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# Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030

## HIGHLIGHTS



# **Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030**

## **HIGHLIGHTS**





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# Introduction

## Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030

As one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, tourism is increasingly recognized as a vital contributor to job and wealth creation, environmental protection, cultural preservation and poverty alleviation. A well-designed and managed tourism sector can help preserve the natural and cultural heritage assets upon which it depends, empower host communities, generate trade opportunities, and foster peace and intercultural understanding.

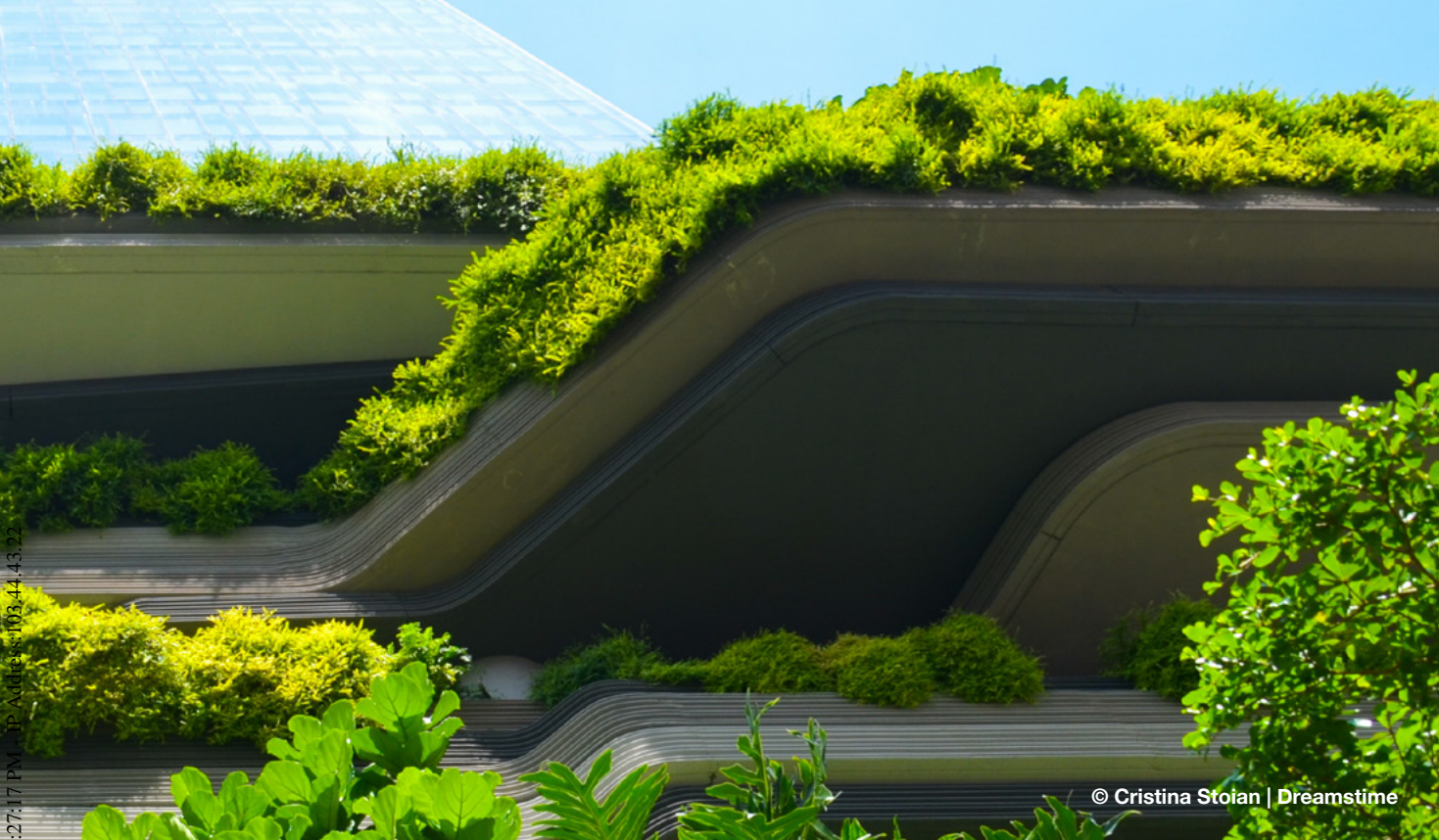
Nevertheless, the growing number of people travelling internationally and domestically each year also poses growing challenges including those related to greenhouse gas emissions, economic leakages, resource management or impact on local communities and cultural assets. Therefore, the harnessing of tourism's positive contribution to sustainable development and the mitigation of the sector's potential adverse effects calls for strong partnerships and decisive action by all tourism stakeholders in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## The Sustainable Development Goals – new opportunities for tourism

Tourism's role in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be significantly strengthened when sustainable development becomes a shared responsibility and moves to the core of policies and business decision-making within the tourism sector.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are committed to inspire leadership and facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders to advance the contribution of tourism to the SDGs and the targets of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations General Assembly designation of 2017 as the International Year for Sustainable Tourism for Development sets the ideal stage for the sector to reflect on its role and embark on a common journey towards 2030; a journey guided by the SDGs as reflected in the commitment of all UNWTO member states at the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly to the Chengdu Declaration on Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals.





The *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030* report aims to build knowledge, empower and inspire tourism stakeholders to take necessary action to accelerate the shift towards a more sustainable tourism sector by aligning policies, business operations and investments with the SDGs. The report highlights the links between tourism and the SDGs and provides recommendations on how to steer the road towards 2030. It is based on an analysis

of 64 countries' Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)<sup>1</sup> on the SDGs – submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> in 2016 and 2017 –, eight Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS)<sup>3</sup> country roadmaps and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities of 60 global tourism companies. The present Highlights summarize the main findings of the report.

<sup>1</sup> Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the SDGs are presented by UN member states as a basis for the regular reviews by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. They aim to facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned regarding progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national and sub-national levels. The 64 VNRs of 2016 and 2017 are available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/> (05-12-2017).

<sup>2</sup> The High-level Political Forum is the UN's central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. As part of the Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (ECOSOC) serves as the Secretariat of the HLPF. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017a), *High-level Political Forum – Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform* (online), available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf> (05-12-2017).

<sup>3</sup> Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) is a UN approach to assist developing countries' own efforts towards the integration of SDGs in national and local development policy frameworks.

