Flagship initiatives

Executive summary

In the Draft Programme of Work for 2024-2025 (document A/25/4(c)), the Secretary-General makes mention to flagship initiatives, in which UNWTO Members and partners are invited to join, on a voluntary basis, in order to further strengthen the programme of work of the Organization.

The present complementary report gives further details on each of these 15 flagship initiatives.
I. Introduction

1. In document A/25/4(c), the Secretary-General presents a draft programme of work for the biennium 2024-2025. In such draft, mention is made to special initiatives, called flagship initiatives, that are proposed to members and partners for collaboration.

2. Such initiatives, some of which are newly designed, are available on a voluntary basis and aim at further strengthening the outputs and impacts of the programme of work of the Organization.

3. They are listed below and further detailed in the present document, under each priority of the programme of work:

   (a) **Priority 1**: Enhance competitiveness: robust tourism statistics and UN standards, data and market intelligence, rethink destination positioning, and product development;

   (b) **Priority 2**: Foster sustainability and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture;

   (c) **Priority 3**: Invest in people: reinforce education and training, strengthen human capital for decent work;

   (d) **Priority 4**: Boost investment & scale up innovation: access to finance, accelerate the uptake of new business models; and

   (e) **Priority 5**: Build better and strong institutions: tourism policy, governance and resilience.
Annex: Flagships under the different Priorities of the Organization for 2024-2025

Priority 1: Enhance competitiveness: robust tourism statistics and UN standards, data and market intelligence, rethink destination positioning, and product development
  1.I.1. World Tourism Report
  1.I.2. UNWTO Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme

Priority 2: Foster sustainability and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture
  2.L.1. One Planet Sustainable Tourism
  2.L.2. Piloting implementation of One Planet action frameworks at country level upon request from member States
  2.L.3. Tourism Transition towards NetZero Emissions
  2.L.4. UN NetZero Facility
  2.L.5. Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)
  2.L.6. ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses

Priority 3: Invest in people: reinforce education and training, strengthen human capital for decent work
  3.J.1. International Academies in collaboration with UNWTO
  3.J.2. UNWTO Education Toolkit for High Schools and technical assistance
  3.J.3. Bachelor of Science in International Sustainable Tourism

Priority 4: Boost investment & scale up innovation: access to finance, accelerate the uptake of new business models
  4.H.2. UNWTO Digital Futures for SMEs Programme

Priority 5: Build better and strong institutions: tourism policy, governance and resilience
  5.H.1. Tourism Law Observatories
  5.H.2. TIPS - Toolkit of Indicators for Projects
Priority 1: Enhance competitiveness: robust tourism statistics and UN standards, data and market intelligence, rethink destination positioning, and product development

1.1.1. World Tourism Report

1. The World Tourism report will be the first Index to measure Tourism Performance and Policies at national level on the three dimensions of Sustainability becoming a global reference to measure and benchmark tourism worldwide.

2. In line with existing flagship reports by other UN agencies and international organizations this report will:
   a) Benchmark countries’ tourism performance and policy progress
   b) Identify global tourism trends and foresight
   c) Guide countries and businesses to transform governance and policy frameworks as well as business models.

3. The development of this report includes the creation and development by UNWTO of a wide range of new indicators for tourism progressing the analysis of the correlation between tourism data and relevant economic, social and environmental data at national and regional level.

4. It will create a first holistic approach to tourism analysis by bringing together performance and policies to build an assessment of countries’ competitiveness, sustainability, inclusion and resilience in tourism.
1. Introduction and Background

Tourism is a lifeline for many rural communities and has a unique capacity to provide new opportunities to generate jobs, progress territorial cohesion, promote and protect natural and cultural resources as well as empower women and youth. The major impact that COVID-19 had on tourism represents both a challenge and an opportunity to advance the role of the sector in rural communities. While some rural destinations were particularly affected by the decline in demand, in the post COVID-19 context, travellers’ interest in new experiences around nature, local culture and products and community engagement, offers immense opportunities for supporting rural communities. UNWTO designated 2020 the ‘Year of Tourism and Rural Development’ and, on the occasion of the 2020 World Tourism Day on this same theme launched the ‘UNWTO Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development’. These recommendations outline the key steps necessary to fully harness the potential and resilience of tourism to drive inclusive, resilient and sustainable development in rural areas.

Also, in 2020, under the Saudi Presidency of the G20, UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group developed the ‘AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism’ to promote tourism as an effective tool for community empowerment and a sustainable future.

Against this backdrop, UNWTO created the Tourism for Rural Development Programme with a vision to make tourism a driver of rural development and wellbeing. The Programme is implemented around four main axes:

- Advocacy and outreach: Advocating for the role that tourism can have in rural development.
- Skills development: Strengthening capacities and skills of relevant stakeholders in rural areas.
- Knowledge creation: Creating, exchanging, and disseminating knowledge for effective evidence-based policy making and tourism management.
- On the ground projects: Working with Member States and actors on the ground in implementing innovative approaches.

2. The Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme (T4RD-SGP)

2.1 Rationale

Rural areas face increasing challenges, including depopulation, ageing, lower income levels, decline in traditional economic activities, gaps in infrastructure, health and financial services and the digital divide. Important improvements have been achieved in recent decades to close gaps between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the current trend shows that by 2030 some of them will persist, maintaining rural areas behind their urban counterparts.

Lack of opportunities lead to depopulation and ageing rural societies

Rural populations have less access to economic opportunities and social protection, particularly youth and women. Approximately 80% of individuals living in poverty are concentrated in rural areas while most of the 1.8 billion young people live in rural areas of low and middle-income countries. Youth in rural communities are three times more likely to...
be unemployed than adults and also more likely to be poor. Youth unemployment causes migration to cities, harming rural communities, often irreversibly. Urbanization is a prevalent trend across the world and population in rural areas is decreasing. In 1950, 70% of the world population lived in rural areas, by 2050 population in rural areas is expected to account only for 32%. As young people leave to find work and better opportunities in cities, rural communities are increasingly ageing and left behind.

When compared to urban environments, rural areas also have less access to basic services, infrastructure, and connectivity. These disparities have significant implications for the quality of life and the economic opportunities available to rural populations. The share of the population with no access to safely managed drinking water tops 40% in rural areas while less than half of the rural population has access to safely managed sanitation coverage. The number of people with no electricity is five times higher in rural areas compared to cities, and access to the digital world is almost half in rural compared to urban areas, with 39% of rural population accessing internet compared to a 76% in cities.

Tourism, a driver of rural development

Rural areas also host invaluable cultural and natural heritage, the conservation and promotion of which is often under threat. Traditional economic and cultural systems are put at risk by depopulation, biodiversity loss and climate change. In extreme cases, land abandoned due to migration can be affected by erosion, causing an altered landscape and the potential loss of a sense of place.

Tourism, when managed sustainably, can be an effective means of maintaining the viability and sustainability of local communities by providing socio-economic opportunities for rural people and advance cultural and natural conservation. It has the capacity to create jobs, promote and protect natural and cultural resources as well as empower women and youth. It can help with increasing the attractiveness and vitality of rural areas, mitigating demographic challenges, reducing migration, and promoting a range of local resources and traditions while upholding the essence of rural life. It can also celebrate a territory’s values, often the core of the travel experience, in an active way so as to preserve both tangible and intangible heritage and complement the existing economic activities of these territories.

Tourism can create new economic and social opportunities in rural areas, increasing motivation for people to stay or even migrate to rural areas. Tourism in rural areas can also benefit women (who make up 54% of the workforce in the tourism sector compared to 39% for the whole economy), youth, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups. Tourism can encourage governments to promote investment in infrastructure in order to improve the well-being of rural communities and the visitor experience. Tourism can also stimulate education and skills development, bringing training opportunities closer to rural areas.

The post COVID-19 context presents an opportunity for countries to reverse the negative trends in rural areas, mitigate territorial disparities and capitalize on the power of tourism to

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8 Ibid.
9 United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2021), Tackling inequalities in public service coverage to “build forward better” for the rural poor. Policy brief by the HLCP Inequalities Task Team, UN, New York, available at: https://unsceb.org
make the transition to a more balanced, holistic and people-centred growth and sustainable development. The acceleration of the digital transformation, the rise of remote working and distance learning, together with an increasing demand from travellers for more authentic, culturally-aware and nature-based experiences, offer great opportunities to ‘build back better’ and make tourism a resilient and inclusive source of income, decent jobs and wellbeing for rural communities, preserving their culture and the surrounding environment.

