





Tourism

Investing in energy and resource efficiency

This chapter was developed in partnership with the World Tourism Organization

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Contents

List of Acronyms	417
Key messages.....	418
1 Introduction.....	420
1.1 Tourism in a green economy.....	420
2 Challenges and opportunities for tourism in a green economy	421
2.1 Challenges.....	421
2.2 Opportunities	423
3 The case for investing in the greening of tourism	426
3.1 Spending in the tourism sector	426
3.2 Benefits in employment	426
3.3 Local economic development and poverty reduction.....	427
3.4 Environmental benefits	429
3.5 Cultural heritage	433
3.6 Modelling tourism.....	433
4 Overcoming barriers: enabling conditions.....	435
4.1 Private-sector orientation.....	435
4.2 Destination planning and development.....	437
4.3 Fiscal policies and economic instruments	438
4.4 Financing green tourism investments.....	439
4.5 Local investment	440
5 Conclusions	442
Annex 1: Economic sizing of the sector	444
Annex 2: Drivers and likely implications of investment in sustainable tourism strategic areas.....	445
Annex 3: Assumptions of the model	447
References	449

List of figures

Figure 1: World international tourist arrivals	423
Figure 2: Accommodation linkages and tourist income distribution in Tanjong Piai, Malaysia	429

List of tables

Table 1: Sample of tourism employment multipliers	427
Table 2: Impact of tourism on poverty rates in Costa Rica, 2008	429
Table 3: Breakdown of tourism income and pro-poor income (PPI) contribution in Malaysia	429
Table A1-1: Economic relevance of tourism in selected countries	444
Table A2-1: Drivers and likely implications of investment in sustainable tourism strategic areas	445

List of boxes

Box 1: Water consumption for tourism and local communities	422
Box 2: Investment in energy efficiency and savings	430
Box 3: Strengthening the Protected Area Network (SPAN)	432
Box 4: Financial cost-recovery of green programmes in tourism	432
Box 5: Differential economic contribution from cultural areas	433

List of acronyms

ACIF	Amazon Carbon and Biodiversity Investment Fund	PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
BAU	Business-as-usual	PPI	Pro-poor income
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	RM	Ringgit Malaysia, currency of Malaysia
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	ROI	Return on investment
CESD	Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development	SIFT	Sustainable Investment and Finance in Tourism
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide	SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
CSR	Corporate social responsibility	SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
DFI	Development Finance Institutions	SPAN	Strengthening the Protected Area Network
DMO	Destination Management Organization	ST-EP	Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty Initiative
ERT	Environment-related tourism	TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
EU	European Union	TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	TPRG	Tourism Planning Research Group
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
FONAFIFO	Costa Rica's National Forestry Financing Fund	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
G2	Green Scenario 2	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNEP FI	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative
GER	Green Economy Report	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GFANC	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GHG	Greenhouse gas	UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria	VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
IEA	International Energy Agency	WEF	World Economic Forum
ILO	International Labour Organization	WTP	Willingness to Pay
IPA	Investment Promotion Agency	WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
ISO	International Organization for Standardization	WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ITF-STD	International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development		
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature		
LDCs	Least Developed Countries		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		

Key messages

1. Tourism has significant potential as a driver for growth for the world economy. The tourism economy represents 5 per cent of world Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while it contributes to about 8 per cent of total employment. International tourism ranks fourth (after fuels, chemicals and automotive products) in global exports, with an industry value of US\$1 trillion a year, accounting for 30 per cent of the world's exports of commercial services or 6 per cent of total exports. There are around four billion estimated domestic arrivals every year and in 2010, some 940 million international tourists were recorded. Tourism is one of five top export earners in over 150 countries, while in 60 countries it is the number one export. It is also the main source of foreign exchange for one-third of developing countries and one-half of least developed countries (LDC).

2. The development of tourism is accompanied by significant challenges. The rapid growth in both international and domestic travel, the trends to travel farther and over shorter periods of time, and the preference given to energy-intensive transportation are increasing the non-renewable energy dependency of tourism, resulting in the sector's contribution of 5 per cent to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which is expected to grow substantially under a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario. Other challenges include excessive water consumption compared with residential water use, discharge of untreated water, the generation of waste, the damage to local terrestrial and marine biodiversity and the threats to the survival of local cultures, built heritage and traditions.