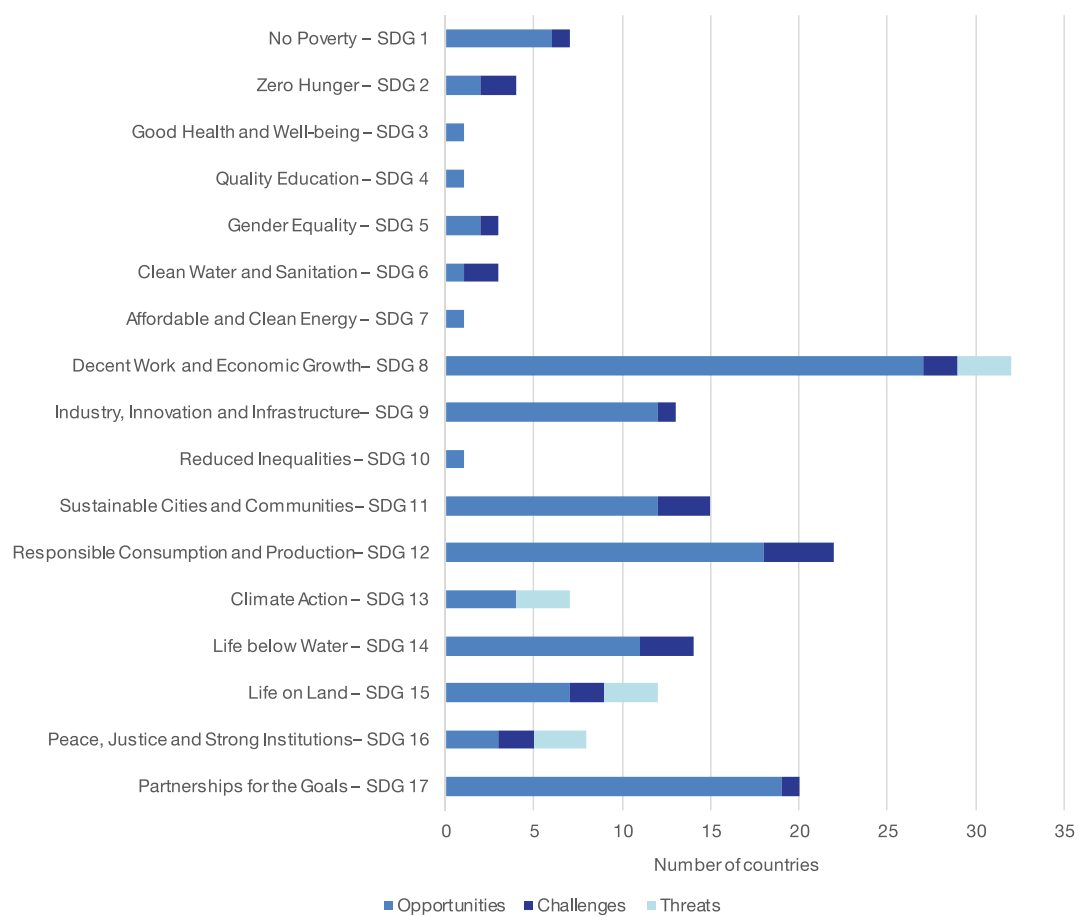








**Figure 1:** Tourism opportunities, challenges and threats in relation to the SDGs, as reported in 41 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)







## Harnessing tourism's potential to advance the SDGs requires integrated policies

Despite the clear identification of tourism's potential to advance the SDGs, few tourism policymakers – in both developed and developing countries – seem to be currently involved in national SDG planning. The full involvement of tourism administrations in the institutional mechanisms for the SDGs, as well as their active participation in the formulation of national policies, strategies, action plans and processes is fundamental. Tourism policymakers must also strengthen their dialogue with other line ministries, the private sector and other relevant tourism stakeholders to take advantage of tourism's interlinkages with – and impacts on – other sectors and industries. Similarly, addressing the challenges and threats of tourism as identified above will require integrated policies that fully take into account tourism's crosscutting impacts on the SDGs.

## Key points:

- **Policymakers widely recognize tourism's contribution to the SDGs:** 41 out of 64 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) mention tourism. SDGs 8, 12 and 17, on 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', 'Responsible Consumption and Production' and 'Partnerships for the Goals', respectively, appear as having the strongest link with tourism.
- **Active engagement of tourism policymakers in national SDG processes is indispensable:** Only 13 of the 41 VNRs mentioning tourism reported involvement of tourism policymakers in national SDG planning, suggesting that they may not be exerting sufficient influence within the institutional mechanisms that drive the national processes for SDG implementation. This may lead to missed opportunities in harnessing tourism's true potential in completing the 2030 Agenda.





- **Public policy needs coherent dialogue among all stakeholders:** In order for tourism to contribute to and benefit from the progress towards the SDGs, effective collaboration with line ministries, the private sector and other tourism stakeholders is quintessential for policy coherence. Given the integrated nature of the SDGs, the various interrelations allow for combined efforts at all sectorial and spatial levels to optimize progress towards the SDGs.
- **Challenges and threats in tourism require urgent policy measures:** While recognizing tourism's value in advancing and even accelerating implementation and achievement of the SDGs, both the VNRs and the MAPS country reports have also raised important concerns about some of tourism's most pressing challenges and threats that could slow down or even negatively affect SDG progress. The reported challenges and external threats – relating mostly to unsustainable resource consumption, climate change or global economic instability – must be addressed by policymakers.
- **Policymakers must encourage and support the tourism private sector:** The sustainability of the tourism private sector depends to a large extent on a supportive policy framework and financing, that would enable and incentivize small and large companies to develop business models that foster inclusive green growth – in particular in those areas where voluntary action is not sufficient to achieve the SDGs.





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## The SDGs and the private sector – the business case for the Goals

Private companies are key players in the tourism sector. They include accommodation providers, transport companies, tour operators, attractions, destinations management companies, technology companies and many more. Given that every tourism destination relies on a well-functioning society, a healthy environment and a stable economy, the private sector has a large role to play in ensuring all three of these conditions. Businesses must aim to generate profit, take care of the environment they operate in and create a positive social impact. They can lead tourism towards a more sustainable path by embracing sustainable models and practices that do not undermine profitability; and on the contrary, make business sense. Yet, in order to become more competitive, companies need to operate in a supportive policy framework.

### Building competitiveness – key to sustainability for tourism industries

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) analysis of 60 large tourism companies representing accommodation,

transport and tour operators has shown that most of the companies engage in activities that relate to their own business operations followed by host-community support, suggesting that competitiveness and profitability remain the major drivers of sustainability in all tourism industries. This, in turn, produces co-benefits for society and the environment. Furthermore, their primary response to sustainability is anchored in building competitiveness rather than philanthropy or donations (see annex 2).