**The Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme (T4RD-SGP)**

In light of the challenges posed to rural communities and recognizing the role of tourism in driving sustainable development in rural areas, the UNWTO Secretariat proposes the creation of a Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme (T4RD-SGP) in line with the fourth line of action of the Tourism for Rural Development Programme (on the ground projects).

Though financial support initiatives that invest in rural programmes are widely available at the regional and global levels, UNWTO has the opportunity to capitalize on its comparative advantage as the UN Specialized Agency with a mandate in tourism, by developing a mechanism that addresses rural development challenges exclusively focusing on tourism as a driver of sustainable development.

### 2.2 Objectives

The T4RD-SGP aims to provide direct support to not-for-profit organizations in rural areas in the development of innovative approaches and solutions, at community level, that foster tourism as a driver of rural development and wellbeing.

In line with the fundamental aim of UNWTO\(^\text{12}\) - the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms with a particular attention to the interests of the developing countries in the field of tourism – the T4RD-SGP aspires to:

- Encourage the preservation and promotion of local cultural heritage.
- Foster sustainable tourism practices and environmental conservation.
- Improve the quality and attractiveness of tourism offerings in rural communities.
- Enhance the tourism infrastructure and facilities in rural regions.
- Promote community empowerment and engagement in tourism planning and development.
- Advance capacity and skills development.
- Strengthen the institutional framework, and
- Contribute to the overall development and well-being of rural communities, especially among vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In advancing the above, the T4RD-SGP will contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** 1 on poverty alleviation, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 12 on responsible production and consumption.

### 2.3 Final Beneficiaries

The final beneficiaries of the T4RD-SGP will be local communities in rural areas, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, indigenous communities and people with disabilities.

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2.4 Programmatic Areas of Action

The T4RD-SGP is built around four areas of action in line with the AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Area 1 - Empower (PEOPLE):** This area focuses on providing rural individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to reach their full potential. It may include initiatives related to education, and capacity building, as well as promoting gender equality and social inclusion. The goal of empowerment is to create more equitable and sustainable societies by enabling individuals and communities to shape their own futures in a sustainable way.

**Area 2 - Safeguard (PLANET):** This area focuses on promoting and protecting natural resources and cultural heritage in rural areas. It may include initiatives related to environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. This area aims to ensure that conservation efforts are carried out in a responsible and sustainable manner, considering the needs and rights of local communities and indigenous peoples while enhancing the tourism experience. It also includes measures to address the impacts of climate change and other environmental risks on ecosystems, biodiversity, and cultural heritage.

**Area 3 - Prosper (PROSPERITY):** This area focuses on promoting economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneurship. It can include initiatives related to trade, investment, infrastructure development, quality, and private sector development, including product development, marketing, innovation and sustainable business practices. The goal of prosperity is to create more inclusive and sustainable economies that benefit all members of society in rural areas, particularly those who are marginalized and/or disadvantaged.

**Area 4 - Collaborate (PARTNERSHIPS):** This area focuses on fostering collaboration and partnerships among different stakeholders. It may include initiatives related to public-private partnerships, civil society engagement, knowledge sharing, and institutional strengthening. The goal of collaboration is to create more effective and sustainable solutions to complex social and environmental challenges by bringing together diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources.

The T4RD-SGP will encourage projects that fall under any of the areas or that are transversal and cross-cutting to the four areas. The scope of the previous will be detailed in each call for proposals.
2.5 Geographical Areas of Operation (Eligible Countries)

The T4RD-SGP will target beneficiaries located in UNWTO Member States, with a particular focus on countries included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients\(^\text{14}\) at the time of the call for proposals.

The list of eligible countries will be included in each call for proposals.

Member States that, at the time of application, are under the provisions of Article 34 of the Statutes\(^\text{15}\) and/or Paragraph 13 of the Financing Rules\(^\text{16}\) for accumulated arrears in the payment of their assessed contributions will not be considered as eligible countries unless otherwise decided by the Governing Bodies of the Organization.

If, a Member State falls under either of the aforementioned provisions awarded projects for such Member State will be excluded from funding unless otherwise decided by the Governing Bodies of the Organization.

In case the project is already under implementation, the agreement with the grantee will be suspended for such period until the Member State falls out of either of the aforementioned provisions unless otherwise decided by the Governing Bodies of the Organization.

Projects to be implemented in a territory that is the subject of a dispute, of sovereignty or other, before the United Nations will not be considered.

2.6 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are civil society or non-governmental organizations legally established in an eligible country. As per the United Nations definition: “A civil society organization (CSO) or non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level”\(^\text{17}\).

The detailed list of eligible applicants will be included in each call for proposals.

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\(^{13}\) World Tourism Organization (2020), AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422159

\(^{14}\) According to OECD classification for reporting on aid (reviewed every 3 years). Source: OECD


\(^{17}\) A civil society organization (CSO) or non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level. The UN and Civil Society | United Nations
Business sector entities\textsuperscript{18}, governmental organizations (i.e. national and regional governments, municipalities, public agencies, etc.), individuals, as well as quasi-governmental entities, are not eligible.

2.7 Project Duration

The implementation phase of the technical activities of the projects may vary between 12 to 18 months.

3. Governance and Management

The governance of the T4RD-SGP comprises the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Functions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>UNWTO Secretary General or a designated</td>
<td>Provide strategic vision and planning in line with UNWTO mandate, aims</td>
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<td>Representative (Chair)</td>
<td>and priorities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Representative(s) of Donors</td>
<td>Oversee the implementation and development of the T4RD-SGP.</td>
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<td>Provide strategic leadership on outreach and resource mobilization.</td>
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<td>Decide on the acceptance of funding from non-State actors, following due</td>
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<td>diligence by the T4RD-SGP Secretariat to ensure that this is in line with</td>
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<td>the United Nations policies on the contributions from non-State actors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decide on the allocation of unearmarked funds.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approve the launch of the calls for proposals (thematics, eligible</td>
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<td>countries and applicants as well as timeline).</td>
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<td>Review and approve the list of recommended project proposals for award</td>
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<td>of the grants.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approve the list of external experts to contribute to the</td>
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\textsuperscript{18} “Either for-profit, and commercial enterprises or businesses; or business associations and coalitions (cross-industry, multi-issue groups; cross industry, issue-specific initiatives; industry-focused initiative); including but not limited to corporate philanthropic foundations”, Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector, United Nations Global Compact, 2015. https://unglobalcompact.org/library/3431
### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the **technical body** of the T4RD-SGP.

It ensures the technical standards, impartiality, and transparency of the implementation of the T4RD-SGP, including the evaluation process of the project proposals for award of the grants.

- **UNWTO Executive Director responsible for Tourism for Rural Development (Chair)**
- UNWTO officials (at least one) from each of the following departments:
  1. Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness (TMIC),
  2. Regional Departments of regions that cover the countries eligible in each of the calls for applications or that cover Member States that act as donors for such calls
  3. Institutional Relations and Partnerships (IRP) and
  4. Technical Cooperation and Silk Road (TCSR).

Other UNWTO departments can be invited as required

- Advise the Board on the allocations of unearmarked funds.
- Revise and approve all documents for each call for proposals, following the decision of the Board.
- Identify and propose to the Board a group of a maximum five (5) external experts to contribute to the evaluation of proposals under each call and to provide other technical advice.
- Prepare the Terms of Reference of the External Experts.
- Review and evaluate project proposals.
- Propose to the Board the list of recommended project proposals for award of the grants.
- Review and validate reporting prepared by the T4RD-SGP Secretariat and advise the Board.
- Perform the overall monitoring and evaluation of the T4RD-SGP, including the management by the Secretariat.

### Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for the operational management of the T4RD-SGP.

- The Secretariat of the T4RD-SGP sits at the UNWTO Secretariat within the Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness and operates with the support of the other UNWTO Departments when applicable and as per their regular functions.

