

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL: WILLINGNESS TO PAY VS. ACTUAL BEHAVIOR



According to the UNWTO 2014 report, the number of international visitors is expected to rise from an average of nearly 43 million tourists per year, to approximately 1.8 billion each year. In order to make this a reality, something has to be done. There is a dare need to enhance tourism sustainability.

However, with the advance of the growth of the number of international tourists, there will be profound negative impacts. For instance, one of the major setbacks in the rise of international tourists is that a Caribbean cruise sea ship is likely to create approximately 50 tons of solid waste, 130, 000 liters of grey water, and additional 800, 000 liters of sewage. All these are harmful toxins to a healthy environment.

The demand for sustainable tourism does not originate with the investors in the tours and travel sector. **On the contrary, clients are on the constant demand for sustainability in the tourism sector.** According to studies that have been carried out in recent years, quite a number of travelers are more than willing to spend whatever amount of their money on a worthwhile travel and leisure venture.

The Travel Foundation & Forum conducted a report in 2012 where it was revealed that over 75% of tourists actually want a holiday that is more responsible. Another study by the TripAdvisor indicated that 71% of clients that were surveyed would make informed and environmental-friendly choices in 2015. Two other studies that were conducted in 2011 showed that sustainability is one of the major factors that influence their choice of vacation destinations. In fact, the reports that were done by Kuoni and CondeNast Traveler recorded a 22% and 58% respectively.

In order to evaluate the response of those who demanded sustainability, a study was conducted by Ryerson University in 2014. Among other aims of the study was the clients' past spending. The research went ahead to reveal that 73% of the tourists understood the term sustainable tourism and that they would point to specific things that they deemed sustainable. Some of these were staying at a green hotel and donating to sustainability causes. Thirty-five per cent of those studied had so far stayed in green hotels in the past year but over a half of them did not know or were undecided on sustainable branding.

Other indications of sustainability were shown by tourists buying local food while they are travelling. A smaller portion of the respondents purchased carbon offsets and others donated to local sustainability projects.

Although it is not in all parts of the world, the research reveals that travelers' behaviors shift. **It is clear that in order to maintain and achieve sustainable tourism, prices must match consumer comparative options.** Additionally, it is evident that although visitors may beware of what sustainable tourism is, they may not be in a position to point out to sustainable travel options especially when making purchasing decisions.

Lastly, the study had this appeal: If sustainable tourism is a thing to be really achieved, it then should change from becoming an exception to a norm.

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<http://www.tourism-review.com/study-travelers-not-sure-about-sustainable-travel-products-news4632>