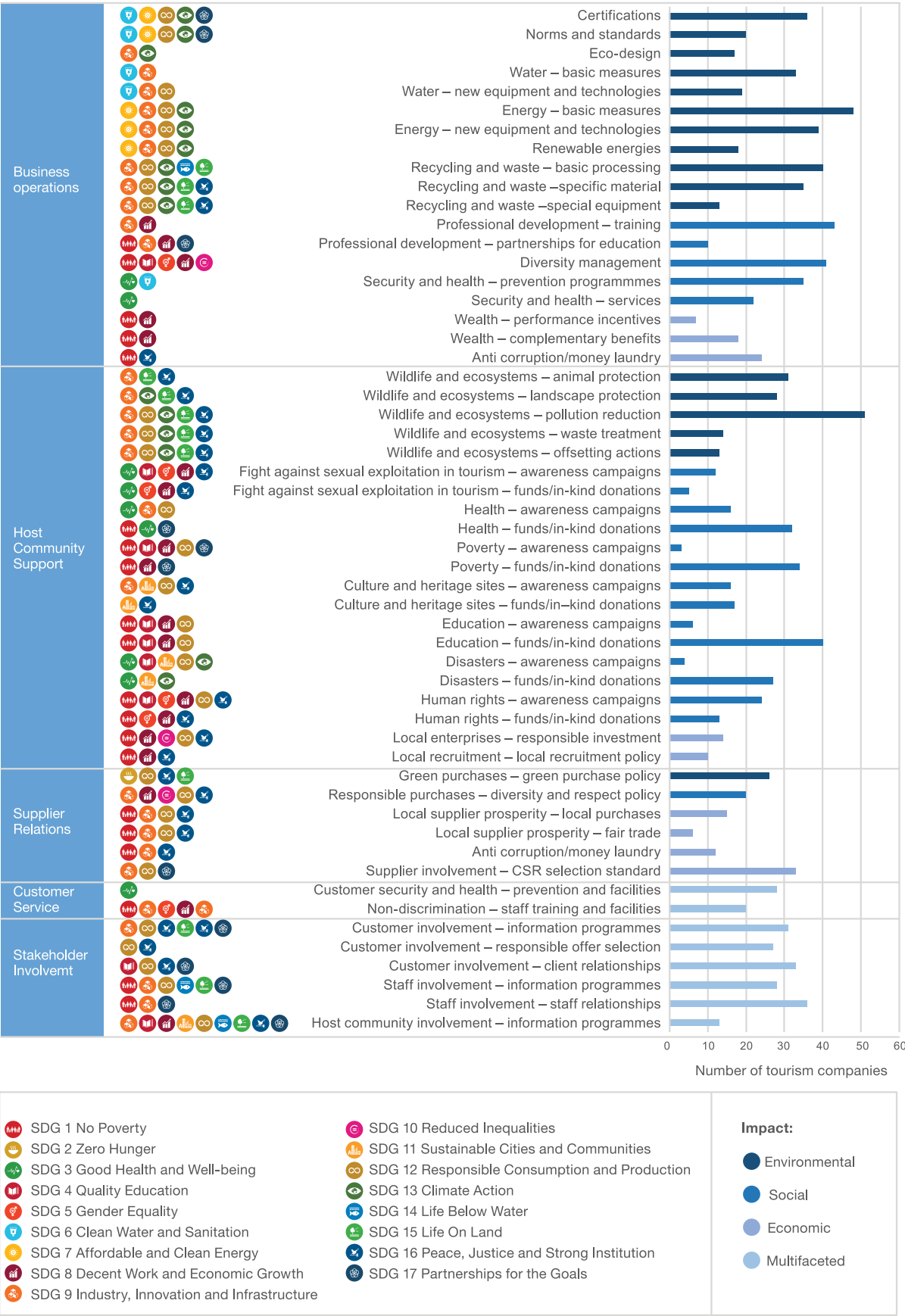
### The private sector can lead tourism towards the achievement of the SDGs through the internalization of the SDGs

The private sector can contribute to all 17 SDGs, as shown by the analysis of CSR activities of 60 large international companies from the accommodation, transport and tour operator industries (figure 3). Some tourism companies already recognize that aligning business goals with the SDGs can bring about greater efficiencies, cost savings and competitiveness while enhancing their social license to operate. The private sector relates most of its actions to SDGs 12, 13, 1, 4, and 8 on 'Responsible Consumption and Production',



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Figure 2: Matching the SDGs with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions, by area of engagement and type of impact



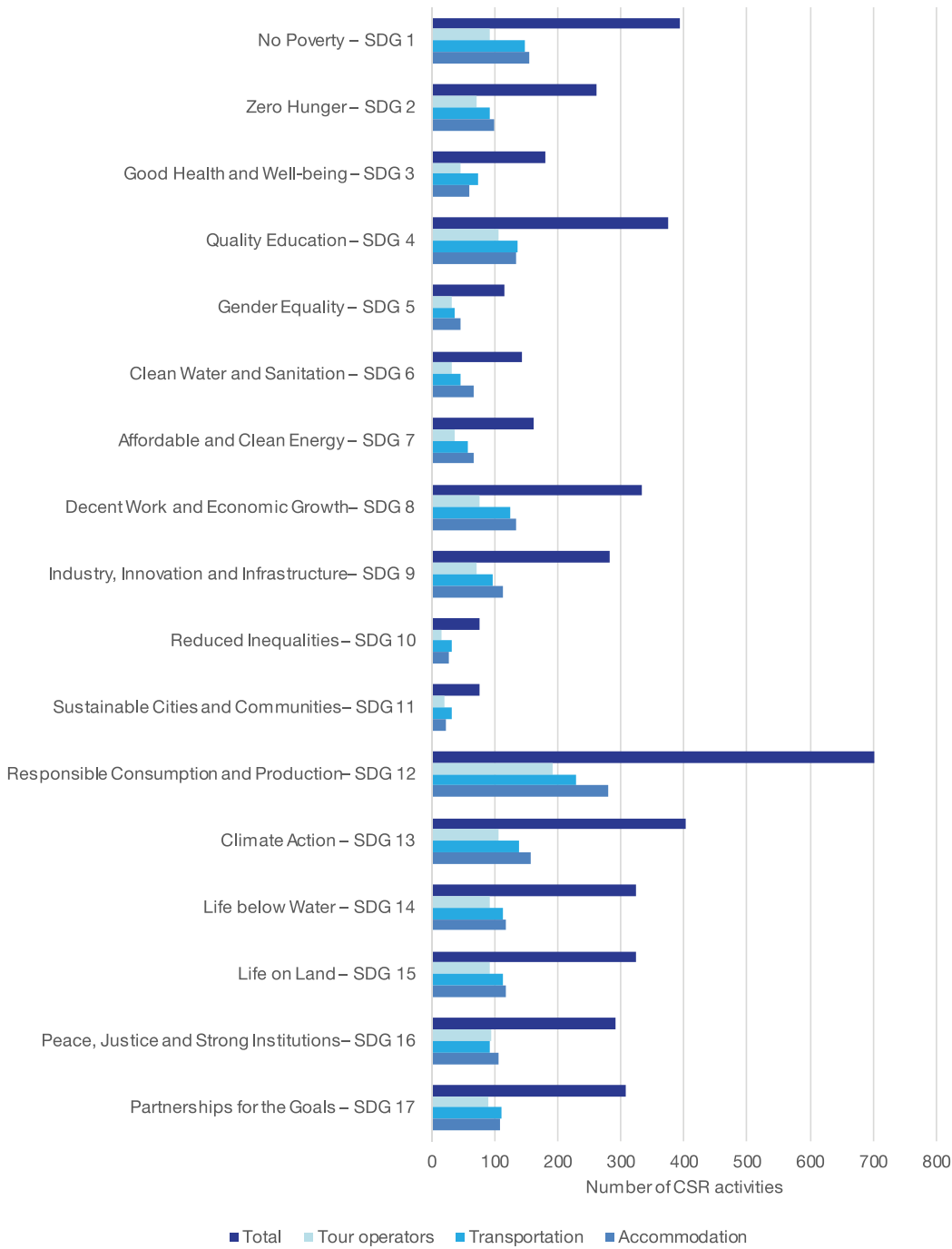
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‘Climate Action’, ‘No Poverty’, ‘Quality Education’ and ‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’, respectively. By contrast, very few of the activities address issues related to SDGs 10 and 11 on ‘Reduced Inequalities’ and ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’, respectively.