- Operational management of the Programme, including:
  - Draft the documents for each of the calls for proposals.
  - Overall administrative management, in collaboration with UNWTO Secretariat departments.
  - Perform due diligence on non-State actors for potential contributions.
The Terms of Reference of the Board, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat will be presented to the UNWTO Executive Council. These Terms of Reference will guide the governance of the T4RD-SGP in its pilot phase.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: The Theory of Change and the Impact on the SDGs

Monitoring and evaluation are critical components for the T4RD-SGP. Effective monitoring and evaluation will be essential to ensure the Programme achieves its goals and objectives, to identify areas for improvement and assess its overall impact. The T4RD-SGP will include a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework both for the Programme and for individual projects. The framework will be based on the Theory of Change and the “Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Tourism – Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs)”19

5. T4RD-SGP Funding

The T4RD-SGP will be fully funded from voluntary contributions, with no cost imposed on UNWTO’s regular budget.

All calls for proposals will be launched upon availability of funds.

The financial sustainability of the T4RD-SGP requires a relevant, stable and diverse source of funding. Building on the impact of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Initiative20 and the growing importance of acting local to support community development, the UNWTO Secretariat will work to build strong and innovative partnerships, strategically engaging a broad range of stakeholders, namely UN agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector to secure appropriate, additional resources.

UNWTO Member States are strongly encouraged to consider engaging as donors in the T4RD-SGP.

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19 World Tourism Organization (2023), Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Tourism – Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs), UNWTO, Madrid, https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424344

20 The Best Tourism Villages initiative recognizes the villages which are an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination with recognized natural and cultural assets that preserve and promote the rural and community-based values, products and lifestyle and have a clear commitment for sustainability. For more information visit https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/
UNWTO will conclude agreements with donors in accordance with UNWTO Financial Regulations and Rules.

6. T4RD-SGP Sustainability

Sustainability is of paramount importance for the T4RD-SGP as to ensure its long-term success, impact, and effective contribution to rural development globally.

Operational sustainability: The operational sustainability focuses on the T4RD-SGP’s ability to effectively manage its resources, activities, and operations in a sustainable manner. This includes efficient utilization of funds, effective project management, and the development of robust systems and processes of implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Impact sustainability: Impact sustainability refers to the long-term impact of the T4RD-SGP as well as its interventions. It involves ensuring that the projects implemented have the desired and lasting benefits for the local communities, economies, and environments and that the T4RD-SGP meets its objectives.

Scalability: Developing a scalable approach is essential to ensure that successful initiatives and projects can be expanded to other communities and regions. This may involve developing toolkits or guidebooks that outline best practices and lessons learned, and that can be used by other communities to develop and implement their own rural tourism development initiatives.

7. T4RD-SGP Application and Award Process

7.1 Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the T4RD-SGP, applicants within the meaning of Section 2.6 must meet all the following criteria:

- Have legal personality, be legally established in and have the ability to operate within the territory of the country where the project is proposed to be implemented.
- Present a project to be implemented in one of the eligible countries within the meaning of Section 2.5 (the list of eligible countries will be included in each of the call for proposal).
- Be operative for the last three years.
- Not being currently the beneficiary of another T4RD-SGP grant in the same country.
- Financial capacity: have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the project is being implemented and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity: have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project.

Applicants will be requested to provide all the necessary documentation proving the above criteria.

Applications that do not meet the above criteria shall not be considered for evaluation.

Non-eligibility criteria

Applicants are ineligible to apply when falling under any of the following categories:

- Be located in a territory that is the subject of a dispute, of sovereignty or other, before the United Nations, or their activity is related to such territory.
- Be included within the following ineligibility lists of the United Nations: such as UN Ineligibility List (link) and the UN Security Council Sanctions List (link).
- Have an actual or potential conflict of interest.
- Reported as having committed, or under investigation for alleged, fraud or misconduct.
- Assessed with an overall high-risk rating in the due diligence exercise.
• Be in a situation of exclusion from participating in contracts foreseen by the applicable national legislation.
• Be bankrupt, liquidated or administered by the courts.

Projects that have been awarded will be excluded from grant signature in case:
- The Government of the country of implementation of the awarded project does not undertake to apply to UNWTO and its personnel the provisions of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (1947) or the mandatory security standards required by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) (template to be provided by the T4RD-SGP Secretariat).

7.2 Eligible Countries

The list of eligible countries will be defined in each of the calls for proposals in line with 2.5.

7.3 Eligible Applicants

The list of eligible applicants will be defined in each of the calls for proposals in line with 2.6.

7.4 Potential Areas of Intervention

Applicants are requested to design and implement activities in such a way that bring significant added value to the T4RD-SGP and a strong contribution to the achievement of its objectives.

The complete list of specific eligible and non-eligible areas of intervention, activities and expenses will be provided in each call for proposals. Below is an example of potential areas of intervention that may be eligible for funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Areas of intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity-building and skills development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy and governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation and operation of infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market access, marketing, promotion and branding</td>
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7.5 Evaluation Criteria

The project proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
• **Relevance**: The project aligns with the mission and objectives of UNWTO and the T4RD-SGP.
• **Impact**: The project has a clear and measurable impact on the intended community.
• **Innovation**: The project uses or applies innovative approaches, tools, or knowledge in addressing practical issues or challenges in rural areas through tourism.
• **Budget**: The budget is sufficient, reasonable, and appropriate for the proposed activities.
• **Effectiveness**: The project demonstrates its ability to achieve the intended outcomes and impact through a clear, coherent, and consistent approach.
• **Feasibility**: The project is feasible and realistic given the resources (financial, human and technical) and the capacity of the applicant to implement the project, the level of community support and engagement, the regulatory and legal environment, and the potential risks and challenges associated with the project.
• **Partnerships**: The project builds partnerships and collaborations with a range of relevant stakeholders and leverages resources and expertise that help maximize benefits and ensure the scalability of the project.
• **Community involvement and empowerment**: The project integrates the local communities in the planning, development, and implementation process. This aims
to ensure that projects are aligned with the needs and priorities of local communities and that they are part of the decision-making process.

- **Governance**: The project uses multi-stakeholder approaches.
- **Inclusivity**: The project engages and benefits vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, indigenous communities and people with disabilities.
- **Sustainability**: The project activities have the potential to be continued, scaled up and/or replicated after the completion of the implementation period. Projects that provide evidence of a sustainable funding model will be prioritized to ensure long-term sustainability.

Projects to be implemented in a territory that is the subject of a dispute, of sovereignty or other, before the United Nations will not be considered.

### 7.6 Project Funding – Financial Provisions

Co-financing is mandatory in all project proposals. Project proposals shall include a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 50% co-financing of the total eligible cost of the project, either financial or in-kind. The percentage of co-financing applicable will be defined in each of the calls for proposals.

UNWTO’s grant is limited to a funding rate of between 50% and 90% of the total eligible cost of the project and up to a maximum of USD 20,000. Co-financing may also be provided by third parties proposed by the applicant. In this case, the applicant is the sole responsible towards UNWTO. Information about the third party shall be provided at the time of application, if available.

Payments will be made based on deliverables according to the grant agreement signed with the grantees and in line with UNWTO Financial Regulations and Rules.

Each call for proposals will define:
- the percentage of co-financing required.
- how the co-financing should be provided: in-kind, financial, or mix.
- the type of costs that are eligible for the financing.
- the type of costs that can be covered by the applicants’ contribution (co-financing).
- the share of subcontracting allowed.
- the way of reporting.
- how the pro-rata rule functions and will be applied at the end of the implementation.

### 7.7 Application and Award Process – steps

The application and award process of the T4RD-SGP include the following steps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>The Secretariat will announce the call for applications through various channels, such as the UNWTO website and social media, in addition to official communication to UNWTO Member States. Information sessions and video tutorials will be available for interested applicants as well as for Member States.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for applications</td>
<td>The applications shall include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Full project proposal, including a detailed project plan, budget, implementation timeline, partners and impacts among other (according to the application form to be provided in each of the calls).</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Proof and relevant documents that support for the eligibility criteria in 7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEP 2</td>
<td>The T4RD-SGP Secretariat shall perform a screening process to determine compliance with the eligibility criteria as per Section 7.1.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Eligibility assessment

Upon determination that the application is compliant, the Secretariat will request the endorsement from the Government of the Member State where the applicant is located (8.2).

STEP 3
Project evaluation

Applications that pass the eligibility assessment will be evaluated by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will be responsible for preparing a list of recommended projects to be awarded a grant for the decision of the Board.

