Policy Guidance to Support Climate Action by National Tourism Administrations

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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Executive Summary

Key messages

The consequences of climate change are already being felt around the world. Tourism is vulnerable to climate impacts and at the same time can play an important role in reducing climate risks by decreasing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To advance progress on addressing climate change, the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism was launched at UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021. The Declaration provides a framework for consistent sector-wide messages and approach to accelerate climate action in tourism.

Tourism involves many stakeholders, including public and private sectors, civil society, local communities and environments, and the visitors themselves. This policy guidance has been developed to assist governmental agencies dedicated to tourism in the development of tourism climate action policies and initiatives to support the low-carbon transition for tourism. Governments play a key role to enable actions that ensure tourism contributes to global climate goals set in the Paris Agreement.

This guidance addresses four areas that National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) can focus on. Foremost, NTAs need to engage with national climate policy making processes in their country, including the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and other national climate policies. Moreover, tourism policymakers will benefit from engaging in cross-governmental initiatives linked to national climate policy, for example in the areas of transport, energy, and conservation. Second, tourism as a stand-alone policy domain can develop tourism laws, policies and strategies that support climate action. Third, NTAs have an opportunity and responsibility to drive climate awareness and engage tourism stakeholders to support climate action, including the travellers. Fourth, additional levers are available through finance and strategic partnerships, including those related to climate finance which are critical to achieving the low-carbon transition for tourism.

For tourism-specific policy, six levers are introduced. These are:

1. Strategy (e.g. National tourism strategies, Roadmaps, Masterplans, Action plans)
2. Regulation (e.g. Emission standards for vehicles; carbon disclosure requirements)
3. Economic levers (e.g. Carbon taxes, environmental levies, tax incentives, grants)
4. Information (e.g. Measurement / reporting, technology guides, low-carbon itineraries)
5. Education (e.g. Staff training, curricula development, education of visitors)
6. Voluntary (e.g. Carbon offsetting, restoration projects, certification, clean ups).

This policy guidance provides examples of good practice from around the world to illustrate how NTAs can implement climate-enabling policy and other initiatives as well as benefit from climate initiatives in other sectors.

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1 Climate finance is of critical importance to enable the low-carbon transition of tourism and supplementary guidance will be developed as soon as possible.
1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this policy guidance

This policy guidance has been primarily developed to support public sector policy-makers who work on issues related to tourism. The tourism policy domain is inherently comprehensive and cross-cutting, but increasingly considerations of sustainability – and more specifically climate change – are becoming centrally relevant to tourism decisions. It is therefore important that those tasked with tourism policy understand the international and national climate change policy context, as well as consider opportunities for the tourism sector to contribute to climate action. In some cases, tourism-related agencies may have a supportive role and in other areas they may play a leadership role.

The policy guidance presented here will help NTAs to develop more comprehensive and strategic interventions, both in conjunction with other government agencies and within their own policy domain. This guidance is designed to inform tourism policy-makers about the broader climate change context, tourism’s position relative to formal national climate responses, and specific approaches that the tourism representation in government can take to complement other efforts. The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism provides a starting point for NTAs to get involved and an Engagement Pack has been developed to support this process with some practical recommendations on how to get started.

NTAs have the opportunity to connect globally to their peers (e.g. exchanging learnings), to strategic partners (e.g. co-marketing), and to finance institutions. Regular reporting on progress will ensure that collectively, the global tourism sector will benefit from innovations and learnings in individual countries or destinations so as to rapidly accelerate tourism’s ability to mitigate its carbon footprint and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

1.2 The climate crisis

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges that humanity is facing. The main cause for climate change is the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) derived from human activities. The consequences of climate change are already being felt around the world, with effects such as increasing temperatures, varying precipitation patterns, rising sea levels or the increase on the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

The July 2023 heatwave in the Northern Hemisphere, for example, was 2.5°C warmer in Southern Europe, 2°C warmer in North America and 1°C warmer in China due to human-induced climate change compared to the pre-industrial climate. According to the survey conducted by UNWTO in September 2023, 28% of the respondents from the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts mentioned that some destinations have been affected to a large extent (6%) or to some extent (22%). A 2°C warmer world would see events such as these occur every 2 to 5 years. Preparing for these changes and adjusting to already occurring climate

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2 UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, September 2023 (e-unwto.org)
risks is known as adaptation. This type of climate action will have to happen alongside the urgent need to reduce emissions. Actions related to reducing humans’ impact on the climate are referred to as mitigation. Mitigation involves ‘decarbonisation’, which effectively means to reduce our use of fossil fuels for energy and materials (e.g. plastics). It also requires active removal of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere, for example by investing into reforestation.

In 2015, 196 governments adopted the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C and preferably to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that crossing these temperatures’ threshold risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves and rainfall⁴. The latest report by the IPCC from 2022 showed that to limit global warming to 1.5°C, GHG must peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43% by 2030 (with 1990 as the baseline year). The mid-term goals are an immediate milestone to set up the pathway towards the long-term goal to achieve a Net Zero decarbonized world by 2050⁵.

Net zero is a complex concept. It means that the level of man-made emissions of CO₂ (and technically other GHG emissions) does no longer lead to an increase in concentrations of emissions in the atmosphere. Effectively this means that fossil fuel emissions need to reduce between 90% and 97% by 2050 compared to today’s levels. The remaining very low volumes of emissions can be balanced by permanent carbon sinks. These carbon sinks are limited. They are comprised of natural sinks (e.g. forests, soil carbon, oceans; which maximum capacity is finite), and man-made sinks (e.g. carbon capture and geological storage; for which piloting and investments are still in embryonic stage). Therefore, emission reduction pathways, for example those based on science-based targets⁶, require significant emissions reductions and must not rely on compensation activities⁷.

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⁵ https://unfccc.int/news/climate-plans-remain-insufficient-more-ambitious-action-needed-now

⁶ Science-Based Target Initiative: https://sciencebasedtargets.org/net-zero

⁷ The traditional use of ‘carbon offsets’ to neutralise current emissions is therefore not acceptable anymore; very small levels of removal can be used after emissions reductions in the order of 90-97% have been achieved, for a scientific explanation see, for example: Fankhauser, S., Smith, S.M., Allen, M. et al. (2022). The meaning of net zero and how to get it right. Nature Climate Change, 12, 15–21. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-021-01245-w
Today, the world is already experiencing the impacts from 1.2°C global warming above pre-industrial levels and concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere have now reached 412 parts per million of CO₂; the highest in hundreds of thousands of years. Emission reductions are not on track with the required Paris Agreement targets and thus, reducing emissions is urgently needed to minimise further accumulation of GHG in the atmosphere. Every sector has a role to play.

1.3 GHG emissions from tourism

The tourism sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including present-day increased climate variability and extreme events. At the same time, tourism activity contributes to GHG emissions to the extent of 5 to 8 percent globally. The exact composition of tourism’s GHG emissions at the national level depends on the type of destination, and so do opportunities to mitigate it. Nevertheless, the biggest contributor to emissions is transport, making up half of all tourism emissions or more depending on the country.

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Figure 2: Estimated GHG tourism emissions split by industry

(Note: Visual to be developed for the document as an adapted version of WTTC/UNEP/UNFCCC Net Zero Roadmap depiction)

In Ireland, for example, a recent study revealed that 80% of the total tourism carbon footprint comes from transport, most of which related to the international air travel component of overseas arrivals. Food is another substantial source of emissions, alongside emissions embodied in consumer articles, accommodation, or other services (see Box 1).

Box 1: A value chain approach to address GHG emissions from tourism

UNWTO defines the tourism value chain as “the sequence of primary and support activities which are strategically fundamental for the performance of the tourism sector”. Planning, product development, promotion and marketing, distribution and sales, quality control and destination operations and services are key primary activities. Support activities involve water and energy supply, transport, infrastructure (including construction material), technology, textile, furniture, consumables, agriculture, fisheries, creative industries, services, etc.

Understanding and managing the climate impact of tourism can be informed by a value chain approach as tourism contributes to GHG emissions not only through directly involved tourism companies or organisations (e.g. primary activities) but also through their interactions (and often purchase decisions) with other, non-tourism entities (e.g. support providers). A value chain approach enables an understanding of the full value chain in relation to the hotspots of material use and GHG emissions and relevant stakeholders to prioritize and implement interventions.