**Competitiveness remains a key driver for businesses to achieve sustainability**

Tourism companies are most likely to address those SDGs that improve their business operations. This, in

**Figure 3:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities per SDG, in total and by tourism industry





turn, supports the business case for sustainability. Even though the tourism private sector shows commitment to the SDGs, efforts must go beyond the improvement of operational efficiencies and philanthropy. The SDGs must be integrated into core business activities, improving private sector competitiveness and protecting tourism assets. By embracing more inclusive and sustainable business models, the private sector can improve risk management, increase business efficiencies, promote product differentiation and reduce leakage. Business must ensure, however, that profits are retained locally and re-invested in the local value chain.

### Improving performance by measuring impact

Both countries and companies lack frameworks to capture, aggregate and report on the full economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. For tourism businesses to play a more significant role in realizing the SDGs, they must be able to measure their progress, benchmark themselves against comparable businesses and incrementally improve their performance. At the country level, UNWTO's Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) Initiative,<sup>4</sup> as well as statistical capacity building and knowledge sharing are also necessary to inform evidence-based decision-making and policies. Launched with the support of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Initiative aims to develop an international statistical framework for measuring tourism's role in sustainable development, including economic, environmental and social dimensions.

### Creating an enabling environment for increased private sector investment

Policymakers can strengthen SDG engagement and commitment from the private sector, financiers and investors by devising supportive policy frameworks and providing smart subsidies and incentives that are conducive to increased competitiveness, inclusiveness

and sustainability. Furthermore, the private sector – particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which represent the bulk of the tourism sector – must be sensitized and given access to knowledge and capacity, including in new technologies that encourage investment in greener and more sustainable businesses. In those areas where voluntary action is not sufficient, the public sector needs to define clear targets, enabling policies and smart incentives that support and guide sustainable business activities and foster innovation. Furthermore, integrated and inclusive policies and strategies are needed to expand local production in the tourism supply chain, reinforce local capacities and remove barriers to trade.

### Key points:









- **Competitiveness is the key business driver of sustainability:** Since many CSR activities are related to the business case for sustainability, companies are most likely to engage on SDGs where they can also improve their business results, which in most cases includes efficiency measures. Yet, the mitigation of negative impacts must go beyond resource efficiency and include more drastic measures along the entire tourism value chain.
- **Effective management requires consistent measurement of impact:** While the tourism private sector can contribute to all 17 SDGs, its impact is still difficult to measure given that there is no universal means by which travel and tourism businesses and destinations can measure and monitor their progress or contribution towards the SDGs.
- **There is little awareness of the economic benefits of sustainability:** Tourism enterprises, SMEs in particular, often lack awareness of how efforts and investment in sustainable business operations can also significantly boost competitiveness and profitability, while increasing customer and host community satisfaction.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see: World Tourism Organization (2017), *Measuring Sustainable Tourism: A call for Action – Report of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics, Manila, Philippines, 21 – 23 June 2017*, UNWTO, Madrid.

**Table 1:** Tourism links with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): public policy and business Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions

Public policy		Companies and CSR actions
<b>SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b> Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills requirement and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women.		On-going staff training; Partnerships for education; Diversity management; Complementary benefits; In-kind donations for education, Poverty and human rights; Responsible investment and local recruitment; Local purchases and fair-trade
<b>SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture</b> Tourism can spur sustainable agricultural by promoting the production and supplies to hotels, and sales of local products to tourists. Agro-tourism can generate additional income while enhancing the value of the tourism experience.		Local and green purchase (food/agriculture); Local supplies and fair trade; Host community involvement; Wildlife and ecosystem protection; Offsetting actions
<b>SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b> Tax income generated from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services, improving maternal health, reduce child mortality and preventing diseases. Visitors fees collected in protected areas can as well contribute to health services.		Health prevention programs; Fight against sex tourism, health and disasters awareness and donations; Customer security and health – prevention and facilities
<b>SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all</b> Tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness. A skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect jobs for youth, women, and those with special needs, who should benefit through educational means.		Professional development and training; Partnerships for education; Diversity management; Education for culture and heritage; In-kind donations for education; On-going staff training, information, facilities; Host community involvement
<b>SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b> Tourism can empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from MMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society.		Diversity management; Awareness campaigns and in-kind donations towards fight against sex tourism and human rights; Non-discrimination values in staff recruitment and training
<b>SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b> Tourism investment requirement for providing utilities can play a critical role in achieving water access and security, as well as hygiene and sanitation for all. The efficient use of water in tourism, pollution control and technology efficiency can be key to safeguarding our most precious resource.		New equipment and technologies; Prevention programs for security and health; Standards and certifications; Community involvement
<b>SDG 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b> As a sector, which is energy intensive, tourism can accelerate the shift towards increased renewable energy shares in the global energy mix. By promoting investments in clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce green house gases, mitigate climate change and contribute to access of energy for all.		New equipment and technologies; Prevention programs for security and health; Standards and certifications; Community involvement
<b>SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all</b> Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts.		Training for professional development; Diversity management and local recruitment; Performance incentives-complementary benefits; Responsible investment and local purchases; Community involvement
<b>SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b> Tourism development relies on good public and private infrastructure. The sector can influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative and resource-efficient and moving towards low carbon growth, thus attracting tourists and other sources of foreign investment.		Eco-design; New equipment and technologies in energy and water resources; Renewable energies; Equipment and materials for recycling and waste; On-going staff training