STEP 4
Project award

The Board shall examine the recommendations of the Steering Committee and decide on the list of projects to be awarded.

Applicants whose projects have been selected will be informed accordingly by the T4RD-SGP Secretariat.

The list of awarded projects will be made public.

The Board is not obliged to accept the recommendations of the Steering Committee and thus not all projects recommended might be awarded a grant.

STEP 5
Grant agreement

Subject to Section 8.3, once a project has been selected, UNWTO will enter into an agreement with the grantee.

STEP 6
Project implementation and reporting

Project implementation can be from 12 to 18 months.

The implementation of the project by grantees will include mentorship.

7.8 Estimated Timeline

The following timeline is estimated for the calls for applications processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for applications</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility assessment and letter of endorsement</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project evaluation</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Decision and Communication</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant agreement (negotiation and signature)</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical implementation of the project</td>
<td>12-18 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final reporting and approval</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The Role of Member States

8.1 In the T4RD-SGP

Member States are encouraged to engage as donors in the Programme.

8.2 In the application process

Member States will be invited to actively promote and disseminate the calls for proposals when their countries are included in the list of eligible countries for the call.
Each applicant must be endorsed by the Government of the Member State in which the project is implemented. To that effect, Members States will be requested by the Secretariat to issue an endorsement letter, mandatory for the application process, whereby they ascertain that the applicant meets with the criteria set out in 7.1. The Guidelines for States on Criteria for Support of Affiliate Members\textsuperscript{21} will apply mutatis mutandis in terms of endorsement, responsibilities of Member States and possible withdrawal of the endorsement to the applicant.

8.3 In the signature of the grant agreement

Pursuant to Article 32 of the Statutes, UNWTO Member States are bound to accord to it the necessary privileges and immunities to facilitate its ability to fulfil its mandate efficiently and effectively in their respective territories. Consequently, in order to sign the agreement with the grantee, the Government of the State of implementation of an awarded project shall undertake in writing to apply to UNWTO and its personnel that the provisions of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (1947) as well as the mandatory security standards required by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

Failure to undertake this commitment will lead to non-signature of the grant agreement with the awarded applicant.

9. Communication and Outreach

UNWTO will maximize the visibility of the T4RD-SGP and of individual projects through a comprehensive, tailor-made outreach and communication plan. The objectives of the plan are to facilitate effective and efficient communication and engagement with the various audiences having a major stake in the T4RD-SGP, provide visibility to the T4RD-SGP outputs, outcomes and impact, and demonstrate how key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, donors and UNWTO work together to achieve the Programme results.

10. The Way Forward

The T4RD-SGP is proposed to be rolled out with a phased approach, starting with a pilot phase in order to test the feasibility, viability, scalability and sustainability of the same, including its governance, management, and overall implementation framework.

Building on the principles of relevance and adaptability, the initiative can be then adjusted based on lessons learned during the pilot phase.

It is proposed to roll out the pilot phase in 2024-2026 provided funding is available. Upon conclusion of the pilot phase a detailed report and proposed action plan will be submitted to the Governing Bodies. The Executive Council will oversee the implementation of the pilot phase and take any decisions as necessary in regard to the T4RD-SGP in between sessions of the General Assembly.

Priority 2: Foster sustainability and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture

2.L.1. One Planet Sustainable Tourism

BACKGROUND

5. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme is one of the six programmes of the One Planet network. The network operates with a mandate of the United Nations General Assembly to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 and guided by the Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production 2030 which identifies tourism as a high impact sector.

6. UNWTO has been leading the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme since 2015 and through its implementation it sets the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) agenda in the tourism sector to advance SDG12 as well as connected goals such as SDG 13, SDG 14 and SDG 15, respectively on climate action and the protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

OBJECTIVE

7. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme aims to accelerate SCP in tourism to address the challenges of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. It operates as a multi-stakeholder partnership which promotes knowledge sharing and networking and provides guidance and recommendations to address collective priorities.

8. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme currently focuses on accelerating climate action and circularity in the tourism sector through three main areas of intervention:

- Accelerating climate action in tourism: The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism is uniting over 800 tourism organizations from more than 90 countries to accelerate climate action in tourism through the development of climate action plans focusing on measurement, decarbonization, regeneration, collaboration and finance.
- Building a circular economy of plastics in tourism: The Global Tourism Plastics Initiative is tackling plastic pollution at the source and has mobilized 200 tourism organizations (mainly businesses) to eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastics, integrate reuse models and collaborate with suppliers and waste contractors to better manage plastics.
- Transforming food value chains in tourism: The Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism promotes the uptake of strategies to reduce food waste and its associated economic, social and environmental costs through prevention, redistribution and circular processes, and also as a lever for more sustainable food management.

COLLABORATION

9. Following the Decision of 117th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council (CE/117/DEC), UNWTO was reconfirmed as the Lead of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme for the period 2023 – 2024.

10. There are opportunities for Member States and Associate Members to guide and support the implementation of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme by becoming Co-Leads.

11. The main role of a Co-Lead is to support the coordination of the programme implementation, including one full time dedicated staff to be managed by UNWTO in support of the Coordination Desk of the programme, as well as an additional annual financial and/or in-kind contribution to support the operational work of the programme.
2.L.2. Piloting implementation of One Planet action frameworks at country level upon request from member States

BACKGROUND

12. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme supports the integration of circular economy principles and practices as a pathway to decouple tourism operations from environmental degradation. Research conducted in 2019 identified only 13 national tourism policies (out of 131 reviewed) making reference to the concept of a circular economy.

13. In 2020, the One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery prioritized two “entry points” to accelerate change, namely: Addressing plastic pollution, and; Promoting a more sustainable management of food.

OBJECTIVE

14. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme aims to further support the shift towards more circular tourism operations and policies through capacity building, advocacy and outreach, as well as strategic recommendations.

15. As part of the implementation of its work on addressing plastic pollution, the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme has developed the following guiding materials:
   - Plastic Procurement Recommendations
   - Plastic Measurement Methodology for Accommodation Providers
   - Guidance for the identification of reusable alternatives
   - Guidance for addressing plastic pollution without compromising health and safety

16. As part of the implementation of its work on the sustainable management of food, the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme has developed the following guiding materials:
   - Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism
   - Series of Online Trainings on sustainable food management
   - Awareness Raising Toolkit on Sustainable Food Management

COLLABORATION

17. Promoting systemic approaches to implement circular solutions appears essential to address complex challenges. Undertaking interventions in tourism destinations could lead to the identification of the most appropriate solutions, key stakeholders and respective roles.

18. For instance:
   - Capacity building materials and trainings could be tailored to address knowledge gaps and enable policy makers and tourism workers to take action.
   - Advocacy and outreach activities could support enhanced awareness and engagement of tourism stakeholders, as well as destination positioning.
   - Value chain workshops could involve suppliers (of food and/or plastics) and waste contractors in the identification of challenges and solutions.
   - Policy recommendations could support the development of policy instruments to support the shift towards a circular economy of plastics and food in tourism.

19. Building on the existing guideline materials, there are opportunities for Member States and Associate Members to request technical assistance in connection to plastic pollution and sustainable food.
2.L.3. Tourism Transition towards NetZero Emissions

BACKGROUND

20. The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism proposes a coordinated plan for the tourism sector to raise its climate ambition and support the global goals of achieving net zero by 2050, thereby contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Research released in 2019 by UNWTO and ITF pointed out that, in a business as usual scenario, tourism emissions will increase by at least 25% by 2030 and called for accelerated action.

21. The Glasgow Declaration operates as a voluntary initiative and since its official launch at COP26 UN Climate Conference in November 2021, over 800 tourism organizations from more than 90 countries have become signatories. By becoming signatories, organizations across the tourism value chain (including government and institutional agencies; donors and financial institutions; civil society; the private sector; and academia) agree to implement the following commitments:

- Support the global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050
- Deliver climate action plans within 12 months from becoming signatories (or updating existing plans)
- Align plans with five pathways, namely measure, decarbonize, regenerate, collaborate and finance
- Report publicly on an annual basis on progress achieved implementing their plans
- Work in a collaborative spirit, sharing good practices and solutions

22. Between 2019 and 2022, the references to tourism in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) increased from 42% to 53%, showing the potential to support climate action. During the same period, the references to climate action in national tourism policies also increased from 42% to 62%. Nevertheless, such references are not yet actionable enough for tourism stakeholders to scale up the implementation of climate action.