Addressing GHG emissions along the value chain can be strategically linked to the integration of circular economy principles and practices including sustainable procurement, waste minimization and ecosystem restoration.

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11 https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420858

12 Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Tourism – Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs) (e-unwto.org)

13 Building-Circularity-into-NDCs_A-Practical-Toolbox-User-Guide-Final.pdf (learningfornature.org)
As of December 2019, tourism related GHG emissions were forecast\(^\text{14}\) to increase by at least 25% by 2030 in a business-as-usual scenario\(^\text{15}\), pointing at the urgent need to enable an accelerated low-carbon transition of tourism operations to stay in line with international climate goals and ensure the resilience of tourism destinations and their residents.

To catalyse progress in addressing climate change across travel and tourism, the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism was launched at UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021 by UNWTO and partners, within the framework of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme. The Declaration provides a framework for consistent sector-wide messages and approach to accelerate climate action in tourism. It was developed in collaboration with UNEP, the Travel Foundation and Visit Scotland and involved a broad coalition of stakeholders, including UNFCCC, in the co-creation process. The Declaration is aligned with science-based pathways and constitutes a voluntary commitment for tourism organisations to contribute fairly and adequately to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 among other related SDGs (see Box 2).

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\(^{14}\) The forecast was carried out from the point of view of transport-related tourism emissions as passenger transport services represent the largest emitter in the tourism value chain. The model estimated current and future demand, the share of different modes of transport and related CO2 emissions, both for international and domestic tourism.

1.4 The role of National Tourism Administrations for climate action

Climate action is understood as the efforts to measure and reduce GHG emissions and strengthen adaptive capacity to climate induced impacts. This policy guidance has been developed to assist governmental agencies dedicated to tourism in their development of tourism climate action policies and initiatives. The target audience of this guidance is National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) that are looking at addressing the climate emergency by contributing to the goals of national climate policy, including through integrating climate action in tourism policies. These include Glasgow Declaration signatories.

The institutional arrangements of NTAs vary across countries. Whilst this document addresses all forms of national tourism agencies, including tourism ministries, departments, secretariats and tourism boards, the specific mandate and/or ability to design and implement climate action supportive policy is likely to differ amongst them (Box 3). Tourism can be represented in government through various arrangements:

- Ministry of Tourism (e.g. Ministry of Tourism Brazil, Ministry of Tourism Maldives, Ministry of Tourism Jamaica, Ministry of Tourism Malta);
- Department of Tourism (e.g. Department of Tourism Bhutan, Department of Tourism Morocco within Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy; Department of Tourism within Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism of Botswana);
- Tourism secretariats within another Ministry (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Korea; General Directorate for Tourism Romania);
- National Tourism Board (e.g. Fáilte Ireland, Singapore Tourism Board; Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. alongside Barbados Ministry of Tourism and International Transport);
- A tourism authority or corporation that may have representation from both public and private sector representatives (e.g. Canadian Tourism Commission).

Tourism involves both public and private sector activities, and it takes place within local communities and environments. It is a complex interplay of many stakeholders with different levels of interest in sustainable tourism. Whilst the function of government in the tourism sector differs across the world, there is a key role for the public sector to enable actions that ensure tourism contributes to global climate goals. Addressing climate change is also essential to ensure that tourism transitions to a low carbon model that can be sustainable and viable beyond 2050.

The transition to a climate resilient model is unlikely to be achieved by market forces alone. Common goods such as preventing further climate damage, restoring ecosystems to provide existential services, and equitable access to development require government intervention. Governments and their tourism administrations (institutional arrangements vary significantly across countries) play a central role in maximising the opportunities from a low-carbon transition, including new investments into clean technology, green jobs, and healthier environments.

The exact potential for an NTA to engage in policy depends on the jurisdiction. The Act on the Icelandic Tourist Board (2018), for example mandates the organisation to:

**Article 2:** “The Icelandic Tourist Board shall monitor and promote the development of tourism...having regard to the carrying capacity of Icelandic nature and society...in accordance with government policy.”

**Article 5:** “The Icelandic Tourism Council shall advise the Minister on long-term policymaking and planning in the area of tourism...and shall work towards coordination between the industry and the government so that defined objectives ...may be achieved.”

**Article 12:** “The Icelandic Tourist Board shall gather information that is useful for decision-making and target-setting in tourism and publish it. The agency shall also promote research and analyse the need for research in the field of tourism...”

This policy guidance addresses four core areas that NTAs can focus on to accelerate climate action in the tourism sector, namely: 1) cross-governmental integration; 2) tourism climate policy; 3) climate aware promotion / campaigns; 4) finance and new partnerships.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the four areas. NTAs can work on all areas simultaneously to enable a holistic approach that maximises support for the low-carbon tourism transition.

In the first instance, NTAs need to engage with climate policy in their country. To identify opportunities for tourism, it is important to understand (and engage with) the country’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) negotiation process, and all the policies and laws that might derive from it. In addition, policy designed directly for climate action is often complemented by other sectoral policy, for example in relation to transport or infrastructure. These sectoral policies and their implementation may intersect with tourism operations. Cross-governmental engagement with both national and sectoral climate policy will be discussed in Section 2.

Secondly, as tourism itself is a policy domain, there is an opportunity and need to integrate climate action into existing or future tourism laws, policies and strategies. Tourism climate action is an example of sectoral policy which can contribute to national climate goals. There are six distinct policy levers that will be explored in more detail in Section 3. In addition to

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tourism policy, new approaches to promotion represent an important opportunity for climate action (see Section 4). Finally, partnerships play a crucial role in implementing climate action initiatives, including through finance (Section 5).

Figure 3 Four core areas for climate action available to NTAs as the voice of tourism in government

- Finance and new partnerships
- Cross-governmental integration
- Climate aware promotion
- Tourism climate policy

• Governance
• Finance and resource pooling

• Climate change policy
• Other sectoral policy

• Low-carbon campaigns
• Behaviour change

• Strategy
• Regulation
• Economic levers
• Information
• Education
2 Cross-governmental integration

Most countries have put in place, at the central government level, arrangements to reduce GHG and address adaptation to climate change. The IPCC in the 6th Assessment report refers to these national laws and policies as “direct climate policy”.

In addition to direct climate policy, indirect approaches to climate law and policy are common. These typically represent ‘sectoral approaches’ which embed climate change issues into strategies or policies that are designed for policy outcomes other than climate action (see Box 4). Common examples of sectoral policy relate to energy (e.g. national energy security, investment into renewable energy), transportation (e.g. air quality or congestion), waste management (e.g. recuperation of organic waste for compost), and conservation (e.g. reforestation or biodiversity, resource efficiency). The IPCC in the 6th Assessment report refers to sectoral policymaking as ‘indirect climate policy’. Tourism policy that addresses mitigation and/or adaptation is one type of sectoral (indirect) climate policy.

Box 4: IPCC definitions on climate laws and policy

“This encompassing approach to climate governance is also built on a recognition that climate policymaking is routinely formulated in the context of multiple policy objectives such as energy security, energy access, urban development, and mitigation-adaptation linkages. This informs policymaking based on an understanding that to fully maximise direct and indirect climate mitigation potential, maximising co-benefits and minimising trade-offs should be explicitly sought rather than accidentally discovered and policies designed accordingly.” (Chapter 13, p. 1360)

“There are both narrow and broad definitions of what counts as ‘climate laws’. The literature distinguishes direct climate laws that explicitly considers climate change causes or impacts – for example through mention of greenhouse gas reductions in its objectives or title (Dubash et al. 2013) – from indirect laws that have ‘the capacity to affect mitigation or adaptation’ through the subjects they regulate, for example, through promotion of co-benefits, or creation of reporting protocols (Scotford and Minas 2019). Closely related is a ‘sectoral approach’ based on the layering of climate considerations into existing laws in the absence of an overarching framework law (Rumble 2019).” (Chapter 13, p. 1361)

2.1 Direct climate policy (national)

Climate laws are important in enabling climate action. They promote mitigation by setting a broad direction (including carbon reduction targets), increasing regulatory certainty for businesses, mainstreaming climate action into sector policies, and attracting finance. Similarly, climate laws exist to promote adaptation to climate risks, for example through land use planning, building standards, and disaster management. An example of a direct climate law would be the Law 7/2021 on climate change and energy transition in Spain, which sets a clear direction and targets for emissions, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

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deployment. Another example is the 2017 National Law on Climate Change no. 5875 in Paraguay, which amongst others set up a Climate Change Fund to direct public and private funds towards mitigation and adaptation.

