism.

As of 18 May 2020, all destinations worldwide are observing travel restrictions for international tourism. Out of all 217 destinations, 163 (75%) have placed a complete stop on international tourism and, for the time being, only seven destinations have started to ease travel restrictions.³ This situation makes it difficult to foresee when tourism operations will fully resume. It is nevertheless predictable that changes to the way tourism operated will be needed to exit a crisis of this magnitude.

In line with the priorities outlined in the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism, this vision aims to support the development and implementation of recovery plans which contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

As such, the vision recommends six lines of action to guide a responsible tourism recovery for people, planet and prosperity, namely public health, social inclusion,

1 <https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-05/UNWTO-Global-Guidelines-to-Restart-Tourism.pdf>

2 <https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020>

3 <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-travel-restrictions>



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biodiversity conservation, climate action, circular economy and governance and finance.

A #ResponsibleRecovery is needed to #BuildBackBetter tourism

The COVID-19 crisis has emphasised the need to strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector and awakened a sense of unity and interconnectedness among tourism stakeholders. This crisis has highlighted both the fragility of the natural environment and the need to protect it, as well as the intersections of tourism economics, society and the environment like nothing before in history. It represents an opportunity to accelerate sustainable consumption and production patterns and build back better tourism.

As governments and the private sector are now embarking on a path for recovery, there is no better timing for placing future generations at the centre of the action. This implies long-term and holistic thinking with regards to the challenges of our world and thus connects with the need to transition to a more sustainable tourism model based on social inclusion and the restoration and protection of the environment. Our health and wellbeing depend on it.

The tourism sector registered continuous growth in the past decade, creating significant benefits in terms of socio-economic development and employment, which are now at stake. At the same time, such growth represented important challenges related to the carrying capacity

of destinations, consumption of natural resources and impacts on climate change.

Addressing all these issues must be at the heart of a responsible recovery of the tourism sector, as the resilience of tourism will depend on the sector's ability to balance the needs of people, planet and prosperity.

Generating the necessary evidence to support decision making and effective action towards sustainability in tourism is now more pressing than ever.



LINES OF ACTION TO SUPPORT A #RESPONSIBLERECOVERY TO #BUILDBACKBETTER TOURISM

To support the implementation of the UNWTO Guidelines to Restart Tourism, this vision recommends six lines of action, which represent several key elements capable of guiding a responsible tourism recovery for people, planet and prosperity; namely: public health, social inclusion, biodiversity conservation, climate action, circular economy and governance and finance.

This vision invites governments to integrate such lines of action in COVID-19 recovery plans for tourism to build back better. The vision also encourages tourism businesses to revisit operational processes along the lines of action below to enhance competitiveness. NGOs, International Organizations, academia and the civil society can support and assist both governments and the private sector by sharing their knowledge, tools and supporting the development of best practices.

#ResponsibleRecovery for People

Public health:

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the strong connection between tourism and public health. The tourism sector has proven to be of assistance by putting its infrastructure, supply chains and staff at the service of public health and humanitarian aid. Creating long lasting synergies between public health and tourism is an investment in

preparedness in relation to future crises and contributes to confidence and trust.

- **Integrate epidemiological indicators in tourism:** Epidemiological indicators are in the process of being connected with tourism monitoring mechanisms. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms in this direction has potential to lead the way for tourism to recover as an economic activity, ensuring that the easing of travel restrictions or introduction of new measures and policies is based on evidence. If well planned and managed, tourism can make a responsible contribution to the health and wellbeing of those working in the sector and local people.
- **Connect hygiene with sustainability:** Tailored guidance and protocols for tourism operations to resume timely and safely shall reflect the outcomes of collaboration between tourism stakeholders, the scientific community and health authorities. It is essential that such protocols integrate sustainability principles as much as possible, to prevent decision-making and changes in processes in connection to hygiene which could have harmful effects on the environment without measurable gains with regards to health. Introducing new social distancing measures and safety protocols should not suppose new



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barriers⁴ for people with disabilities and seniors.

- **Restore trust through communication:** To address the public health concerns of tourists, employees and host communities and restore trust, transparent and proactive communication on the measures put in place and current developments within businesses or destinations is key. Destinations shall send clear and consolidated messages to their source markets and adjust to their perceptions and needs to regain visitor confidence, given the importance and current sensitivities towards public health.

Social inclusion:

The COVID-19 crisis is having sweeping consequences on tourism jobs and enterprises, notably on small and medium enterprises, which account for around 80% of tourism businesses globally.⁵ Many tourism employers are nevertheless taking the lead in supporting their workers and helping the communities in which they operate.⁶ Capitalising on these practices can repurpose tourism as a supporter for the community.