OBJECTIVE

23. UNWTO is overseeing the implementation of the Glasgow Declaration and providing support to its signatories for the implementation of commitments. In March 2023, the Overview of Tools and Methodologies to Measure GHG Emissions was released. There is additional guidance addressing National Tourism Administrations and tourism destinations in the pipeline.

24. During the first round of reporting by Glasgow Declaration signatories, which was conducted between January and June 2023, over 200 climate action plans were received from signatories. Out of the Launch Partners (i.e. those who joined the initiative by the end of 2021), around 40% submitted a climate action plan, while 35% requested extensions or voiced impediments and knowledge gaps which are delaying the process of preparation of their first climate action plan.

COLLABORATION

25. Removing the barriers to access knowledge for tourism stakeholders appears fundamental for the development of climate action plans aligned with five pathways: Measure, Decarbonize, Regenerate, Collaborate and Finance.

26. There are opportunities for Member States and Associate Members to request technical assistance in connection capacity building for a variety of tourism stakeholders and the development of climate action plans.
2.L.4. UN NetZero Facility

UN NetZero Fund
A Tourism Facility, led by UNWTO

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

27. Tourism is forecasted to continue growing considerably in the years to come. While this growth, which is faster than that of the world economy or international trade growth, provides excellent opportunities to create jobs and to spread prosperity, it presents challenges and potential threats to the environment and local communities if not well managed.

28. It is therefore essential to decouple tourism’s growth from environmental degradation and to embrace participatory governance models that involve host communities and help drive the socio-economic inclusion and the empowerment of traditionally marginalized groups through our sector.

29. Accelerating climate action in tourism, in particular, strengthening the adaptive capacity of the sector to climate direct and induced impacts, is therefore of utmost importance for the resilience of the sector.

30. UNWTO has the ambition to create a UN NetZero (Tourism) Facility and Ecosystem, leveraging on a unique alliance of the United Nations system to lead the change at global and national level, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Equity Funds to support the green funding required; International Organizations (IOs), Development Partners and the Private Sector at large to support both transformation as well as funding for reaching NetZero emission levels for tourism.

31. The flagship initiative UN NetZero Fund - A Tourism Facility, led by UNWTO thus contributes to the implementation of UNWTO’s Programmatic Priority 2: Foster sustainability, and inclusiveness: circularity, climate action, and biodiversity. Reduce inequalities and promote culture.

OBJECTIVE

32. UNWTO is committed to accelerate progress towards Decarbonizing Tourism Globally, empowering businesses and policy makers to reach a NetZero Carbon emission for the Tourism sector - recognizing Tourism's commitment to international climate goals and the Paris Agreement.

33. The flagship initiative aims at accelerating the decarbonization of tourism, through adaptation and mitigation, by engaging the tourism sector in carbon removal.

34. The Facility framework will be using grants for advisory services to de-risk the pull for scalable investments, building a blended finance model of Aid for Impact.

INTENDED OUTPUTS

35. Unlocking innovative financing will be key to enable tourism transformation.

36. UNWTO will fully engage in Climate Action deploying an innovative financing mechanism and ecosystem, in response to COP26 resolutions in 2021 in Glasgow, based on the
Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism which provides the framework support and accelerate adaptation and mitigation policy changes and help the sector to adopting sustainable consumption and production models – decarbonize, regenerate, measure, finance, cooperate.

37. Therefore, the flagship initiative will create a facility to secure grants for de-risking investment unlock innovative investment opportunities and scalable funding.

ROADMAP - KEY ACTIONS

38. A detailed timeline with specific milestones and tasks for each component will be developed. This initiative will encompass several key components, each supported by a diverse set of actions, such as:

- Develop the UN NetZero Tourism Facility narrative – Concept note, Theory of change, Governance of the facility.
- Build a UN alliance in tourism – to scale up implementation of NetZero growth models for tourism, and other sectors to drive change.
- Mobilize IFIs - Global and Regional – to secure public and private funding and investment required towards NetZero Tourism governance and competitiveness.
- Promote UN NetZero Tourism Facility to countries and businesses – securing commitment for Carbon offsetting - Funding for Climate Action and building a Carbon Bank for tourism.
- Establish the UN NetZero Tourism Facility, a multi-partners pooled funding mechanism.

BENEFICIARIES

39. The main beneficiaries of the initiative outputs are developing countries that could benefit of funding through grants for projects proved to be fully in line with Glasgow Declaration for Tourism Climate Action.

40. The funding made available will also promote the development of adaptation and Mitigation policies, an UN ESG Tourism Framework, tools for decarbonizing hotels & cruise ships, waste/plastic management for hotel and cruise ships, regenerative communities, R&D
2.L.5. Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)

41. The global programme on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST), led by UNWTO, responds to the urgent need for guidance to produce more credible and comparable data on the role of tourism for people, planet and prosperity.

42. In tourism and beyond, people are more aware than ever of the ability of tourism to support – or deter – progress towards sustainable development more broadly, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Stakeholders are also increasingly concerned with the sustainability of the sector itself, especially in the face of the need to build back better, and challenges like climate emergency and geopolitical conflict.

43. Well managed, tourism can create better outcomes for people, planet and prosperity. Robust data is needed to understand whether tourism is on the right track, or requires redirecting, and helps to focus efforts on those areas that matter most.

44. UNWTO’s Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) aims to provide an internationally agreed statistical framework to measure the impacts and dependencies of tourism on the economy, society and the environment.

45. MST includes five inter-related lines of work:

1. Development of a Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism;
2. Engagement and consensus-building towards a new global measurement standard for tourism;
3. Support the implementation of MST in countries and the identification of pioneering pilots and good practices;
4. Development of a set of indicators for international comparability purposes, derived from the MST Framework; and
5. Setting up of a global dataset and country data reporting processes.

46. The Statistical Framework for MST will empower policy makers and the private sector to shape innovative policies, transform business models and promote better tourism governance.

47. MST is being developed by UNWTO in partnership with leading countries, and with the support of the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Labour Organization and others. Work is being led by the Expert Group on MST composed of representatives from Tourism Ministries and National Statistical Institutes from around 40 countries covering all world regions, as well as more than 30 international and regional organizations, subnational authorities, academia and the private sector.

48. The development of the Statistical Framework has undergone numerous consultations, including on the occasion of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics, and has been fed by the work of nine research teams and over 21 discussion papers, as well as close technical guidance of the MST Editorial Board. In addition, 28 countries and subnational destinations from all regions have implemented or are in the process of implementing MST.

49. By following established UN process and a governance structure that closely involves the tourism and statistical communities, the Statistical Framework for MST will be presented to both the UNWTO General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission for its endorsement as the third UN statistical standard for tourism (following the Tourism Satellite Account and the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics, both also led by UNWTO).

50. Different policy mechanisms have recognized the need for MST to guide data production and support comparability, such as:

- the [Manila Call for Action on Measuring Sustainable Tourism](#).
• the G20 Al-Ula Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism,
• the European Parliament Resolution establishing the EU Strategy for sustainable tourism,
• the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework,
• the UN Secretary General on the occasion of the Beyond GDP report “Valuing what counts”,
• the G20 Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the SDGs and
• the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development,
• the UN Statistical Commission as well as the UNWTO Executive Council and General Assembly.

51. As a living example of going beyond GDP, MST will support the production in countries of reliable, internationally comparable data on the performance of countries and subnational tourism destinations when it comes to the sustainability of tourism.

52. All in all, MST will change the tourism landscape by providing the foundation for more robust data to ensure that tourism action on the ground really contributes to the betterment of people’s lives now and into the future.
2.L.6. ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses

54. In early 2023, UNWTO initiated the development of a harmonized ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses in partnership with the University of Oxford's SDG Impact Lab, powered by easyJet holidays. This initiative aims to consolidate existing best practices on ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and provide guidance to streamline the reporting processes while taking into account the unique requirements of the tourism sector.

55. The ESG Framework project is a natural extension of the UNWTO programme of work on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) launched in 2016 in partnership with leading countries, the United Nations Statistical Division and the International Labour Organization.