2.1.1 Nationally Determined Contributions

Most countries who are Parties to the Paris Agreement have provided their NDC to the UNFCCC (see Box 5). NCDs are national plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. The latest assessment of NDCs as of 23 September 2022 showed that 94.9 per cent of total global GHG emissions in 2019 are covered in NDCs. The main focus of the NDC mechanism is to urge countries to set ambitious emission reduction targets. NDCs also embed adaptation action.

Box 5: What is the purpose of Nationally Determined Contributions?

NDCs typically provide information on:

- Mitigation goals and targets (including strategies, policies, plans and actions) which can be expressed in absolute reduction number (a certain quantity of GHG emissions to be reduced) or in relative expression (reducing a % of the total emissions), using a baseline year to set reduction targets or based on a projection of the emissions by 2030.
- Mitigation co-benefits resulting from adaptation actions and/or economic diversification plans.
- Actual levels of carbon dioxide (CO\textsubscript{2}) emissions, as well as other GHG (especially methane (CH\textsubscript{4}) and nitrous oxide (N\textsubscript{2}O))

Countries, especially Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries can also develop two kind or reduction objectives: unconditional (the reduction goal that the country is committed to reach with its own current resources); and conditional (reductions that are subject to receiving external financial aid from developed countries, international aid institutions or compensation schemes).

The next round of NDCs is due in 2025. Countries are required to submit updated or new NDCs every five years, with each successive NDC representing a progression in ambition compared to the previous one. The first round of NDCs was submitted in 2015, and the second round took place in 2020. The goal of these periodic submissions is to assess global progress towards the Paris Agreement’s objectives and to encourage countries to enhance their climate action commitments over time.

Climate policy by central governments typically focuses on addressing GHG emissions that originate within national borders, although embodied emissions (e.g. through imports) or other issues related to international matters may be included as well. The emissions from international transportation (related to so-called bunker fuels) do not typically form part of NDCs. However, some countries are exploring how to report emissions from international aviation. The United Kingdom, for example, includes emissions from all departing flights in its sixth carbon budget; however, it does not include incoming flights. The New Zealand

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21 Climate Change Committee: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/
Climate Change Commission, for example, will consider in 2026 whether to include international aviation and shipping emissions into its next NDC and (adjusted) climate targets. The developments in this area are of great interest to the tourism sector.

Many NDCs already address tourism in some form. As of 2022\textsuperscript{23}, a review conducted by UNWTO of the 191 current NDCs identified that 53% make references to tourism (up from 42% in 2019). Of those NDCs with references to tourism, 56% identify the sector as vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Also 64% of the NDCs with a reference to tourism mention the sector in connection with adaptation measures and 36% in connection with mitigation measures. The references to tourism are more prevalent (71%) in NDCs from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) than in the rest of countries (48%). The review suggests that some NDCs merely mention tourism, whilst others have dedicated sections for tourism. Albania’s NDC, for example, provides extensive detail on tourism risks and vulnerabilities within a dedicated section in the adaptation plan under coastal areas. Jordan’s NDC is another example, with a section on tourism’s adaptive capacity related to cultural heritage sites and infrastructure, and the wider tourism supply chain. More examples are provided in Box 6.

Figure 4 Tourism dimensions in NDCs calculated out of 101 NDCs (53% of total) which include references to tourism (total NDCs reviewed = 193).

Box 6: Tourism representation in NDCs – examples\textsuperscript{24}

**Cabo Verde – 2020**: Cabo Verde undertakes to strengthen sustainable tourism as a factor for local empowerment and economic development, ensuring climate resilience and diversification and increasing decent employment. International and national efforts combined seek to reduce overall GHG emissions from tourism by 20% per visitor/day by 2030. Cabo Verde undertakes to develop a roadmap for the phased transition to a circular economy for the years 2022 to 2040, by industry and municipality. The circular economy aims to contribute to climate protection and adaptation to climate change.

\textsuperscript{23} UNWTO reviewed NDCs in effect as of August 2022. [https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/glasgow-declaration/policy-snapshot](https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/glasgow-declaration/policy-snapshot)

\textsuperscript{24} For the NDCs mentioned in this textbox, please see: Cabo Verde [https://unfccc.int/documents/497420](https://unfccc.int/documents/497420); Cambodia [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/20201231_NDC_Update_Cambodia.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/20201231_NDC_Update_Cambodia.pdf); Maldives [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Maldives%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%202020.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Maldives%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%202020.pdf) and Namibia [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Namibia%20%27s%20Updated%20NDC%20%20FINAL%202025%20July%202021.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Namibia%20%20Updated%20NDC%20%20FINAL%202025%20July%202021.pdf)
Cambodia – 2020: Detailed mitigation measures for tourism, include (quoted from document): 1. Promoting one tourist, one tree campaign. Co-benefits: Reducing natural disaster, job creation for local people, poverty alleviation, social welfare improvement, cultural and environmental conservation, protecting biodiversity; 2. Practicing responsible travel manner in order to protect and conserve environment, biodiversity, culture and local livelihood improvement; 3. Reducing energy use, improving energy efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy, carbon offsetting, waste management and recycling, and water conservation; 4. more activities from tourists including; adventure, cycling, walking, hiking, stop using car, bus, van and other vehicle by using gas/energy into tourist sites by replace of cow cart, ride bicycle, or walking.

Maldives – 2020: 1. Mainstream climate change risks into tourism sector policies to enhance resiliency and sustainability of the sector; 2. Facilitate access to finance to increase the resilience and sustainable environmental management of the sector; 3. Mainstream and promote clean energy and energy efficiency technologies to reduce the overall emissions; 4. Establish an insurance mechanism to reduce the impacts on the tourism sector through risk sharing and risk management.

Namibia – 2021: Promote sustainable tourism and provide capacity building for climate change innovation in Namibia’s tourism sector. co-benefits: Lower Ecological Impact • Conservation of biodiversity • Reduction of land, air and water pollution • Support of local communities by direct engagement and stimulating their economies • Environmentally aware and conscious tourists.

2.1.2 Other climate change frameworks

In addition to NDCs, many countries prepare National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)\(^\text{25}\). The NAPs focus specifically on managing climate risks and represent an important input into the NDCs. NAPs are important because some adaptation measures can also generate substantial benefits for mitigation. For example, shoreline rehabilitation (e.g. mangrove reforestation) will contribute to the sequestration of carbon in natural sinks. Many countries have also submitted Long-Term Low-Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS). Some of these recognise tourism as a particularly vulnerable sector. Common themes in NDCs, NAPs, and LT-LEDS related to tourism are diversification opportunities, climate-friendly tourism practices, energy- and water-saving technologies, public–private partnerships (including with local and indigenous communities), tourism policies, monitoring and awareness-raising.

NTAs can work with their national climate offices or focal points (often located within the Ministry of Environment) to ensure that tourism is adequately considered and reflected in both NDC and NAP processes. For example, the National Reactivation Strategy for Tourism (2022-2025) in Peru contains reference to MINCETUR (the national governing body for tourism) working directly within the framework of the Tentative Programming of NDCs to ensure tourism needs are covered. It is important to understand that the NDC process happens regardless of tourism-related input. However, engagement by NTAs is likely to be beneficial and provides an opportunity to position the efforts undertaken by the tourism sector.

\(^\text{25}\) Database for NAPs: https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans
2.2 Sectoral climate policy and co-benefits

NTAs engage with government agencies (e.g. transport, energy, health) that are not directly responsible for climate change, but which implement sectoral policies of relevance for climate action. Understanding the implications of sectoral policies for tourism is important as they can create co-benefits or policy conflict.

2.2.1 Maximising co-benefits

Co-benefits for climate action occur when policies meet multiple objectives simultaneously. The IPCC (2022) highlighted that just like sectoral policy can have benefits for climate action, direct climate policy can bring benefits for sectoral objectives. Figure 4 provides examples of economic, environmental, social, political/institutional co-benefits related to climate change policy. Climate policy that achieves such co-benefits will have greater public acceptance and be more successful. For example, energy policy to improve energy security often results in investment into renewable sources. As a co-benefit, the reliance on fossil fuels will be reduced, as well as emissions.