Public policy	Companies and CSR actions
<b>SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries</b> Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is an effective means for economic integration and diversification.	 Diversity management; Local enterprise investment; Responsible purchases; Non-discrimination values in staff recruitment and training; Community involvement
<b>SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b> Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.	 Certifications; Partnerships; Awareness campaigns, in-kind donations for culture and heritage sites; Host community involvement; Clean energy; Resource efficiency; Biodiversity conservation initiatives
<b>SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b> The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.	 Efficiency technologies for energy and water; Renewable energies; Recycling – waste treatment; Pollution reduction; Local purchase and enterprises; Local supplier; Community involvement; Responsible investment; Guest involvement
<b>SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b> Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. Tourism stakeholders should play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.	 Eco-design; New equipment and technologies; Renewable energies; Recycling and waste; Wildlife and ecosystems – landscape protection; Pollution reduction; Offsetting actions; Awareness campaign and in-kind donations for disasters
<b>SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b> Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.	 Wildlife and ecosystems animal protection; Pollution reduction; Waste treatment; Offsetting actions; Green purchases; Information for customers and staff; Community involvement
<b>SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss</b> Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.	 Wildlife and ecosystems animal protection; Pollution reduction; Waste treatment; Offsetting actions; Green purchases; Information for customers and staff; Community involvement
<b>SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions</b> As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies.	 Human rights awareness; In-kind donations; Local enterprises – responsible Investment; Local recruitment and purchases; Diversity and respect policy; Anti-corruption money laundering; Client relationships; Host community involvement
<b>SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</b> Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing are at the core for achieving the 2030 Agenda.	 Professional development; Partnerships for education; Wildlife and ecosystems animal protection; Offsetting actions; Supplier and Customer involvement; Client relationships; Staff involvement and relationships; Community involvement

### 3.

## New ways of financing sustainable tourism for SDG success

### Financing of tourism is key to SDG success

Advancing tourism's contribution to the SDGs not only requires political will and private sector commitment, but also new and better financing frameworks. An increasing number of multilateral development banks and donor countries recognize tourism's role in sustainable development and support developing countries in achieving the SDGs by investing in sustainable tourism or providing trade-related technical assistance. Resource mobilization efforts and international public finance for tourism, including through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Aid for Trade (AfT), must be scaled up to generate a positive and long-lasting impact. It is imperative, therefore, that tourism becomes a priority sector for sustainable development at all levels.

### Aligning development cooperation with the SDGs and countries' needs

Development cooperation becomes significantly more effective when donors and recipient countries recognize

and consider tourism's challenges and threats and fully align their priorities and objectives to the SDGs. However, there is still a significant lack and even diminishing availability of financing for sustainable tourism projects, programmes and initiatives – an obstacle that must be overcome. Coordination of development assistance between development banks and donor countries, and an inclusive, whole-of-government approach can increase resource efficiencies, improve the quality and longevity of positive socio-economic and conservation outcomes and mitigate possible negative impacts on the SDGs.

### Going beyond development cooperation to boost support of the SDGs

Innovative financing mechanisms can attract international, domestic, private and public funding and resources to sustainable tourism. Furthermore, public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships can strengthen private sector engagement and galvanize the support needed to achieve the SDGs. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) for least developed countries and the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes





on Sustainable Consumption and Production, as well as green finance and biodiversity conservation funds can be powerful means through which tourism authorities can channel resources to sustainable tourism. In addition, National Tourism Export Strategies (NTES) can reinforce capacities, strengthen tourism value chains, and enhance local economic impact. There are also opportunities to maximize local production in the supply chain by removing barriers to trade, shaping sound investment policies and building capacity and incentives for SMEs to access loans and credits for greening their operations.

Access to financing is paramount to building a competitive, innovative and sustainable tourism sector in service of the 2030 Agenda. Yet, international assistance in terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Aid for Trade (AfT) for tourism remains modest and needs to be scaled up. In order to make real strides in attracting more funding, it is essential that tourism ministries are fully involved in the government processes, given that ODA funding is often managed by other ministries. Policymakers should also ensure that tourism is identified as a priority sector in national and international policy documents and encourage the participation of all stakeholders in national governance processes.

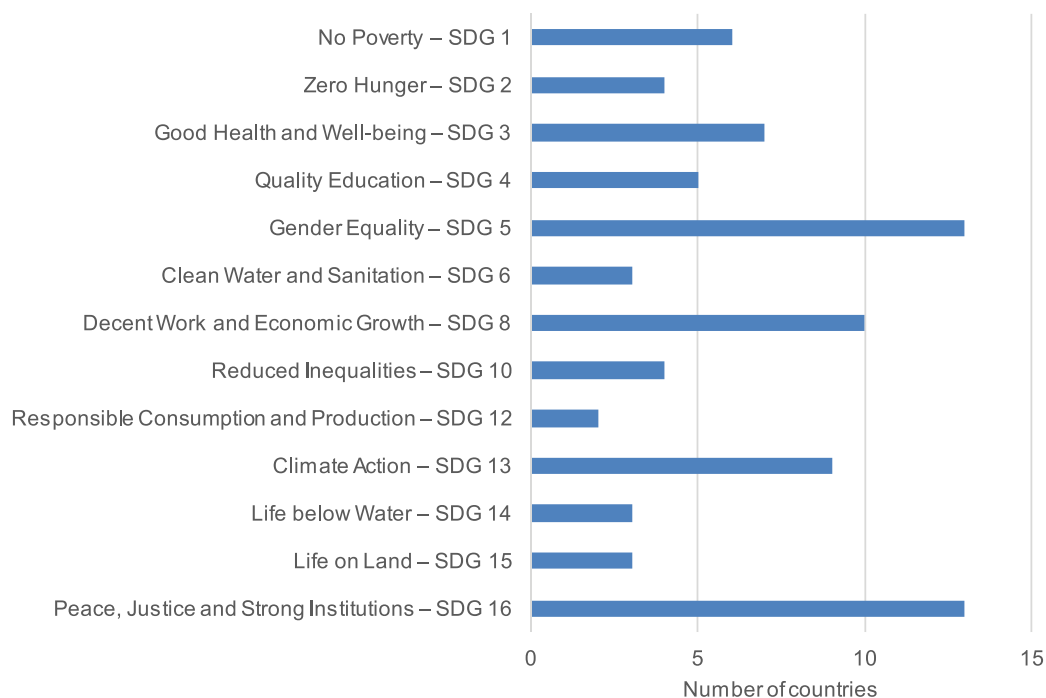
### Leveraging resources for tourism to drive the SDGs

While donor countries need to pay special attention to the challenges and needs of developing countries, tourism decision-makers in developing countries can attract more funding if their tourism activities focus on those areas that are most relevant for donor countries. 19 of the 64 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) were submitted by ODA donor countries and most of them have already established, or are planning to establish, development cooperation priorities and strategies that are fully aligned with the SDGs. SDGs 5 and 16 on 'Gender Equality' and 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions', respectively, seem to be the donors' current priorities, followed by SDGs 8 on 'Decent Work and Economic Growth' and SDG 13 on 'Climate Action'. Awareness of donor priorities is particularly important so as to connect them with the needs and priorities of the tourism sector.