56. The primary objective of both the ESG and MST initiatives is to promote evidence-based decision making and address the need for comprehensive data that facilitates the measurement of tourism at various scales and dimensions. These Frameworks also acknowledge the significant contribution of tourism to sustainability by offering a well-structured system that encompasses its economic, environmental and social aspects.

57. Utilizing the structure of the MST, a harmonized ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses will bring several benefits, such as enhanced comparability between national and subnational levels, destinations and private sector entities, allowing businesses to effectively cater to the unique sustainability requirements of the tourism sector.

58. In essence, ESG captures all material non-financial topics that usually are not being captured by standard financial reporting. Given the direct interactions between tourism sector operators, the environment, and communities the importance of ESG in tourism cannot be overstated. In a practical sense, the importance of ESG to companies within the tourism industry can be clearly seen in areas such as customer acquisition, customer retention, managing risks and regulations, gaining access to sustainable financing or managing investor relations.

59. Tourism businesses are facing mounting pressure to address ESG concerns due to increasing regulations and industry-wide goals and its direct impact on investors and consumers, who are exerting significant influence on businesses and large corporations. In particular, investors are now seeking socially responsible investments and demanding transparency in non-financial information beyond traditional financial statements. Consumers, on the other hand, are becoming more environmentally conscious and tend to show higher satisfaction and loyalty towards companies that embrace sustainable practices. As a result, tourism companies have a direct and tangible interest in reporting ESG information.

60. By adopting ESG reporting practices, tourism businesses can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, meet regulatory requirements, attract socially responsible investors, and build stronger relationships with environmentally conscious consumers. It is an opportunity to showcase efforts by businesses in addressing environmental and social challenges, while ensuring long-term success and a joined coordinated effort towards a more sustainable and responsible tourism.
Priority 3: Invest in people: reinforce education and training, strengthen human capital for decent work

3.J.1. International Academies in collaboration with UNWTO

Brief

61. Understanding the importance of tourism education, UNWTO can partner with public and private sector stakeholders to set International Academies in collaboration with UNWTO.

62. Objective: helping Member States strengthen their tourism workforce by quality and affordable programmes thought by UNWTO suggested experts or by inviting top academic institutions in their territories.

63. Types: depending on the local needs, Academies are classified by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education:</th>
<th>Education tracks:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Vocational</td>
<td>• Hotel Operation &amp; Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managerial</td>
<td>• Hospitality Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hybrid</td>
<td>• Sustainable Destination Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64. Programmes: all Academies are expected to feature the following 3 programmes disregarding their type:

- **Online Education**
  Courses 100% online and self-paced. Final exam for obtaining a certificate.

- **Train the Trainers**
  On-site face-to-face training for teachers to become experts in a subject and be able to spread knowledge in their local contexts.

- **Offline Education**
  On-site courses and workshops on specific topics aimed at certifying skills development.

Main considerations

65. The Academies will:

- not be UN Academies or joint ventures.
- be independent bodies from UN rules.
- comply with UNWTO’s vision, strategy, and mandate.
- be set through an Agreement using the UNWTO template.

The role of UNWTO

66. The role of UNWTO:
• Involvement on the development of the strategy, vision, content, and curricula of the academic courses.
• Participating in the creation of the development strategy and plan of work of the programme.
• Provision of advice on the strategy.
• Promotion and endorsement of the activities of the project with UNWTO Member States and Affiliate Members.
• Providing internship opportunities at UNWTO for selected students.
• Dissemination of UNWTO events and activities of interest for students.
• Branding and positioning through UNWTO logo and United Nations communications network.

The role of the partner

67. The role of the partner:

• Ensure the budget to maintain the operations of the Academy at least for 5 years, including one UNWTO member of personnel to coordinate the relationship with the Academy.
• Operation of everything related to the financial, administrative, human resources, auditing, and enrolling process to assure efficiency inside the academic processes.
• Provision of the facilities where the Academy will be set up and ensure the correct operations of the programmes.
• Creation of the governing bodies in collaboration with UNWTO.
• Securing of academic permits to teach and certify students.
• Development of marketing and promotion.
• In the case of loss, capacity to bear the additional costs of the operations.

How to join?

68. Member States interested in setting their Academies are encouraged to send a Letter of Intention to the Secretary-General through the corresponding Regional Department to initiate the discussion and negotiation process. Once specifications and responsibilities are defined, parties need to sign an Agreement drafted with the UNWTO template.

69. Conditions:

• Being a UNWTO Member State with a positive balance (no arrears).
• In the case of the private sector, being a well-known brand with a positive image and strong expertise in education (University, education institution or academic-driven corporation).
• Have a strong network in the academic sector to bring elite faculty to teach and develop research programs.
3.J.2. UNWTO Education Toolkit for High Schools and technical assistance

Background

70. UNWTO now leads the production of research outputs for guiding Member States on the process of developing and implementing strategies and programmes to set tourism as an instrumental economic sector within the education, career development and job creation spheres.

71. Against this background, the Organization released the first UNWTO Tourism Education Guidelines in the 117th session of the Executive Council in Marrakesh 2022 and, by the end of the 25th session of the General Assembly in Samarkand 2023, it should have already presented the UNWTO Education Toolkit for the incorporation of tourism in high schools.

About the Toolkit

72. The UNWTO Education Toolkit for the incorporation of tourism in high schools is a compilation of leading methodologies, success cases, qualifications, and recommendations for implementing tourism as a subject in secondary education.

73. It aims to help prepare faculty and students to take full advantage of resources by academic experts. This manner, advancing on the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies for tourism future leaders.

74. For this edition, UNWTO has collaborated with three renowned academic partners: Cambridge Assessment International Education, the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), to provide learning materials for the introduction of tourism into the curricula.

75. Based on the above, the following recommendations 22 are made:

   1. **Focus on advancing within the general education track of the national system.** Member states should progress through the stages to fully deploy tourism as a high school subject.

   2. **Optimize the visibility and adoption of tourism in the international education system.** Collaborate with UNWTO academic partners to effectively promote tourism as a subject in high schools following the British, American and IB systems.

   3. **Introduce a skills-based vocational education and training (VET) programme that encourages higher education.** Develop a VET tourism education and training programme in collaboration with the industry to provide practical skills and meet industry demands.

   4. **Engage and empower key stakeholders in high schools. Raise** awareness among the Ministries of Education, local authorities, and potentially the Ministry of Employment about the benefits of the tourism sector. Ensure parents, school directors, and teachers understand career pathways and educational requirements. Engage professional tourism associations, chambers of trade/tourism, and influential organizations in the tourism industries. Provide

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22 World Tourism Organization (2023), UNWTO Education Toolkit – For the incorporation of tourism as a subject in high schools, UNWTO, Madrid. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424689.
comprehensive information and support to high school students for informed career choices.

5. **Address the gap in tourism fundamentals.** Implement strategies at the global and national levels to enhance salary competitiveness and create appealing career opportunities within the tourism sector.

### About the Technical Assistance for the implementation of the Toolkit

76. Real impact from the Toolkit will only be possible with its full implementation in specific areas. For this reason, UNWTO encourages Member States to carry out pilot projects based on the above-mentioned methodologies.

77. UNWTO will be able to design curated projects for such purpose, including but not limited to the following items:

- Diagnostic and analysis of current state
- Guidance on the introduction of a tourism subject: development of the curricula, selection of methodologies, etc.
- Facilitation of partnerships with academic institutions
- Implementation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes
- Capacity building programmes for key stakeholders
- Train the trainers programmes

### How to join?

78. Member States interested are encouraged to express their intention through their Regional Department. Preliminary calls will be carried out accordingly to be able to make an initial proposal on a case-by-case base.
3.J.3. Bachelor of Science in International Sustainable Tourism

Brief

79. UNWTO and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU) have developed the brand-new [Bachelor of Science in International Sustainable Tourism](#) and have launched it at the 118th Session of the Executive Council in Punta Cana 2023.

80. Its main objective is to provide a concrete education programme to allow future leaders to have the necessary skills for a more innovative and sustainable tourism sector.

81. It is a 3-year programme featuring UNWTO’s vision and expertise, an official Swiss Diploma, and innovative teaching methodology including modules such as Tourism Tech, Entrepreneurship in Tourism, New Business Modules, and UN Diplomacy and Tourism. Also, students will be able to enjoy the 1st year in Madrid, 6 months in remote learning, 6 months anywhere in the world for an internship, and the last year in Lucerne. First cohort is expected to start in Autumn 2024.