Many of the co-benefits and sectoral policy examples shown in Figure 4 are relevant to tourism stakeholders. Thus, NTAs have a clear interest in ensuring that tourism needs are connected to these policy domains. The case of energy is a good example. Tourism businesses and destinations will consider the availability of renewable energy as a benefit, and they will also gain from investments into energy efficiency, namely from reduced utility costs. Understanding co-benefits and harnessing them for sustainable tourism represents an important opportunity for NTAs.

In Norway, for example, the Parliament, led by the Norwegian Maritime Authority, has adopted a zero emissions requirements for the world heritage fjords by 2026, addressing both local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. This development represented a co-benefit for Visit Norway which could build on this policy to support tourism decarbonisation for the cruise ship sector.

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28 The policy has been developed by the Norwegian Maritime Authority, see https://www.sdir.no/en/shipping/vessels/environment/prevention-of-pollution-from-ships/zero-emissions-in-the-world-heritage-fjords-by-2026/#::text=%E2%80%9CZero%20emissions%20means%20that%20by%202026%20we%20will%20be%20using%20%20zero%20fossil%20fuels.
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The co-benefits for tourism could be either financial or environmental (e.g. emissions reductions. The example of a recent policy by the United Kingdom’s Department for Transport and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy illustrates this. The ‘Office for Zero Emission Vehicles’ 29 was changed in response to COVID-19 so that small accommodation businesses and heritage sites were eligible to receive funding for the installation of electric vehicle charge points for visitors. Moreover, a particular focus was on rural areas, which are highly relevant to tourism. The same office also provides competitive grants for local authorities to install charging stations under the Ultra Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme, another co-benefit for tourism.

A key area for policy integration is biodiversity conservation (institutionalised through the Convention on Biological Diversity) and climate change. Both are also closely interlinked with tourism, especially in countries where nature-based tourism plays an important role. The need for tourism to contribute positive to nature is recognised in the ‘regeneration’ pathway of the Glasgow Declaration. Healthy ecosystems are natural sinks for carbon emissions as they remove carbon from the atmosphere. Ecosystems are also essential contributors in building resilience to extreme events, for example through shoreline

29 See: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-zero-emission-vehicles
stabilisation by intact vegetation. Well-functioning ecosystems with high biodiversity also support livelihoods, both for sustainable harvesting and ecotourism.

Several countries have aligned the climate change components of their tourism strategies with conservation policy. Costa Rica, through a partnership between the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) and the National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO)\(^3\), has established a system for visitors to contribute financial resources for the Payment of Environmental Services Program (PSA), including the planting of trees, the protection of the hydrographic basins, natural regeneration, and agroforestry development. Regeneration supports carbon sequestration through the regrowth of natural carbon sinks; an important mechanism to help stabilise the climate.

The just released Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy\(^3\) leans heavily on the concept of regenerative tourism, including through the inclusion of a dedicated ‘Aspiration’ that underpins the other areas of focus (Enhance and Leverage our Visitor Economy; Optimise the Visitor Experience; and Empower our Tourism Industry). The notion of ‘giving back’ to improve the wellbeing of local people and the environment sits at the core of the strategy. Strengthening the resilience of local ecosystems is a crucial climate adaptation measure. If these ecosystems (e.g. mangroves) absorb carbon, then there is a mitigation benefit as well.

### 2.2.2 Avoiding policy conflicts

Besides the importance of creating win-win situations through co-benefits, it is important to avoid policy conflict. Conflict would arise when a sectoral policy undermines climate action. For example, transport policies that support expansion of fossil fuel dependent transport modes (e.g. highways, airports) will conflict with national mitigation policies and climate targets. Tourism policy that is merely geared for sector expansion, without consideration of sustainability, is likely to conflict with environmental policy designed to reduce emissions and manage risk.\(^3\)\(2\) Thus, for NTAs it is important to maximise co-benefits whilst minimising policy conflict (see Box 8).

### Box 8: An example of tourism climate policy integration\(^3\)\(3\) : The Maldives Tourism Climate Action Plan\(^3\)\(4\)

The highest level of working together results in policy integration. Climate change is a cross-sectoral policy problem that requires high levels of coordination. Climate Policy Integration (CPI) refers to the “integration of multiple policy objectives, governance arrangements and policy processes related to climate change mitigation, adaptation and other policy domains” (Di Gregorio et al., 2017). Concepts that are similar to policy integration (or indeed stepping stones to full integration) are policy coordination, consistency and alignment. To date, policy integration between


\(^{31}\) Cook Islands: [https://cookislands.travel/news/strategic-focus-regenerative-tourism](https://cookislands.travel/news/strategic-focus-regenerative-tourism)


\(^{34}\) For more information, see [https://www.solimarinternational.com/project/usaid-climate-adaptation-project/](https://www.solimarinternational.com/project/usaid-climate-adaptation-project/)
climate and tourism has been limited. To avoid conflict between tourism policies and national climate goals it is important to improve alignment.

The Maldives provide a recent example of an integrated approach to climate action in tourism. The just-released ‘Maldives Tourism Climate Action Plan: Strategic Pathways for Climate Resiliency in Tourism’ is designed to help operationalize the vision set out in the Second National Communication of Maldives to the UNFCCC (2016) and the NDC of the Maldives (2020) for the particular case of tourism in the country. The Action Plan also explicitly links climate action with biodiversity conservation (including by prioritising nature-based solutions). It supports Goal 4 of the Maldives Fifth Tourism Master Plan, namely ‘Build Climate Resilience and Protect Natural Assets’.
3 Tourism policy for climate action

NTAs can take different pathways to support climate action through their decision and policy making, depending on their mandate and the institutional arrangements. For example, they may choose to develop stand-alone climate strategies or action plans. South Africa took this approach in 2012 in the form of its ‘Final National Tourism and Climate Change Response Programme and Action Plan’[^35], and around that time, in 2009, Australia developed a ‘Great Barrier Reef Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy’[^36] focused on both reducing emissions and protecting from future climate impacts. Samoa is currently updating its 2012 ‘National Tourism Climate Change Strategy Samoa’[^37]. As an alternative, NTAs can mainstream climate change into wider national tourism policies and frameworks. One example is the Norway National Tourism Strategy 2030[^38], which has a strong climate focus. The strategy is also a good example of a direct reference to the targets of Norway’s NDC. The strategy specifically notes the role that tourism plays in complying with both international and national climate regulations.

Before developing policy initiatives, NTAs should consider what sub-components of tourism are most important in terms of climate action. The case example of Italy is useful. The government recognised a need to better understand the GHG emissions associated with domestic car travel. This triggered a study to identify overall levels of emissions and priority regions for further action[^39]. Such an assessment relates to GHG measurement (see section 3.4).

NTAs can make use of a range of policy instruments. Figure 5 shows examples of six different types of climate-related tourism policy instruments. These will be examined in more detail in the following sections, and examples of good practice will be provided.


Figure 6 Overview of different types of policy instruments commonly used by tourism policymakers and relevant to climate action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy instruments</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td>E.g. National tourism strategies, Roadmaps, Masterplans, Action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulation</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Emission standards for vehicles; carbon disclosure required for licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic levers</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Carbon taxes, environmental levies, tax incentives, government grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Measurement, reporting on targets, technology guides, low carbon itineraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Staff training, student curricula development, education of visitors through pledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voluntary</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Carbon offsetting, nature restoration projects, environmental certification, clean ups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Strategy

One key task of NTAs is to develop strategies for the (long-term) future of tourism in the country. This may take the shape of a masterplan, tourism or visitor strategy, action plan or roadmap (see Box 7 for climate-related roadmaps). Strategic plans typically include vision and mission statements, and they go through stages of extensive consultation to ensure that the plan meets the needs of communities, and constituents more broadly. Plans should also contain clear priorities and guidance for decision-making as well as accountability. The strategic plan may also contain recommendations for other policy instruments (e.g. taxes or information campaigns), and it should be supported adequately through both financial and non-financial resources (see finance further below).
Box 7: Low-carbon tourism roadmaps – One Planet

Action plan for low-carbon and resource efficient accommodation in Mauritius: Action plan that sets out a roadmap to a sustainable and resilient tourism accommodation sector in Mauritius, focused on energy and waste with one key outcome of lowering GHG emissions (UNEP, 2019a).