- **Channel targeted support towards vulnerable groups:** Many tourism jobs represent the main source of income of

local communities and the livelihoods of youth, women, rural population, indigenous and other vulnerable groups, including those in the informal economy. Therefore, targeted support which caters for their needs should allow a more inclusive recovery.⁷ The principles of decent work⁸ and safety at a work place should guide measures aiming at enhancing job security in tourism and at providing formal employment.

- **Channel long-term support to small and medium enterprises:** Targeted support beyond initial relief measures will be needed for small and medium enterprises to continue operating⁹ and to ensure that destinations maintain a diverse and attractive offer. Embracing digital technologies can contribute to business continuity. In those destinations where tourism has become almost the sole economic activity, supporting businesses to diversify their customer base and revenue streams will enhance their resilience.
- **Repurpose tourism as a supporter for the community:** Capitalising on the new services that tourism businesses and creative industries¹⁰ have been providing to destinations in times of crisis brings an opportunity to create

4 <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-inclusive-response-vulnerable-groups>

5 <https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-statement-zurab-pololikashvili>

6 <https://www.unwto.org/news/research-shows-strength-of-tourism-sectors-support-for-workers-and-communities>

7 <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-inclusive-response-vulnerable-groups>

8 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_546337.pdf

9 <https://www.oecd-forum.org/users/406151-lamia-kamal-chaoui/posts/rescuing-smes-from-the-covid-storm-what-s-next>

10 <https://www.unwto.org/cultural-tourism-covid-19>



stronger ties with local communities, integrate local wisdom and enhance local satisfaction with tourism. Communities may need business mentorship for their local entrepreneurship ventures to improve their supply chain inclusion. Furthermore, stronger local value chains bring social and economic benefits to local communities, reduce dependence on foreign suppliers while supporting the circularity of tourism operations.

#ResponsibleRecovery for Planet

Biodiversity conservation:

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised awareness of the importance of a healthy environment as a natural barrier for future pandemics, notably in the case of zoonotic diseases. A healthy environment is also directly connected with the competitiveness of the tourism sector and in many destinations conservation efforts largely depend on tourism revenue. Supporting such conservation efforts can enable a greener recovery.¹¹

- **Capture the value of conservation through tourism:** While the reduction of economic activity during COVID-19 has to some extent reduced the pressures on the environment, there are many destinations where the conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, protected areas and species largely depends on tourism revenue and operators. Supporting

monitoring mechanisms that would regularly capture such contribution and the value of ecosystem services through tourism at destination level would enable the tourism sector to capitalize on its conservation efforts.

- **Support conservation efforts through tourism:** In destinations where human-wildlife conflicts are increasing as tourism is on hold, the risk of poaching, encroachment or overexploitation are also growing, directly threatening the very assets upon which the tourism sector needs to be rebuilt. The role of tourism to sustain conservation and fight illegal wildlife trade should therefore be acknowledged in recovery plans and support made available for conservation efforts by tourism stakeholders to continue. Tourism also contributes to the preservation of cultural and historical sites.
- **Invest in nature-based solutions for sustainable tourism:** Nature-based solutions have potential to drive innovation in tourism towards sustainability and, besides mitigating the environmental impacts of tourism activity, result in better management of scarce natural resources such as water, coral reefs, wetlands, mangroves, coastlines and foster disaster resilience both in urban and natural environments¹². Investments in nature-based solutions also respond well to the expectations of a growing demand for experiences in nature.

11 https://parksjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hockings-et-al-10.2305-IUCN.CH_.2020.PARKS-26-1MH.en_-1.pdf

12 https://platform.think-nature.eu/system/files/thinknature_handbook_final_print_0.pdf



Climate action:

During the COVID-19 crisis, reduced emissions and improvements in air quality have been reported and it is estimated that global CO₂ emissions for 2020 will decline by 8%.¹³ According to UNWTO/ITF research released in December 2019, the tourism sector is set to increase its CO₂ emissions by at least 25% by 2030¹⁴ and therefore the need to transform tourism operations for climate action continues to be of utmost importance for the sector to remain in line with international goals.