3. Green tourism has the potential to create new, green jobs. Travel and tourism are human-resource intensive, employing directly and indirectly 8 per cent of the global workforce. It is estimated that one job in the core tourism industry creates about one and a half additional or indirect jobs in the tourism-related economy. The greening of tourism, which involves efficiency improvements in energy, water and waste systems, is expected to reinforce the employment potential of the sector with increased local hiring and sourcing and significant opportunities in tourism oriented toward local culture and the natural environment.

4. Tourism development can be designed to support the local economy and reduce poverty. Local economic effects of tourism are determined by the share of tourism spending in the local economy as well as the amount of the resulting indirect economic activities. Increasing the involvement of local communities, especially the poor, in the tourism value chain can, therefore, contribute to the development of the local economy and to poverty reduction. For example, in Panama, households capture 56 per cent of total local tourism income. The extent of direct benefits to communities and poverty reduction will largely depend on the percentage of tourism needs that are locally supplied, such as products, labour, tourism services, and increasingly "green services" in energy and water efficiency and waste management. There is increasing evidence that more sustainable tourism in rural areas can lead to more positive poverty-reducing effects.

5. Investing in the greening of tourism can reduce the cost of energy, water and waste and enhance the value of biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural heritage. Investment in energy efficiency has been found to generate significant returns within a short payback period. Improving waste management is expected to save money for tourism businesses, create jobs and enhance the attractiveness of destinations. The investment requirement in conservation and restoration is small relative to the value of forests, mangroves, wetlands, and coastal zones including coral reefs, which provide ecosystem services essential for the foundation of economic activities and for human survival; the value of ecosystems for tourists remains undervalued in many cases. Investment in cultural heritage—the largest single component of consumer demand for sustainable tourism—is among the most significant and usually profitable investments. Under a green economy investment scenario, tourism makes a larger contribution to GDP growth, while

significant environmental benefits include reductions in water consumption (18 per cent), energy use (44 per cent) and CO₂ emissions (52 per cent), compared with BAU.

6. Tourists are demanding the greening of tourism. More than a third of travellers are found to favour environmentally-friendly tourism and be willing to pay between 2 and 40 per cent more for this experience. Traditional mass tourism has reached a stage of steady growth. In contrast, ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural and “soft adventure” tourism are taking the lead and are predicted to grow rapidly over the next two decades. It is estimated that global spending on ecotourism is increasing at a higher rate than the industry-wide average growth.

7. The private sector, especially small firms, can, and must be mobilised to support green tourism. The tourism sector involves a diverse range of actors. The awareness of green tourism exists mainly in a selection of larger-scale firms. Smaller firms are mostly outside this sphere and diverse supplier groups may not be connected at all. Specific mechanisms and tools to educate small and medium-sized tourism-related enterprises are critical and are most effective when they are accompanied by actionable items. The promotion and widespread use of recognised standards for sustainable tourism, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), can help businesses improve sustainability performance, including resource efficiency, and assist in attracting additional investment and customers.

8. Much of the economic potential for green tourism is found in small and medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which need better access to financing for investing in green tourism. The majority of tourism businesses are SMEs with potential to generate greater income and opportunity from green strategies. Their single greatest limiting factor for greening, however, is lack of access to capital. Governments and international organisations can facilitate the financial flow to these important actors with an emphasis on contributions to the local economy and poverty reduction. Public-private partnerships can spread the costs and risks of large green tourism investments. Besides reducing administrative fees and offering favourable interest rates for green tourism projects, in-kind support such as technical, marketing or business administration assistance, could also help.

9. Destination planning and development strategies are the first step towards the greening of tourism. In developing tourism strategies, local governments, communities and businesses need to establish mechanisms for coordinating with ministries responsible for the environment, energy, labour, agriculture, transport, health, finance, security and other relevant areas. Clear requirements are needed in such areas as zoning, protected areas, environmental rules and regulations, labour rules, agricultural standards and health requirements particularly related to energy, emissions, water, waste and sanitation.

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