Roadmap for low-carbon and resource-efficient tourism in the Philippines: The roadmap provides recommendations for actions to reduce carbon emissions and improve the resource efficiency of tourism. Four key solutions are identified, namely sustainable food value chains, sustainable events, pollution and energy (UNEP, 2019b).

Roadmap for Low-carbon and Resource Efficient Sustainable Accommodation in the Dominican Republic: The roadmap is based on the tourism value chain, which means that energy and materials of all supplies are included. GHG reduction targets are set and improvements in gastronomy are one key pathway.

A review of 114 national tourism strategies carried out in 2022 showed that 62% included broad references to climate change (up from 42% in 2019). Of the national tourism policies which referred to climate change, 86% identified tourism as a sector vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; 69% include reference to certain mitigation measures; and 46% include reference to certain adaptation measures (Figure 5). The references to climate change were more prevalent (79%) in national tourism policies from SIDS compared with other countries (59%). Elsewhere, research found that tourism strategies need to pay more attention to the particular challenge of climate mitigation, and enable better scaling up of activities to ensure a low-carbon transition and achieving net zero tourism operations by 2050 at the latest.

Some national tourism strategies have extensive coverage of climate change actions. For instance, the National Tourism Policy of Belize identified climate change as a key policy objective. It suggests strengthening the planning, development, and management of local tourism destinations and the sector’s response to climate change. The National Tourism Strategy Plan for Nepal identified the main goal of the policy as improving livelihoods by mitigating and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, adopting a low-carbon emissions socioeconomic development path, and supporting and collaborating in the spirit of the country’s commitments to national and international climate change agreements.

Montenegro’s Tourism Development Strategy 2022–2025 and Action Plan is another good

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40 The three roadmaps have been published in 2019 and can be found here: https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/value-chains/transforming-tourism
practice example of integrating climate change into a tourism policy. This policy also discusses the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

Figure 7 Climate change dimensions in NTPs calculated out of 71 NTPs (62% of total) which include reference(s) to climate change (total NTPs reviewed = 114)

For countries without existing climate-tourism strategies or plans, existing frameworks focused on destination management and sustainable development may provide a suitable starting point. These can be updated or amended to give greater consideration to both climate mitigation and adaptation. The 2021 Tourism Strategy of the Swiss Confederation is a useful example where climate action sits underneath a broader objective to support sustainable tourism.

3.2 Regulation

Typically, climate change regulation is developed at a national level (see Section 2.1 on direct climate law). Regulation or laws usually apply to all actors or sometimes to those organisations over a certain size (e.g. for carbon disclosure), but it is less common that they are designed for individual sectors such as tourism. Similarly, building insulation standards apply to all buildings, not just to tourist accommodation, airports or convention centres. An example of recent regulation is the requirement to report on carbon emissions, often as part of wider Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting (see Box 9).

NTAs may have a mandate to put in place regulatory instruments that complement government approaches to support climate action. These may refer to particular processes, technologies, or products (including those related to clean energy), or they might directly address emission levels (e.g. standards for aircraft or buses). There are not many examples where tourism uses regulation for the purpose of climate action. The Fiji Tourism 2021 strategy, for example, contains reference to building codes to promote “climate resilient infrastructure”, but it is unclear whether this would be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism or another department. Some NTAs are responsible for developing specific

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50 Fiji: [https://mcttt.gov.fj/division/tourism/fijian-tourism-2021/#:~:text=In%20summary%2C%20the%20key%20strategies,Asia].
standards for tourism, for example the Department of Tourism in Thailand. In the context of climate change, it is useful to differentiate:

- **Performance Standards**: e.g. a minimum market share (or sales target) of electric vehicles or clean energy; rental vehicle fuel efficiency standards;
- **Technology Standards**: e.g. these can apply to new technology that requires scaling up, or old technology that needs to be phased out (e.g. certain types of refrigerants used in hotels).

**Box 9: ESG reporting and implications for tourism businesses**

More and more countries are making it mandatory for large companies (typically those listed on stock exchanges) to disclose their environmental and social performance. Some countries operate a ‘comply-or-explain’ model where businesses are expected to comply with national ESG reporting standards, or explain why they have not. ESG frameworks (and progress in the private sector) is relevant to national policy because the more organisations report and disclose their climate actions, the easier it will become for government agencies (including NTAs for the case of tourism) to assess progress in the sector. As such, ESG reporting and tourism climate policy can be highly complementary.

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. 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.

Elsewhere, and wider-than-tourism, Hong Kong operates a blanket “comply-or-explain” system, whereby larger companies fall under mandatory ESG reporting standards. These include reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, including Scope 3 to capture impacts along the supply chain. For hotels, for example, this means that information needs to be gathered from all suppliers, even smaller businesses. This creates a ripple effect where more and more businesses have to monitor their emissions.

To achieve greater consistency globally, the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) was established in November 2021. Standards will be created for investors in 140 participating countries. The IFRS has also merged the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). In addition to regulation, it will be increasingly important for tourism companies to report climate performance to secure finance.

### 3.3 Economic levers

In general, economic instruments are the most applied public sector approach to encourage climate mitigation. Pricing instruments, such as carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS), are now covering 22% of global emissions\(^1\). Carbon pricing on selected or all fossil

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fuels is often complemented by other policy, for example to manage disproportionally detrimental impacts on some population sub-groups or industries.

Tourism also applies economic levers, for example New Zealand is charging an International Visitor Levy of NZ$ 35 per international visitor to support tourism infrastructure and conservation. Many countries apply bed taxes, either nationally or managed by local government. Entry fees into National Parks or other government-run attractions also raise capital, often directed towards visitor management. However, at this point it is not common that NTAs develop economic instruments targeted at climate action.

Examples of aviation emission taxes or levies, whilst highly relevant to NTAs, are typically implemented by other agencies. For example the Dutch Air Passengers Tax by the Ministry of Finance (which will increase to almost Euro 30 per departing passenger in 2023), has environmental impacts as a key motivation for the tax, but funds are not earmarked for sustainability action.

One interesting example is the Fiji Environment & Climate Adaptation Levy (ECAL), which helped fund important projects across Fiji to protect the natural environment, mitigate GHG emissions, and adapt to climate hazards. According to the Environmental Levy Act 2017, ECAL is made up of the following: 10% tax on importation of luxury vehicles; Miscellaneous – inclusive of 10% charge on super yacht charters and docking fees; 10% income tax on individual earnings of more than FJ $270,000; 10 cents levy on plastic bags; and 10% ECAL on prescribed services (including most tourism providers). In 2018, the levy raised US$50m and funded 46 projects, including one specifically for tourism. The ECAL was reduced during COVID-19 and removed in 2022, whilst tax incentives to restart tourism were increased.

Other economic instruments include subsidies or financial incentives, including direct government funding, to encourage particular production or consumption decisions. Kiribati, for example, is extending the sustainability agenda through their planned Sustainable Tourism Investment Guidelines, with other Pacific Island countries undertaking similar measures to dovetail future tourism and climate change considerations.

3.4 Information

Information, through capacity building and knowledge management, is a key tool to enable effective climate action in the tourism sector. This can take multiple forms. One way of creating information or evidence base relates to measurement. More and more countries, as well as destinations, are engaging in measuring the GHG emissions generated by the tourism industries to understand their baseline climate impact and to monitor progress, ideally against set GHG emission reduction targets.

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3.4.1 GHG emissions measurement

There are many analytical approaches and methods that are being used to determine the GHG emissions of tourism. Whilst the best method depends on the particular circumstances of a country or destination, it is important that general standards of monitoring, reporting and verification (Box 10) are adhered to when progress of mitigation policies is reported\textsuperscript{55}.

**Box 10: GHG emissions national inventories: Monitoring, Reporting and Verification**

Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) involves several steps to measure the amount of GHG emissions that have been reduced as a result of a specific mitigation activity relative to a baseline. MRV of GHG emissions (at all levels, including countries or companies) help understand the emissions profile and report it in the form of a GHG inventory. Third-party verification is required to ensure quality. The UNFCCC has developed requirements for developing countries for each of the elements:

- Measurement (M) applies both to efforts to address climate change and to the impacts of these efforts. It can also include measurement of the support needed and received, such as finance.
- Reporting (R) is implemented through the national communications, amongst others.
- Verification (V) is addressed at the international level, through International Consultation or it can occur at the national level.