How to join?

82. Member States and Affiliate Members are encouraged to join through becoming partners, which means a concrete contribution to talent development in tourism, following two main manners:

**Premium Partner**

- **Funding of 5 scholarships** and giving back to society (high-quality education)
- Two premium partners maximum per region
- Commitment to tourism education and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Strong impact on talent, insights, networking, and tourism sector engagement

**Partner**

- **Funding of 2 scholarships** and giving back to society (high-quality education)
- No limits in terms of regular partners
- Commitment to tourism education and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Positive impact on tourism sector engagement

83. Member States interested are encouraged to express their intention through their Regional Department. Preliminary calls will be carried out accordingly to be able to make an initial proposal on a case-by-case base.
Priority 4: Boost investment & scale up innovation: access to finance, accelerate the uptake of new business models


Brief

84. Launched in 2022 with the aim of providing a concrete service to Member States for country-specific investment promotion both for traditional and non-traditional mechanisms, the UNWTO Tourism Doing Business – Investment Guidelines now stand as a global recognized tool for not only supporting recovery but for innovating in the way investment projects are targeted, attracted and measured.

85. They are built in-house by UNWTO personnel with direct collaboration of local authorities and include a dynamic yet comprehensive structure:

- Economic outlook
- Investments outlook
- Value proposition
- Green investments
- Competitiveness outlook, including the portfolio of projects to be prioritized by the country
- Conclusions and recommendations

86. Usually, the launch of any edition is made in the framework of a UNWTO Investment Forum or a country-hosted event.

How to join?

87. Member States interested are encouraged to express their intention through their Regional Department. Preliminary calls will be carried out accordingly to be able to make an initial proposal on a case-by-case base.
4.H.2. UNWTO Digital Futures for SMEs Programme

Brief

88. Recognizing the vital role of Small and Medium Enterprises in tourism, which make about 80% of the sector’s business tissue, as well as their vulnerability to crisis due to multiple factors including a low level of digital transformation, UNWTO launched the Digital Futures for SMEs Programme in 2022 with the main objective of providing access to free-of-charge online training and resources by global technology leaders.

89. Entrepreneurs are able to register and undertake a Diagnostic Tool, available in English, French and Arabic, that will help them decide on which Digital Paths they would need to take. Each of those paths have been curated by companies such as Amadeus, Mastercard, Telefónica, Hosco, and Ecolab-LobsterInk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Paths</th>
<th>Content and Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity</td>
<td>networking essentials, os &amp; it essentials, programable infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Growth</td>
<td>digital marketing, platforms and ecosystems, growth hacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>business strategy, digital strategy &amp; benchmarking, industry development (destination management organizations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Commerce</td>
<td>sell fundamentals, store management, smes operations</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>merchant services and payment ecosystems, point of sales, cybersecurity essentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big data and Analytics</td>
<td>cloud computing: cloud fundamentals, data storage, application integrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>artificial intelligence: machine learning services, big data &amp; analytics, artificial intelligence services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments and Security</td>
<td>payment ecosystems, cyber protection, data driven insights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to join?

90. While Digital Paths are incredibly useful tools to accelerate digital transformation, long-standing results can be achieved through more specific education methods. For this reason, Member States are encouraged to develop a Digital Futures pilot project including but not limited to:

- Preparation of a curate diagnostic tool for a specific region
- Providing analysis of the results which will allow to identify the main needs and tailor one or more digital paths
- Organizing a capacity building programme for local businesses

91. Member States interested are encouraged to express their intention through their Regional Department. Preliminary calls will be carried out accordingly to be able to make an initial proposal on a case-by-case base.

Priority 5: Build better and strong institutions: tourism policy, governance and resilience

5.H.1. Tourism Law Observatories

UNWTO Tourism Law Observatories:

Background and justification

92. In recent years, the tourism sector has experienced major structural changes at a global level related to the dynamic growth of technology and the need to mainstream environmental and climate management in the planning and management of tourism destinations.

93. These factors, alongside with other elements such as the need to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of destinations and to regulate competition between digital players and traditional tourism service providers, among others, have increased the complexity of the normative framework applicable to tourism, the so-called “Tourism Law”, progressively expanding the areas of law that directly or indirectly affect the sector.

94. As such, Tourism Law, which has gained recognition in recent years as a legal discipline, presents many complexities. On the one hand, due to its interdisciplinary character, it is composed of a cross-cutting body of public and private rules or principles that draws from Administrative Law, Commercial Law, Civil Law, Tax Law and others. On the other hand, tourism activities are not only subject to tourism-specific regulations, but also to regulations promulgated for other areas.

95. Additionally, there is a profound fragmentation of Tourism Law at the international, regional and, in some cases, also national levels, with significant disparities in tourism legislation from country to country. The unprecedented crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the lack of uniformity and the loopholes of the sector’s current legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as the need to protect tourists and to reach a more balanced share of responsibilities among all actors involved, including tourists themselves.

96. Interestingly, as part of the survey launched by the UNWTO Secretariat for the preparation of the General Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025, the need to rethink and update the overall normative framework applicable to tourism was considered a key priority by 54% of Member States, particularly with regard to revising legal frameworks on tourism resilience and recovery (28% of Member States) and climate change and associated risks (49% of Member States).

97. In this context, it becomes necessary to study and analyze, in a more systematic manner, the different legal and regulatory frameworks currently in force in order to establish a general guiding framework for achieving more efficient, coherent, and updated laws and regulations for the tourism sector and contribute to the progressive harmonization of Tourism Law, at both the regional and international levels.

98. Progress towards more compatible, transparent, updated and harmonized legal frameworks for tourism will contribute to provide greater legal certainty to both the public and private sectors, and to grant greater legal protection to tourists themselves. At the same time, it will contribute to effectively and resolutely addressing the global challenges and transformation that the sector is facing in the post COVID–19 world.

Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

Introduction

99. In the specific case of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean (‘LAC’), the existing normative framework regulating the tourism sector is highly fragmented, with significant disparities in the laws and regulations affecting the sector among the different countries of the region, as well as among its different municipalities.
100. In this context, the UNWTO is collaborating with the Inter-American Development Bank (the ‘IDB’) for the establishment of the first “Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean” (the ‘Tourism Law Observatory for LAC’) to provide a better response to the need to address the significant disparities in the current legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to tourism in LAC and to support UNWTO member States in the development and improvement of tourism regulatory frameworks.

Goals and objectives

101. The main objectives of Tourism Law Observatory for LAC are:

i. Compile and systematize national legislation and regulations applicable to the tourism sector in the LAC region;

ii. Monitor and analyze the status of tourism laws and regulations in the LAC region, both at a general level and by specific topics;

iii. Disseminate and share knowledge, best practices and lessons learned in relation to development and improvement of tourism legislation among the countries of the LAC region; and

iv. Develop service lines for the Member States of the LAC region in the field of Tourism Law, including the development, review and optimization of tourism legislation.

102. Overall, it is expected that the Observatory will contribute to the progressive harmonization of tourism laws and regulations in LAC, facilitating the establishment of more clear, transparent and balanced legal and regulatory frameworks for the region.

103. At the same time, the Observatory will optimize the governance models of the tourism regulatory process and promote the active participation of public and private tourism stakeholders interested in the processes of development, implementation, and review of legislation applicable to tourism.

Key components and modus operandi

104. The Tourism Law Observatory for LAC serves as a pioneering digital platform, hosted by the UNWTO Secretariat, that collects, organizes, analyzes, updates and disseminates, in a continuous and systematic manner, the laws and regulations applicable to tourism in the LAC region, with the support of a network of individual experts and academic collaborators.

105. In general terms, the Observatory will be structured around the following key components:

i. The creation of a legislative DATA BASE / REPOSITORY covering legislation applicable to tourism in the LAC whose purpose is to gather, categorize, and systematize the laws and regulations relevant to tourism in the region, providing a comprehensive source of information on Tourism Law for both public and private tourism stakeholders;

ii. Based on the information collected, carrying out ANALIS and DIAGNOSIS of the status of tourism legislation in the region, both at a general level and on specific topics, identifying the gaps of the existing legal and regulatory frameworks and understanding the challenges faced by LAC countries in the development and implementation of tourism legislation;

iii. The development of relevant RESOURCES and MATERIALS (guidelines, model laws, publications) to service Member States in the development and improvement of tourism legislation; and
iv. The provision of services of TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE for the development, review and optimization of tourism legislation and regulations, subject to the Rules and Regulations of UNWTO for the management of projects through voluntary contributions.