**Figure 4:** SDG priorities in development cooperation for the 17 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members<sup>a</sup> and two non-DAC member donors<sup>b</sup>



a) The 17 DAC members in this study include: Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The Kingdom of the Netherlands.

b) The 2 non-DAC member donors in this study include Estonia and Monaco.





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### Key points:

- **International financial assistance to tourism remains modest:** Even though Official Development Assistance (ODA) for tourism has continuously grown over the last 15 years, Aid for Trade (AfT) for tourism has experienced a reverse trend. Some donor countries, however, are becoming increasingly aware of tourism's potential to drive development and use the sector to support developing countries in achieving the SDGs. Growing recognition of tourism's value to drive the SDGs can offer new opportunities for increased ODA and AfT disbursements to the sector.
- **Development cooperation should be matched with developing countries' needs:** The universality of the SDGs implies that developed countries also need to incorporate the goals in their development cooperation. Tourism's challenges and threats deserve special attention from donor countries when supporting their partners through tourism. At the same time, tourism decision-makers should ensure that tourism initiatives are fully in line with the priorities of donor countries.
- **Support to tourism must go beyond development cooperation:** A number of frameworks can help leverage funds for sustainable tourism. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10YFP, for instance, can be powerful means through which tourism authorities can channel further resources to tourism. Public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships in tourism can also be effective ways to strengthen the engagement of the private sector and other tourism stakeholders in achieving the SDGs.
- **Innovative financing mechanism promise new avenues for tourism:** A large variety of innovative financing mechanisms is available to help the sector access much-needed resources. Green bonds, impact investment, energy efficiency loan facilities, blended finance, smart incentives for eco-certification, voluntary contributions, among others, are viable means to mobilize and blend public and private resources in a way that aligns investments with the SDGs.



## 4.

### Shaping the journey towards 2030

To unlock tourism's full potential towards achieving the SDGs, the sharing of knowledge and good practices between all stakeholders – governments, businesses, the UN system, the donor community, academia and civil society – will be vital for the long road ahead.

The *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030* report reveals that the public and private sectors fully recognise the potential contribution of tourism to the SDGs and that countries as well as businesses can drive genuine progress in making tourism greener, fairer and more inclusive. The contrast between the reported public sector and private sector actions (figure 5) suggest that they can complement each other's efforts. Awareness and understanding of each sectors' current activities towards the SDGs is fundamental for advancing tourism's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### A common roadmap for our Journey to 2030

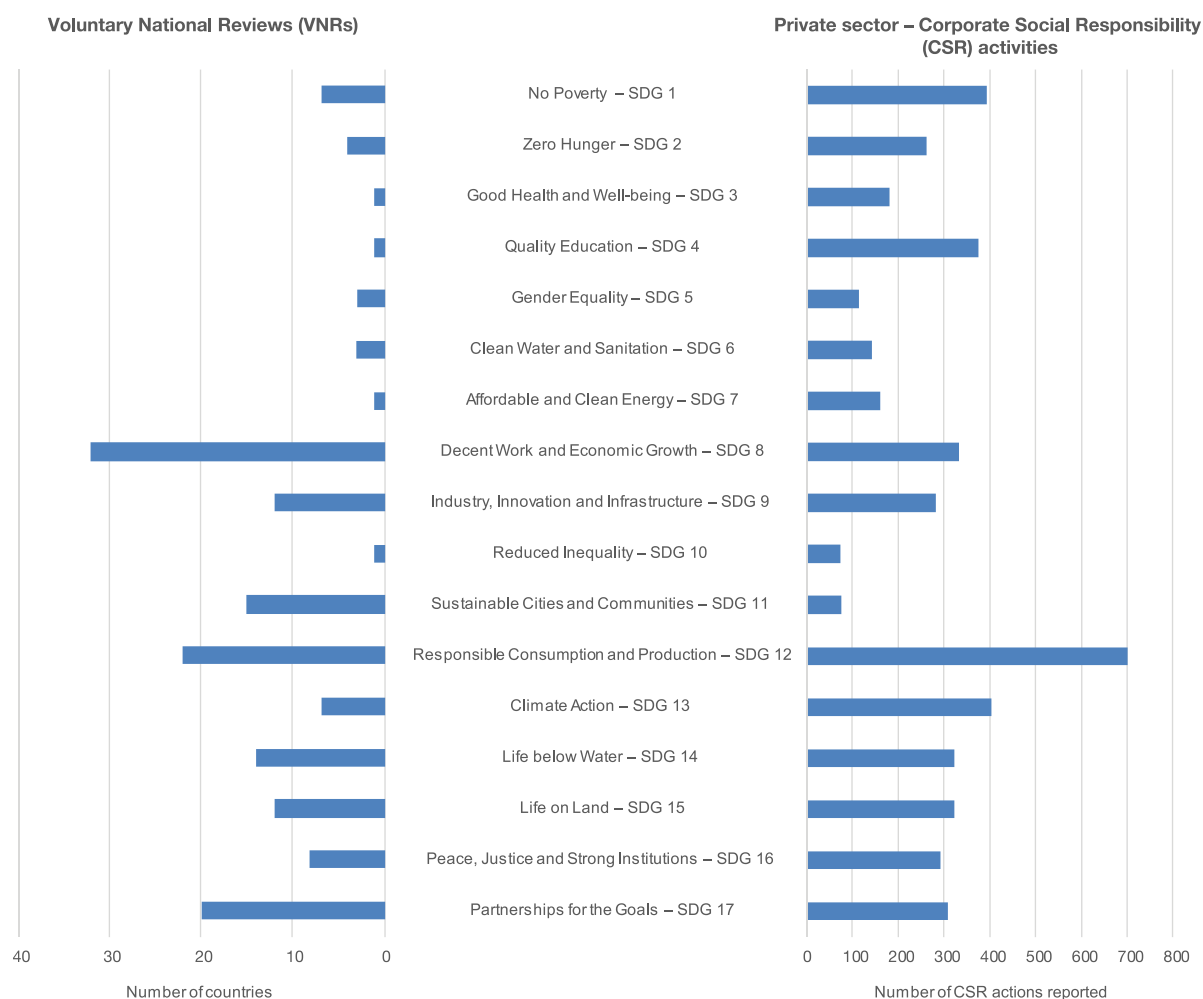
While current efforts of the public and private sector as well as the donor community signal strong commitment to the SDGs, much remains to be done to transform tourism as a force for good. Sharing knowledge and good practices between governments, the private sector, the UN system, the donor community, academia and civil society will be vital for tourism to unlock its full potential towards achieving the SDGs.