There is flexibility in how the system is developed so to fit the circumstances of each country.

In a simplistic way, there are two methodologies (Figure 7). The top-down approach takes a macro-economic perspective of tourism. One objective is to compare tourism with other sectors such as agriculture or manufacturing. This approach involves the use of Input-Output tables, and Tourism Satellite Accounts are linked with the System of Environmental Economic Accounting. The key metric is dollars, whereby estimated financial flows are multiplied with GHG intensities typical of a tourism-characteristic industry (e.g. kg CO\textsubscript{2}$/ spent on accommodation). There are different versions, and these may focus on the borders of a country (territorial approach), production (e.g. companies registered in a country) or consumption (e.g. emissions by all national citizens or residents)\textsuperscript{56}. As for economic satellite accounts, such tourism GHG inventories sit alongside national inventories. Effectively they extract the tourism component from national GHG statistics. If tourism was added to a country’s GHG inventory there would be double counting.

The 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, at the national and subnational levels. The Statistical Framework for MST covers the measurement of GHG emissions generated by tourism, among the wide range of sustainability topics. It provides the internationally agreed measurement concepts and definitions and to facilitate the organization of data from multiple sources, that can then be used to derive indicators relevant for different purposes.

\textsuperscript{55} For example, see https://agledx.ccafs.cgiar.org/estimating-emissions/unfccc-guidance/

and at different scales. It can also serve to better organize and produce richer data that feed analytical approaches of different kinds. This indicator is calculated as the total GHG emissions associated with domestic and inbound trips that are (i) generated by resident establishments (including tourism characteristic and non-tourism characteristic, adjusted for their tourism share); (ii) generated by visitors directly through their tourism activity; and (iii) the visitors’ share of emissions generated by resident households when visitors stay with them.

Several countries have begun to formally measure the GHG emissions in tourism by applying the Statistical Framework for MST such as Denmark, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland. Statistics New Zealand has included the compilation of the annual GHG account for tourism in its regular data production, alongside the national emissions inventory. Importantly, there needs to be integration between measurement and policy development.

Figure 8 Overview of different approaches to tourism carbon measurement, including macroeconomic methods (Top Down) or micro-scale methods (Bottom Up). CO$_2$-e stands for carbon-dioxide equivalent to represent both CO$_2$ and non-CO$_2$ greenhouse gases.

The top-down approach requires detailed economic and environmental data, as well as specific expertise to combine these accounts. For that reason, some countries prefer simper approaches, for example through bottom up accounting. The bottom-up approach examines tourism components such as transport, accommodation, attractions, restaurants, and retail to estimate the level of activity and resulting emissions. The focus can be either on production (e.g. the units of analysis are tourism businesses) or consumption (the unit of analysis is the tourist) of tourism. For example, if the number of guest nights in a country is known, and an average carbon intensity for one night in a hotel or other types of establishments can be established, then the product of these would provide a bottom-up

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57 These experiences are showcased in the following UNWTO publications: Experiences from Pilot Studies in Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: A synopsis for policy-makers and Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: Learning from Pilots.
accommodation footprint from a consumption perspective. Surveys are often the key tool to collect the necessary data at the national level.

Undertaking comprehensive GHG emission assessments – whether top down or bottom up – can be costly. In those instances, it might still be useful for the NTA to identify a small number of key indicators. For example, the number of passengers from long-distance countries or the volume of registered rental cars could be useful surrogate measures for government to track trends of an increasing or decreasing trend in GHG emissions. Such measures might also be useful in providing a direct link to actions implemented at destination level. The number of businesses that proactively include climate risk in their business planning and monitor their response to those risks could be additional indicators. Sometimes easier to measure the ‘effort’ (e.g. how many visitors have used bicycles) as opposed to outcomes (e.g. how much carbon was saved); although over time it is critical to also measure the emissions impact of climate action.

Findings of tourism emissions measurement should be integrated in tourism policy-making, although it is measured by a government agency outside the NTA (e.g. the national statistics office). The recently established EU Tourism Dashboard is an example of GHG emissions being integrated into a more holistic assessment of tourism.

3.4.2 Informational tools

NTAs play a role in providing information on climate action tailored to tourism needs, including for example on energy efficiency or other carbon reduction opportunities. Fit-for-purpose information can support businesses or other organisations to build capacity, upskill staff and enable informed decision making, for example in relation to most recent technology or low-carbon management approaches. Different governments, including various levels of government (State, Territory, Local) can collaborate on tool development or make available existing material as part of ‘tool boxes’ on NTA websites. An example is Visit Finland’s Sustainable Travel Finland programme (STF), which shares useful resources on its online platform.

As a starting point, the repository of tools and resources of the Glasgow Declaration may be helpful for NTAs. It currently includes the following content and could be expanded with additional resources on, for instance, finance, as they become available:

1. Guidelines for Glasgow Declaration signatories
2. Relevant resources to advance climate action planning
3. Relevant resources to advance on measurement of GHG emissions
4. Relevant resources to advance on regeneration

NTAs could also draw on the Tourism For SDGs platform, especially in countries where climate action is deeply embedded in wider sustainable development initiatives.

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58 https://tourism-dashboard.ec.europa.eu/?lng=en&ctx=tourism
60 https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/glasgow-declaration/tools-resources
61 Provided by UNWTO: https://www.unwto.org/tourism4sdgs
3.5 Education

Tourism growth and the low-carbon transition bring with them demand for skilled workers. Whilst there are many tourism and hospitality degrees globally, alongside apprenticeships and vocational training, there are substantial skill shortages in tourism. The shortage affects all types of skill sets, including hard and soft skills. Sustainability or climate change knowledge would form part of the soft skills in the tourism workforce, and is a key area that deserves more attention. Training should include practical skills in resource efficiency and environmental measures (e.g. recycling) and theoretical knowledge, for example about how tourism contributes to climate change. Portugal in its tourism strategy has set a target of 50,000 professionals being trained in the areas of sustainability between 2020-2023 and for that purpose the “Digital Academy” with its courses and several good practice guides have been launched to reach the target.

NTAs play a role in providing education to tourism businesses, either directly or in partnership with other agencies. In Peru, for example, the Ministry of Energy and Mines has developed a manual for the hotel sector to promote better energy management and clean technology within the establishment. The Hotel Energy Solutions initiative, catalysed by the UNWTO, provides a training manual to assist trainers in the hotel industry and raising the awareness of decision-makers and staff about opportunities for applications and the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and practices. In addition to these existing learning materials, there is a considerable level of tourism sector outreach in the form of webinars and online (training) seminars. These are provided by a wide range of organisations, both globally and nationally. Policymakers are encouraged to identify opportunities, including those related to the Glasgow Declaration, One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, regional organisations (e.g. South Pacific Tourism Organization; Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; etc), and Universities.

3.6 Voluntary

Voluntary climate action is a key component of the low-carbon transition. The role of governments is to enable or support voluntary initiatives. For example, travel and tourism businesses can be encouraged to voluntarily measure and report emissions, and commit to carbon reduction targets, including those related to ‘net zero’. Visit Finland, for example, mobilised over 60 tourism stakeholders to sign the Glasgow Declaration before becoming a signatory of the Declaration themselves.

Encouraging voluntary disclosure is another component of effective climate action. Greater transparency has the potential to attract investors, business partners and customers. In some countries, national tourism boards provide specific incentives for businesses, for example through tourism awards (which may include a climate action category) or preferential listing on official websites (see further below). The ideal outcome would be for new investment to go towards low-carbon infrastructure and other climate initiatives.

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Voluntary agreements can be of an individual business nature or at the sectoral level. For the latter, tourism industry associations may negotiate with government specified action in exchange for support or exemption from other policies. Overall, voluntary commitments may result in greater cost effectiveness and emission reduction outcomes. The Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) scheme by the International Civil Aviation Organization is an example of a global voluntary industry programme to mitigate emissions. Over 60% of aviation emissions occur in international air space and do not form part of national emission obligations. CORSIA involves a market mechanism that requires airlines to purchase carbon credits and compensate for emissions that exceed 2019 levels on specific routes.

