

HOW TO DESIGN A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY IN THE SHORT TERM



change.

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world and accounts for 10% of the world's GDP and employment. By 2030, the number of travelers is expected to reach 1.8 billion, with Asia as the main tourist destination. That same year, the world population will be 8.6 billion, an increase that forces the world to rethink mass consumption, invested resources, and the much-debated climate

Sustainable tourism is a set of activities carried out with respect to the natural environment, resources, culture and traditions of a place. According to the definition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), it is one that “takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

Sustainable Tourism as a Development Strategy

Knowing in advance the population growth and the current climate crisis, **it is more than necessary to promote a sustainable tourism plan that is in line with the sustainable development goals** of the UN 2030 Agenda. However, this does not imply that this alternative form of tourism is not already here: there are very good examples of sustainable tourism in many countries that bet on activities that are respectful of the environment, promote slow travel, and create a different tourism development.

The sustainable tourism strategy often based on key pillars:

Socioeconomic Growth

After more than four decades of continuous growth, it is time for tourism to reconsider its growth model, but without neglecting the current needs of the industry, the region and the population. The actions undertaken must respond to fair conditions of competitiveness and profitability. Digital transformation is essential to achieve this goal.

Respect and Preservation of Natural and Cultural Wealth

A tourism model that does not take into account the natural and cultural wealth of the community cannot be sustainable. So an important pillar of any sustainable tourism strategy is promoting a tourism model whose primary goal is to respect and preserve the local extensive heritage. Economic interests cannot be above this ethical basis; on the contrary, developing a sustainable tourism business implies finding respectful options to provide traditional services.

Social Benefits

This pillar seeks a fairer distribution of economic benefits generated by the industry. The growth of a sustainable model of tourism will allow facing important social issues such as depopulation of rural areas and overpopulation in large cities.

Wide Involvement

Collective participation refers to structuring governance mechanisms in which the state and local administrations work on equal terms at all levels.

Adaptation

A sustainable tourism model cannot be developed while ignoring the challenges of the industry. All actions taken should be aimed towards improving the quality of services offered, but also to train an entire industry exposed to constant changes.

None of this is possible without an optimal technological infrastructure that includes support networks for small and medium businesses. Although the road ahead is long, the prospects for the medium-term look positive, but it is the responsibility of everyone involved, both consumers and businessmen, to work the next decades to achieve this.

Top Sustainable Countries

Euromonitor International released a ranking of the top 10 countries that promoted sustainable tourism in 2020. For this, the market research company analyzed the behavior of seven main factors: environment, social, economy, demand, transport, risks, and accommodation.

Sweden leads the ranking for driving sustainable travel and travel experience. The country's rural and regional tourism, in addition to improving its economy, environment and society, has boosted its tourism industry.

The top ten countries that developed and promoted sustainable tourism in 2020 were:

- Sweden
- Finland
- Austria
- Estonia
- Norway
- Slovakia
- Iceland
- Latvia
- France
- Slovenia

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