To this end, UNWTO, with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), is currently developing the 'Journey to 2030 – Tourism for SDGs' online platform, which will build tourism stakeholders' knowledge, empower and inspire them to act, and accompany them throughout their journey to 2030 and beyond. The platform will build and expand on the findings of this report with a view to enhance the tourism stakeholders' knowledge, empower and inspire them to act, and accompany them throughout their journey to 2030 and beyond.



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**Figure 5:** Comparison between public sector and private sector action in tourism and the SDGs







### Key points:

- **Tourism policymakers need to play a more active role in national SDG planning** and cooperate with other line ministries and the private sector to fully explore and take advantage of tourism's interlinkages with other sectors and industries. At the same time, they must be well informed about the private sector's current contribution to the SDGs so as to understand and bridge the remaining gaps through a supportive policy environment as well as the promotion of innovation, ICT and other new technologies. The SDGs provide an excellent framework for closer public-private cooperation through which tourism could far exceed current expectations in regard to its contribution to people, the planet, prosperity and peace.
- **Tourism companies need to be aware of the economic benefits** that derive from placing the SDGs at the core of business models and practices. While current Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities support the business case for sustainability and often result in environmental or social benefits, companies must be able to measure their impact against international standards and benchmarks of sustainability. Their CSR activities should extend across the value chain by recruiting and purchasing locally as well as by ensuring that profits are retained

and re-invested locally so as to meet host community expectations and customer demand. Furthermore, companies should evolve their concept of CSR towards incorporating SDGs into the whole of its planning and operations.

- **Financing for tourism needs to be scaled up and tailored to the needs and priorities of the sector.** Resource mobilization should go beyond traditional development cooperation, encompassing public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships as well as innovative financing mechanism. While establishing tourism as a priority sector in national SDG planning, engagement with the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme and trade-related technical assistance frameworks, as well as the design of National Tourism Export Strategies can be instrumental to leveraging funding for tourism.



# 5.

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## Recommendations

### Recommendations for tourism policy

- **Participate in the design of national SDG strategies** and ensure high priority for and integration of sustainable tourism in national policy-making and development planning institutions, as well as policy coherence and integration across inter-linked sectors;
- **Devise more inclusive tourism policies** by ensuring active participation of and transparent consultative processes with all tourism stakeholders;
- **Design and implement a National Tourism Export Strategy** (NTES) to reinforce capacities and strengthen tourism value chains for enhanced local economic impact;
- **Assess and monitor tourism's contribution and commitment to the SDGs** at both national and sub-national level and advance timely and systematic measurement and monitoring of tourism's impact by engaging in the Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) Initiative;

- **Enhance statistical capacity-building** and provide guidance on data collection and analysis to measure and monitor progress and results; and
- **Build capacity and create incentives for private sector research and development** (R&D) in sustainable technologies and innovations as well as their applications in business models of tourism companies.

### Recommendations for the tourism private sector

- **Share experiences, good practices and lessons learned** among tourism companies, and especially SMEs, to support evidence-based decision-making in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that impact on the SDGs;
- **Continue investing in people, technologies and ICT** so as to increase resource efficiency, reduce operational costs and minimize the footprint of the sector;
- **Increase local purchasing of goods and services along the tourism value chain** to prevent 'leakage' and to enhance competitiveness and maximize positive local impact;





- **Engage in the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10YFP** to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in tourism;
- **Measure and monitor the impact** of tourism-related business activities on the SDGs;
- **Promote high-quality education and vocational training** that incorporates sustainability and inclusiveness in all its programmes and products so that tourism leadership, management and personnel are fully equipped to operate and advance sustainable tourism principles; and
- **Raise awareness of the business opportunities created by the SDGs** through knowledge-sharing initiatives amongst companies and business alliances as well as partnerships with foundations, the UN system and universities.

#### Recommendations for financing of tourism

- **Align development cooperation with the needs and priorities of developing countries**, providing support that maximizes tourism's positive impact, and mitigates its negative impact on the SDGs;
- **Promote tourism as a priority sector** for sustainable development at the country level and take advantage of trade-related technical assistance frameworks;
- **Identify the SDGs and thematic areas that are most relevant for donor countries** and develop tourism projects and initiatives that are aligned with the donor countries' priorities;
- **Include innovative financing mechanism in resource mobilization efforts for sustainable tourism**, for example financing facilities that can be matched to SDG-related tourism projects;



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- **Design and implement incentives, smart subsidies and policies** to influence the behaviour of tourism enterprises and financiers; and
- **Strengthen inclusive growth opportunities** by maximizing local production in the supply chain, removing barriers to trade, shaping sound investment policies and building the capacity and incentives for SMEs.

#### Recommendations for the international development community and global tourism stakeholders

- **Support the efforts of all tourism stakeholders** and ensure that countries and the private sector can maximize their impact towards the SDGs through tourism;
- **Build closer dialogue** with global development partners from the UN System, including UNWTO,

UNDP and other International Organizations, as well as DAC Members and non-traditional donors to facilitate tourism's contribution to the SDGs;

- **Strengthen public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships** to reinvigorate the means of implementation for the SDGs through tourism, in line with SDG 17 on 'Partnerships for the Goals';
- **Ensure effective cooperation among all major stakeholders**, including government at the national, sub-national and local level, the private sector, destinations and communities, to increase the understanding of the cross-cutting impacts of different activities across the tourism value and supply chains.



# Annex 1

## Countries mentioning tourism in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), by income group

Developed (OECD DAC <sup>a</sup> Members plus Estonia and Monaco)	Developing (other non-OECD DAC Members)				Total (41)
	High-income (> USD 12,235 GNI/capita)	Upper middle income (USD 3,956 – 12,235 GNI/capita)	Lower middle income (USD 1,006 – 3,955 GNI/capita)	Low-income (< USD 1,005 GNI/capita)	
Belgium	Chile <sup>b</sup>	Argentina <sup>b</sup>	Bangladesh <sup>b</sup>	Benin	
Cyprus <sup>b</sup>	Qatar	Azerbaijan <sup>b</sup>	Egypt	Nepal	
Estonia <sup>c</sup>		Belarus	Guatemala	Uganda	
France		Belize	India	Zimbabwe	
Germany		Botswana	Indonesia		
Italy		Colombia <sup>2</sup>	Kenya <sup>b</sup>		
Japan <sup>b</sup>		Costa Rica	Nigeria		
Monaco <sup>b</sup>		Jordan	Philippines		
Norway		Malaysia	Tajikistan		
Portugal		Maldives			
The Netherlands		Mexico			
Slovenia		Montenegro <sup>b</sup>			
		Thailand			
		Venezuela			
12	2	14	9	4	

a) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

b) Involvement of the Ministry of Tourism in the national government structure for SDG implementation.

c) Estonia is an observer to the DAC.