There are a growing number of options for tourists to offset their emissions with carbon credits. These are particularly useful in cases where emissions cannot be reduced directly. Several factors influence willingness to contribute to compensation schemes, including awareness, social/cultural norms, attitudes towards the environment, gender, and income. Most carbon offset programs in travel and tourism focus on aviation and some airlines although other service providers (e.g. hotels or some tour operators) also either directly include offsets or offer the option for customers. Despite some adoption, however, overall uptake is low.
4 Climate-aware promotion

Marketing can play a key role in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from tourism, and in many countries it is the biggest lever that NTAs have at their disposal. Two main avenues stand out:

1. To identify market segments that deliver economic value whilst also meeting low-carbon objectives;
2. To design campaigns that encourage visitor behaviours that are compatible with low-carbon tourism models.

4.1 Low-carbon campaigns

Traditionally, tourism boards seek to attract visitors with the aim to increase growth and expenditure. In addition, however, the desirable market mix can be reconsidered with carbon emissions being an additional variable of consideration. Understanding what types of market segments generate what economic benefit and – at the same time – carbon cost can inform strategies of “de-growth” and “optimization”. For NTAs there is a clear role in assessing the carbon implications of their marketing campaigns. Several countries are actively considering this approach and Innovation Norway has now developed a first-generation calculator, CO2rism\(^{64}\), to enable more informed market development\(^{65}\).

Typically, tourism boards focus their resources on attracting international visitors. During the COVID-19 pandemic this has changed significantly. Many countries developed creative campaigns – sometimes supported by financial incentives – to encourage citizens to explore their own country.

- Domestic marketing: “Keep Discovering” by Failte Ireland\(^{66}\); Japan’s “Go to Travel” campaign which subsidised domestic travel\(^{67}\);
- Gamified: Already, pre-COVID-19, India has come up with an innovative campaign called ‘Dekho Apna Desh’ (See Your Country) to encourage domestic tourism. The citizens are required to take a pledge to visit at least 15 destinations across India by 2022 to be rewarded with a prize.\(^{68}\)
- Activity-based: “Closed for maintenance, open for voluntourism” by the Faroe Islands\(^{69}\) in Denmark, focused on reconnecting nature and people; the German National Tourist Board expanded the scope of its ‘Feel Good’ campaign in 2021 to specifically promote Germany’s sustainable tourism offerings\(^{70}\).

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\(^{66}\) Toolkit provided by Failte Ireland: [https://supports.failteireland.ie/business-supports/sales-and-marketing/keep-discovering-marketing-toolkit/](https://supports.failteireland.ie/business-supports/sales-and-marketing/keep-discovering-marketing-toolkit/)

\(^{67}\) Japan: [https://goto.jata-net.or.jp/](https://goto.jata-net.or.jp/)


\(^{69}\) Faroe Islands, Denmark: [https://visitfaroeislands.com/en/closed](https://visitfaroeislands.com/en/closed)

• Future-focused: “Can’t Skip Tomorrow” with the sub-slogan “Tomorrow is Today. Act Today, change Tomorrow. For a better Planet, a better tourism. Travel better, Visit Portugal”\(^{71}\).

Marketing can involve cooperation between multiple NTAs. For example, the Myanmar Strategic Roadmap for Tourism Recovery\(^{72}\) after COVID-19 focussed on a three-step approach for the recovery of tourism: survival, reopen and relaunch. Whilst the reopening phase involved marketing to the domestic visitor, the relaunch involved cooperation with the other Greater Mekong Subregion NTAs. Regional partnerships could also be used to foster low-carbon tourism as they reduce travel distances, compared with further-away markets. Partnerships will be discussed in section 6.

4.2 Changing behaviour

Several countries have developed visitor pledges and codes of conduct to raise awareness of appropriate behaviours amongst visitors. Visitor pledges or care codes (e.g. UNWTO’s Global Code of Ethics for Tourism\(^{73}\)) are forms of social marketing to influence behaviour through targeted campaigns.

A visitor pledge encourages the visitor to behave responsibly. There are several prominent examples: The Icelandic Pledge encourages people to take a more active role in managing impacts (and safety); as such it sets norms or expectations and is likely to increase consciousness. Other examples are New Zealand’s Tiaki Promise that builds on indigenous concepts, and the Palau Pledge (giving a stamp in the visitor’s passport), and the Sustainable Finland Pledge.

Research has examined tourism pledges and suggests that to be effective, they may have to be accompanied by rules and regulations\(^{74}\). Pledges could also be supported by other policy, for example economic levers (see above, Section 4).

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\(^{71}\) Portugal: https://www.visitportugal.com/en/content/cant-skip-tomorrow

\(^{72}\) Myanmar: https://mekongtourism.org/library/myanmar-tourism-strategic-recovery-roadmap-2021-2025/

\(^{73}\) Global Code of Ethics: https://www.unwto.org/global-code-of-ethics-for-tourism

5 Finance and new partnerships

Tourism strategy and policy for climate change can only succeed if the necessary resources and partnerships are in place to implement them. Tourism policy therefore needs to be accompanied by clear budget lines and resourcing (e.g. responsible staff). Additional sources of funding or finance should be indicated, perhaps attached to specific areas of proposed actions.

Governments have the opportunity to use economic levers (see above) to raise revenue from tourism (e.g. taxes) and direct funds specifically towards climate action.

Similarly, NTAs shall be aware that tourism companies and sometimes destination management organisations may be eligible for broader government climate funding, for example to support small businesses and energy audits, to invest into renewable energy, or to be part of nature restoration projects. In many cases, tourism is a beneficiary of wider government investment (Box 11).

Box 11: Funding for energy or carbon initiatives benefitting tourism

Australia: A grants program was launched in 2021 to help small and medium hotels reduce energy consumption. The Hotel Energy Uplift Program is part of a $1.9 billion funding package and provides up to $25,000 per business on “energy-saving projects” (e.g. replacing air conditioning systems, windows or insulation). The grants can also be used to invest in monitoring systems to allow business owners to better manage their energy use.

France: As part of the COVID-19 response and recovery package an investment of EUR 4.7bn was made for the development of rail transport, especially passenger night trains which can replace short-haul air travel.

Iceland: The country established an Energy Fund for electric charging stations at tourism accommodation providers with additional incentives to increase the proportion of low emission vehicles within rental car fleets.

NTAs have a role in progressively creating an enabling environment in which there is finance for wider tourism sector transition. Some of this could be in the form of direct incentives provided by the NTA to sector initiatives or through working with financial organisations in creating new instruments that are applicable to tourism. Here, the nature of tourism business and their often small size needs to be considered (Box 12).

Box 12: Sustainability-linked loans

North Queensland Airports (NQA)’s sustainability-linked loan (SLL) is the first in Australia to target biodiversity and natural capital, whilst also considering greenhouse gas emissions and indigenous employment. NQA owns and operates Cairns Airport (land holdings include a considerable amount of Far North Queensland’s coastal forest), as well as Mackay Airport and Mackay Airport Hotel. Almost half the company’s 350 hectares of land is carbon-sequestering mangrove forests. The SLL involves NQA working in partnership with the Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation and the local Yirrganydji people. The emissions KPI requires NQA to reduce scope-one and scope-two greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025 and to measure and reduce its scope-three emissions.

5.1 Climate finance for developing countries

A particular opportunity for developing countries relates to ‘Climate Finance’. This type of finance involves monetary flows from developed to developing countries to enable a transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient development. The instruments can include grants, concessional loans, equity investments, and guarantees. They may involve public, private, or multilateral sources.

The global climate finance architecture is complex and changes over time. It involves multilateral channels (inside and outside the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism), bilateral flows and regional initiatives. Some recipient countries have now set up national climate change funds (e.g. the Maldives Climate Change Trust Fund) to coordinate finance from multiple partners/countries and align it national priorities.