- **Monitor and report CO₂ emissions from tourism operations:** Strengthening the measurement and disclosure of CO₂ emissions from tourism and promoting the introduction of science-based targets is necessary for the sector to effectively contribute to the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement. Developing monitoring mechanisms that would allow destinations to understand CO₂ emissions across the value chain and the CO₂ implications of investments has potential to trigger a shift towards climate-aware tourism development.
- **Accelerate the decarbonization of tourism operations:** Enhancing mitigation efforts in the tourism sector, including through investments to develop low-carbon transportation options and greener infrastructure, is key to resilience. It shall

also be seen a competitive advantage as the cost of inaction with regards to climate will be in the long run larger than the cost of any other crisis. Additionally, a growing number of consumers are demanding that the tourism sector takes responsibility for its CO₂ emissions and would like to take part of these efforts.¹⁵ Small and medium-sized businesses would need technical and financial support to accomplish such transition.

- **Engage the tourism sector in carbon removal:** Supporting the engagement of the tourism sector in adaptation to climate change and carbon removal, through both natural and technological methods is necessary. The use of natural systems for carbon removal through the restoration of high carbon density ecosystems as well as engaging with carbon removal technologies would be necessary if the sector is to cut emissions by 50% by 2030 to remain in line with the IPCC's most recent recommendations¹⁶, and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

13 <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2020>

14 <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284416660>

15 <https://skift.com/skf-magazine-2019/>

16 <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>



#ResponsibleRecovery for Prosperity

Circular economy:

The COVID-19 crisis has raised awareness of the importance of local supply chains and the need to rethink how goods and services are produced and consumed, both key elements of a circular economy. Integrating circularity and further advancing resource efficiency in the tourism value chain represent an opportunity for the tourism sector to embrace a sustainable and resilient growth pathway.

- **Invest in transforming tourism value chains:** Circular economy processes such as reducing and reusing (user to user), repairing, refurbishing and remanufacturing (user to business) and recycling and repurposing (business to business) can reduce economic leakages in the tourism value chain as well as waste and pollution.¹⁷ Supporting the integration of circular economy processes in tourism can promote innovation, the creation of new sustainable business models, added value for customers and local economic development. The efficient use of energy and water are essential measures.
- **Prioritize sustainable food approaches for circularity:** Food represents an entry point for circularity in tourism value chains through sustainable procurement (local and organic sourcing, sourcing from market surplus or collective procurement), sustainable menus

(including healthy and plant-rich dishes) and food waste and loss reduction and management. Mainstreaming food loss and waste reduction in tourism has potential to support the recovery of small and large businesses as it presents an opportunity to reduce costs and improve efficiency while curbing CO₂ emissions.

- **Shift towards a circularity of plastics in tourism:** Addressing plastic waste and pollution can be a catalyser of circularity in tourism through the elimination of unnecessary plastics, integrating reuse models safely, engaging the value chain to advance the use of recyclable and compostable plastics and collaborating to increase recycling rates for plastics.¹⁸ Supporting the shift towards a circularity of plastics can reduce marine litter and plastic pollution, preserve the attractiveness of destinations and trigger multi-stakeholder precompetitive collaboration on topics such as waste management at destination level, which in turn can have a positive effect on health.

Governance and finance:

During the COVID-19 crisis, the exchange of information across levels of government, the private sector and internationally has been crucial for decision making and managing the pandemic. Capitalising on lessons learned will be key to implement recovery plans efficiently and enhance global resilience. More inclusive and smart destination mana-

¹⁷ <https://buildingcircularity.org/>

¹⁸ <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/global-tourism-plastics-initiative>



gement and partnerships can lead the way for sustainability to play a pivotal role in the recovery of tourism.

- **Measure beyond economic impacts:** Generating regular and timely data to support decision making towards sustainability in tourism is crucial for the recovery to be aligned with ambitions on resource efficiency, climate change and biodiversity as well as to ensure that the needs of host communities, including public health, are well integrated in destination management. Digital technologies can assist these efforts. Measuring beyond the economic performance of tourism is essential to mobilise green stimulus, financial support and investments.
- **Steer recovery funds towards better tourism:** Financing for the recovery of tourism should strive to balance the urgent support needed for business

survival, job retention and the restart of tourism operations with longer-term goals such as the protection of ecosystems and climate change which not only underpin the global economy but also offer opportunities for creating green and decent jobs. Innovative financing solutions and blended public-private approaches would be needed.

- **Consolidate partnerships for implementation:** Successfully transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient tourism model will largely depend on public private collaboration and partnerships. Enhancing collaboration between key stakeholders along the tourism value chain, internationally and at destination level as well as prioritizing inclusive participatory approaches is crucial to ensure an efficient implementation of recovery plans.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT A #RESPONSIBLERECOVERY TO #BUILDBACKBETTER TOURISM

Visit <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/tourism-covid-19> to learn about initiatives from partners that can support a responsible recovery for people, planet and prosperity.



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