106. The work of the Tourism Law Observatory for LAC will be supported by a NETWORK OF ACADEMIC COLLABORATORS (i.e., universities, academic experts and researchers with relevant expertise on Tourism Law), selected through the Member States of the LAC, which will actively participate in its various activities (i.e., collection of legislative information, elaboration of studies, analysis and diagnosis, participation in academic activities on Tourism Law and others).

Timing and Funding

107. It is expected that the Tourism Law Observatory for LAC will be fully operational on the UNWTO website by the end of 2023.

108. As a collaborative initiative between UNWTO and the BID, the pilot phase of the Tourism Law Observatory for LAC is funded by the IDB’s contributions, with no cost being imposed on UNWTO.

109. The development and implementation of the further stages of the project will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to available extra-budgetary funding by Member States and partners.

110. Members States and partners are invited to join, on a voluntary basis, and to actively support this project.

Tourism Law Observatories for other regions of UNWTO

111. The launch of the Tourism Law Observatory for LAC intends to pave the way for the establishment of UNWTO Observatories on Tourism Law in the other regions of UNWTO, thereby replicating the model that is currently being developed for the LAC in collaboration with the IDB.

112. This flagship initiative refers to a long-term and large-scale project to be developed and implemented in the six different regions of UNWTO with a view to fostering the progressive harmonization of Tourism Law at the international level, thus enhancing legal security and benefiting all tourism operators.

113. The development and implementation of Tourism Observatories for other regions of UNWTO will be subject to extra-budgetary funding by Member States and partners, including international financial institutions.

114. Members States are strongly encouraged to express interest and actively support, on a voluntary basis, the development of further stages of the Tourism Law Observatory for LAC and the establishment of Tourism Law Observatories in the other regions of UNWTO.
5.H.2. TIPS - Toolkit of Indicators for Projects

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs)
A UNWTO Flagship Initiative 2024-2025

BACKGROUND

115. Tourism plays a significant role in global development, offering opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange. However, it is crucial that tourism aligns with sustainable practices to minimize its negative impacts and maximize its positive contributions to local communities, economies, and the environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted the tourism sector with a spill-over effect of unexpected socio-economic consequences to many other sectors. At the same time, it has also provided an opportunity to rethink the sector and mainstream its contribution to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

116. UNWTO and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have enjoyed a long working cooperation, further enhanced in 2017 with the signature of a Memorandum of Cooperation. In 2018, in collaboration with UNWTO, JICA carried out the study Achieving the SDGs through Sustainable Tourism Development: The Impact of donor-supported Tourism Projects, which analysed the contribution of tourism projects to the achievement of the SDGs. The research confirmed the relevance of tourism in all SDGs. However, it also identified the considerable need to develop a method to measure the impact of tourism projects systematically and objectively.

117. The Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through tourism – Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs) was developed jointly with JICA precisely for this purpose — to provide practical guidance and indicators that enable tourism stakeholders to integrate the SDGs into their projects and operations. Under this framework, UNWTO and JICA have created a set of project-based indicators in tourism for achieving the SDGs, in consultation with the OECD Development Assistance Committee, the multilateral system, including development finance institutions, academia and private sector.

118. Published in June 2023, the set of common and harmonized indicators, and explanations of connections with official SDGs indicators aims to evaluate the impact of tourism and its contribution to the SDGs at project level and can be adopted globally for all tourism projects. TIPS have dedicated space on the UNWTO Tourism4SDGs Platform.

OBJECTIVE

119. This flagship initiative seeks to take the TIPs Toolkit to new heights by harnessing the power of effective communication, metrics, strategic partnerships, and global engagement. It aims to ensure the widespread adoption and successful implementation of the Toolkit, influencing key stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public to embrace sustainable tourism practices aligned with the SDGs.
120. This initiative is driven by a clear mission: to make sustainable tourism practices not just a choice but a global norm, realizing the full potential of tourism as a driver of positive change and one that would lead us successfully onto our journey to 2030.

INTENDED OUTPUTS

121. UNWTO is committed to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda and provide a shared understanding on how the tourism sector can most effectively contribute to the SDGs and the implications of the SDGs for the tourism sector.

122. This initiative is founded on the following strategic objectives:

• **Global Awareness and Adoption**: Raise global awareness about the TIPs Toolkit and its value in promoting sustainable tourism aligned with the SDGs.

• **Partnerships and Collaboration**: Foster collaboration and partnerships among tourism organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to drive sustainable tourism initiatives and amplify the impact of the TIPs Toolkit.

• **Policy Influence**: Advocate for the integration of the TIPs Toolkit into tourism policies and practices at national and international levels.

• **New Metrics for tourism and development aid**: Catalyse increased ODA Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Aid for Trade flows from the donors’ community.

KEY ACTIONS

123. This initiative will encompass several key components, each supported by a diverse set of actions, such as:

• **Capacity Building**: Organize workshops, webinars, and online courses to equip users with the skills to effectively use the Toolkit. The TIPs publication is currently being translated into Japanese. Plans are being developed to translate the publication into ES, FR, and other UN languages to have a wider reach.

• **Pilot Study Assessment**: Monitor and assess tourism projects which have used the TIPs Toolkit and create a study of best practices. Feedback received will be used to modify/update the current indicators and revision of the Toolkit.

• **Global Awareness Campaign**: Utilize a dedicated platform, social media, and targeted webinars to reach and educate stakeholders about the TIPs Toolkit and its impact on sustainable tourism.

• **Strategic Partnerships**: Collaborate with UN system entities, international organizations, multilateral financial institutions, national and local authorities, tourism organizations, and academic institutions to jointly promote the TIPs Toolkit through publications, knowledge-sharing platforms, and joint initiatives.

• **Advocacy and Policy Influence**: Engage with government agencies, policymakers, and key stakeholders to advocate for the integration of the TIPs Toolkit in development and tourism policies and strategies.

• **Interactive Platform**: Enhance the 'Tourism for SDGs Platform' to feature comprehensive information, fact sheets, case studies, and resources related to the TIPs Toolkit.

TARGET AUDIENCE
124. The TIPS toolkit is a practical resource for users interested in developing tourism projects that are in line with the SDGs. Thus, this initiative targets a wide range of audiences, including:

- **Policy Makers**: Ministries of tourism, environment, and sustainable development.
- **Donor Community**: Including OECD-DAC members and international development agencies.
- **International Organizations**: UN agencies, international financial institutions, and those focused on sustainable development, environmental conservation, and community empowerment.
- **Tourism Stakeholders**: Such as national tourism authorities, destination management organizations, tourism boards, travel agencies, hotel associations, tour operators, and industry players.
- **Academia**: Individuals and educational institutions specializing in sustainable tourism and development.
- **General Public**: Tourists, travelers, and the wider public interested in responsible tourism and sustainable development.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**: These are crucial partners in advancing sustainable tourism and can utilize the toolkit to enhance their efforts.
- **Local communities**: This includes community representatives and indigenous groups who play a vital role in tourism development within their areas.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

125. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be essential to gauge the initiative's effectiveness. Metrics such as website analytics, social media engagement, media coverage, feedback from stakeholders, surveys, and interviews will be used to assess progress and gather insights for improvement.

TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION

126. A detailed timeline with specific milestones and tasks for each component will be developed. Coordination with communications, regional and operational departments in UNWTO will be crucial for seamless implementation.

CONCLUSION

127. As one of the flagship initiatives for 2024-2025, the TIPs toolkit represents a commitment to sustainable tourism practices and the realization of the SDGs. By harnessing the power of effective communication and strategic partnerships, we aim to transform the TIPs Toolkit into a global catalyst for sustainable tourism, making it applicable to various types of tourism activities and serve as a requirement for development partners and also a source of training material for sustainable tourism/development.

RELATED LINKS


129. UNWTO Tourism4SDGs Platform: https://tourism4sdgs.org/