For NTAs there is an opportunity to either establish tourism stand-alone initiative that attract climate finance, or to add tourism elements to larger (and cross-sector) programmes, for example those related to renewable energy installations, resilience building, biodiversity conservation, or education programmes. There are different ways tourism stakeholders can access funds (Box 13). The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other partners, for example, funded the Marine Spatial Planning Initiative (MSP). This initiative aims to ensure sustainable and resilient marine tourism by promoting the conservation of marine ecosystems and supporting the development of sustainable, low-impact tourism activities like snorkelling, diving, and sailing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13: How can tourism access climate finance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which funding source</strong>: There are several sources of climate finance, such as multilateral development banks, international climate funds (e.g., Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, Climate Investment Fund), bilateral donors, and private sector investors. Determine which sources and what types of funds (e.g. grants, loans) are most suitable for your situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify a sustainable tourism project</strong>: Design a climate change mitigation and/or adaptation project that advances climate action in your country and that can demonstrate clear climate benefits. Ideally, the benefits can be quantified, for example the amount of GHG reduced as a result of this investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build partnerships and local capacity</strong>: Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including local communities, and other government agencies, to ensure that the project addresses local needs and creates synergies with other activities. Strengthen local capacity to implement and manage the project. This is also important for the long-term sustainability of the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare a funding proposal</strong>: Develop a comprehensive funding proposal that clearly outlines the objectives, activities, expected outcomes, budget, and monitoring and evaluation framework (e.g. indicators of success). Ensure that the proposal meets the requirements and guidelines of the targeted funding sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submit the proposal</strong>: Establish a relationship and submit the funding proposal to the appropriate funding sources; maintain open communication with them. Be prepared to provide additional information, address concerns, and negotiate the terms of the funding agreement, if necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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76 The Heinrich Boell Stiftung in Washington on their Climate Funds Update website provides a very useful visualisation of this global architecture.
77 Seychelles: [https://seyccat.org/](https://seyccat.org/)
Implement, monitor, and report: If successful, implement the project according to the agreed-upon plan, regularly monitor progress, and evaluate the project’s outcomes. Provide periodic progress reports and share lessons learned with the funding organization and others, as required.

An interesting option for developing countries is debt-for-nature swaps or the more recently explored debt-for-adaptation swaps. In 2021, for example, Belize re-purchased a quarter of their total public debt ($553 million), in exchange for protecting 30% of its ocean and the ecologically important Mesoamerican Reef. Protecting coral reefs is a well established adaptation measure to protect ecosystems as well as coastlines. NTAs can engage with other government agencies to connect such initiatives to ecotourism opportunities.

5.2 New Partnerships for finance and resource pooling

Some challenges are too big to be tackled by government or industry alone, and pooling of resources and interests is necessary to arrive at the best outcomes for everyone (see Box 14). Partnerships can help NTAs to be more effective in addressing tourism’s GHG emissions. They can be established at a national, regional or international level. Partnerships can involve public and private sector actors, so called Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and civil society, and they can form across different jurisdictions for example bringing together national and local government initiatives. PPPs are very common in tourism, for example in the context of community-based tourism development, management of natural resources and national parks, or innovation.

Box 14: Funding that supports biodiversity, climate action and tourism assets

Tourism relies on healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic several countries have invested into natural areas, including with the aim to provide employment to tourism workforce and build nature connectedness in a sector that depends so much on thriving environments. New Zealand, for example, made available NZD1.3 billion (USD0.9 billion) for its “Jobs for Nature (J4N)” programme, creating over 10,000 jobs and providing a unique injection into biodiversity projects (New Zealand Ministry for the Environment, 2020). The benefits were multiple, including ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration, and capacity building of tourism staff in environmental literacy. Jobs for Nature involved several government departments, including the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment where tourism policy is housed.

Similarly, the United Kingdom launched a GBP 40 million (USD51 million) “green recovery challenge fund” to protect 2000 jobs and create additional 3000 employment in habitat restoration and green space creation. Climate change impacts were explicitly identified as a co-benefits (UK Government, 2020). The initiative brings together the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Natural England, National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Partnerships may also be formed at the cross-sectoral level, for example with agriculture to enable links between (organic) farming and tourism to develop local supply chains. Localised supply chains also have the benefit that they are likely lower-carbon due to reduced transport costs and more resilient in the face of disruptions. The example of a recent policy by Investment into low carbon bicycle tourism also demonstrates how collaboration across

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different public sector agencies, including NTAs, can achieve multiple climate goals, including carbon reduction (Box 15).

**Box 15: Cycle networks highlighting the benefit of multi-agency collaboration**

Cycle tourism is increasingly popular as it offers a low-carbon form of mobility that has the potential to create unique visitor experiences that are deeply connected to place. Many countries are now investing into cycle networks for visitors and locals alike. Lessons learned from an Interreg project in the European Union highlight that a coherent policy framework is required to maximise the wide range of desired outcomes. This involves policymakers from a range of domains, including mobility/transport, infrastructure investment, regional economic development, spatial planning, and health and sport. Well-designed collaboration that involves all relevant stakeholders can help maximise co-benefits, in this case emissions reductions, mobility, and new tourism products in regional destinations.

A national plan can be complemented by regional cycling plans; whereby a bottom-up approach that involves participatory processes will deliver the best outcomes for communities. These regional plans may form part of Destination Management Plans.

Some finance partnerships involve global organisations. A recent example was the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and UNWTO ‘Hotel Greening: Supporting knowledge development to unlock green finance’ initiative that was piloted in seven countries (India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand and Vietnam). The project involved a COVID-recovery related medium-term credit opportunity for hotels that sought to retrofit their premises for better sustainability performance. Specific instruments explored included:

- Tax credits to offset additional costs associated with resource efficient construction materials or processes
- Expedited permitting to prioritize those permits that relate to green construction; in some cases waiving of permit fees was considered
- Grants and loans to cities to incentivize solar power
- Technical assistance to inspectors and government service providers on auditing green buildings
- Electricity metering to support independent power production and grid connectivity
- Public campaigns to build support for green buildings Legislation to integrate certification standards into building codes

Aviation emissions represent probably the most vexing challenge for tourism mitigation. Several partnerships have emerged in recent years in response. The Clean Skies for Tomorrow Coalition, hosted by the World Economic Forum, provides a global mechanism for executives and public leaders to abate carbon emissions from air travel. Together with leaders from industry, government, and civil society, this public-private-partnership is driving a shift to zero-emissions aviation through sustainable aviation fuels, other mitigating

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79 [https://www.interregeurope.eu/find-policy-solutions/webinar/webinar-recording-on-cycling-tourism](https://www.interregeurope.eu/find-policy-solutions/webinar/webinar-recording-on-cycling-tourism)


technologies, and emissions abatement investments. The Jet Zero Council in the United Kingdom is a national partnership between industry and government that aims to achieve a 10% share of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in the fuel mix by 2030 and zero emission transatlantic flight within a generation. The goal is to catalyse innovation.

5.3 Governance

Partnerships can be formed as a basis to improve tourism governance. Often, these partnerships build horizontal (e.g. with other sectors) or vertical bridges (e.g. national to local level) to jointly achieve better outcomes. Two examples are provided in Box 14.

Box 14: Innovative tourism governance

In the Greater Mekong region six countries are working together to join forces on a wide range of aspects, including marketing, infrastructure and sustainable development. The Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) brings together grassroots businesses to co-create marketing content and stories, but also to enable exchange around innovation and sustainability. Climate action is one of several dedicated working groups.

The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) is another example of a governance arrangement that supports 21 Pacific Island government member states, including on climate action in tourism. Having developed an overarching sustainable tourism policy framework, the SPTO are now working on sustainable tourism indicators that can be used by members for consistent measurement.

Vertical partnerships (e.g. between central government and local stakeholders) are particularly important for tourism, as visitor activity occurs ‘at place’. National climate policy needs to be suitable to take into account the diverse contexts of destinations where tourism occurs. Aspects to be considered include, amongst others, remoteness of the location, vulnerability to climate risks, potential for clean energy installations, community preferences, and ecosystem opportunities or constraints. NTAs can benefit from climate action driven at the local level, including by Destination Marketing/Management Organisations. The Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR) provides an example of an organisation that is taking a network-wide approach to establish guidelines and requirements for destinations to measure and act upon carbon emissions.

It is useful to look beyond tourism alone to understand the benefits of higher level partnership arrangements. The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) is an example of a long standing European regional partnership that addresses key challenges related to sustainable mobility. It encourages governments, at national and local levels, to pursue an integrated approach to policymaking and to put sustainable mobility at the top of the international agenda. Several destinations have drawn on funding and tools provided by the initiative, for example related to low-carbon transport options such as cycling and walking.

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83 https://necstour.eu/
84 https://unece.org/thepep