List of 60 tourism companies

Company	Sub-sector	Industry	Continent	Country	Operational in
ANA	Transportation	Aviation	Asia	Japan	Globally
Emirates	Transportation	Aviation	Asia	United Arab Emirates	Globally
American Airlines	Transportation	Aviation	North America	United States of America	Globally
Kenya Airways	Transportation	Aviation	Africa	Kenya	Globally
Southwest Airlines	Transportation	Aviation	North America	United States of America	North America
Ryan Air	Transportation	Aviation	Europe	Ireland	Europe
Air Asia Berhad	Transportation	Aviation	Asia	Malaysia	South East Asia
LATAM	Transportation	Aviation	South America	Chile	Globally
Lufthansa	Transportation	Aviation	Europe	Germany	Globally
Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd	Transportation	Cruise	North America	United States of America	Globally
Genting Hong Kong	Transportation	Cruise	Asia	Hong Kong (China)	Globally
Carnival Corp & PLC	Transportation	Cruise	N. America / Europe	United States of America / United Kingdom	Globally
Iarnród Éireann - Irish Rail	Transportation	Railways	Europe	Ireland	Ireland
KiwiRail	Transportation	Railways	Australia	New Zealand	New Zealand
Japan Railways Group	Transportation	Railways	Asia	Japan	Japan





Company	Sub-sector	Industry	Continent	Country	Operational in
SNCF	Transportation	Railways	Europe	France	France
Amtrak	Transportation	Railways	North America	United States of America	United States of America, Canada
DFDS	Transportation	Ferry	Europe	Denmark	Europe
Shun Tak Group (TurboJet)	Transportation	Ferry	Asia	Hong Kong (China)	Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), China
First Group	Transportation	Public Transp. including Greyhound Coaches	Europe	United Kingdom	United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada
Amadeus	Travel agents	GDS	Europe	Spain	Global
AMEX Global Business Travel	Travel agents	Business Travel	America	United States of America	Global
Aventura Colombia	Travel agents	Specialist	South America	Colombia	Colombia
BCD Travel	Travel agents	Business Travel	Europe	Netherland	Global
Carlson Wagonlit Travel	Travel agents	Business Travel	America	United States of America	Global
Cox & Kings	Travel agents	Luxury	Asia	India	Global
Exo Travel	Travel agents	Sustainability	Asia	Thailand	Asia
Experience Travel Group	Travel agents	Specialist	Europe	England	South Asia
G Adventures	Travel agents	Adventure	America	Canada	Global



Company	Sub-sector	Industry	Continent	Country	Operational in
Globalia	Travel agents	Vertical integrated	Europe	Spain	Europe, Africa, Americas, Caribbean
Hostelworld Group	Travel agents	OTA	Europe	Ireland	Global
Intrepid	Travel agents	Adventure	Australia	Australia	Global
JTB Corporation	Travel agents	Specialist	Asia	Japan	Global
Kuoni Group	Travel agents	Sustainability	Europe	Switzerland	Global
On the Beach Group	Travel agents	OTA	Europe	United Kingdom	Global
Sabre	Travel agents	GDS	America	United States of America	Global
Thomas Cook	Travel agents	Vertical integrated	Europe	England	Global
Transat A.T.	Travel agents	Vertical integrated	America	Canada	Global
TUI	Travel agents	Vertical integrated	Europe	Germany	Global
Wilderness Scotland	Travel agents	Adventure	Europe	Scotland	Scotland
Accor	Accommodation	Hotel	Europe	France	Worldwide (92 countries)
Banyan Tree	Accommodation	Hotel, Resort, Residences	Asia	Singapore	Worldwide (27 countries)
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group	Accommodation	Hotel	America/Europe	United States of America / Belgium	Worldwide (80 countries)
ClubMed	Accommodation	Vacation Village	Europe	France	Worldwide (40 countries)





Company	Sub-sector	Industry	Continent	Country	Operational in
Resort	Accommodation	Upper Upscale, Upscale	Australia	Australia	Worldwide
Hotel	Accommodation	Upper Upscale, Upscale, Upper Midscale, Luxury, Other	America	United States of America	Worldwide (100 countries)
Hostelling International	Accommodation	Hostel	Europe	United Kingdom	Worldwide (88 countries)
Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Accommodation	Hotel, Resort	America	United States of America	Worldwide (52 countries)
Intercontinental Hotels Group	Accommodation	Hotel	Europe	United Kingdom	Worldwide
JetWing Hotels	Accommodation	Hotel, Villa	Asia	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group	Accommodation	Hotel, Resort, Residence	Asia	China	Worldwide (24 countries)
Marriott International	Accommodation	Hotel	America	United Kingdom	Worldwide
Melia	Accommodation	Hotel, Resort	Europe	Spain	Worldwide (41 countries)
Millennium Hotels	Accommodation	Hotel	Europe	United Kingdom	Worldwide



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Company	Sub-sector	Industry	Continent	Country	Operational in
NH Hotel Group	Accommodation	Hotel	Europe	Spain	Worldwide (33 countries)
Regal	Accommodation	Hotel	Asia	China	Hong Kong (China)
Scandic	Accommodation	Hotel	Europe	Sweden	Nordic States, Belgium, Germany, Poland
Serena Hotel	Accommodation	Hotel, Resort, Safari Lodge	Africa	Kenya	East Africa, Asia
Wyndham Hotel & Resorts	Accommodation	Resort	America	United States of America	Worldwide
Wynn Resort	Accommodation	Resort, Casino	America	United States of America	United States of America, China



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World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	Tel.: (+34) 915 678 100
Calle Poeta Joan Maragall, 42	Fax: (+34) 915 713 733
28020 Madrid	Website: <a href="http://www.unwto.org">www.unwto.org</a>
Spain	E-mail: <a href="mailto:omt@unwto.org">omt@unwto.org</a>

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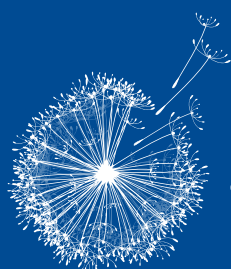






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