13 Guiding Principles

FUTURE OF TOURISM

Whereas tourism done well can benefit destination communities, incentivize protection of nature and history, and enrich the traveling public,

Whereas irresponsible practices have eroded the value of the true tourism product, the destination,

Whereas poorly managed tourism, driven by short-term, unguided market forces, has disrupted communities and ecosystems, worn away cultural and historic sites, added to environmental stress, and degraded the travel experience itself,

Whereas this trend has been aggravated by undue policy emphasis on quantity of tourists over quality of experience and benefits to destination communities,

Whereas widespread degradation has persisted despite earnest attempts to counteract the trend by many responsible parties,

Whereas recovery from the COVID-19 crisis has presented an opportunity to choose a more sustainable future,

We therefore urge worldwide commitment to these principles...

1 See the whole picture
Recognize that most tourism by its nature involves the destination as a whole, not only industry businesses, but also its ecosystems, natural resources, cultural assets and traditions, communities, aesthetics, and built infrastructure.

2 Use sustainability standards
Respect the publicly available, internationally approved minimum criteria for sustainable tourism practices maintained by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) for both industry and destinations.

3 Collaborate in destination management
Seek to develop all tourism through a collaborative management structure with equal participation by government, the private sector, and civil society organizations that represent diversity in communities.

4 Choose quality over quantity
Manage tourism development based on quality of visitation, not quantity of visitors, so as to enhance the travel experience while sustaining the character of the destination and benefiting local communities.

5 Demand fair income distribution
Set policies that counter unequal tourism benefits within destination communities and that maximize retention of tourism revenues within those communities.

6 Reduce tourism's burden
Account for all tourism costs in terms of local tax burdens, environmental and social impacts, and objectively verifiable disruption. Ensure investments are linked to optimizing net-positive impacts for communities and the environment.

7 Redefine economic success
Rather than raw contribution to growth in GDP, favor metrics that specify destination benefits such as small business development, distribution of incomes, and enhancement of sustainable and inclusive local supply chains.

8 Mitigate climate impacts
Strive to follow accepted scientific consensus on needed reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Invest in green infrastructure and a fast reduction in transport emissions involved in tourism – air, sea, and ground.

9 Close the loop on resources
When post-pandemic safety allows, turn away from use of disposable plastics by tourism businesses, and transition to circular resource use.

10 Contain tourism's land use
Limit high-occupancy resort tourism to concentrated areas. Discourage resort sprawl from taking over coasts, islands, and mountain areas, so as to retain geographical character, a diverse economy, local access, and critical ecosystems.

11 Diversify source markets
In addition to international visitation, encourage robust domestic tourism, which may be more resilient in the face of crises and raise citizens' perceived value of their own natural and cultural heritage.

12 Protect sense of place
Encourage tourism policies and business practices that protect and benefit natural, scenic, and cultural assets. Retain and enhance destination identity and distinctiveness. Diversity of place is the reason for travel.
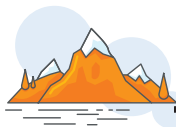
13 Operate business responsibly
Incentivize and reward tourism businesses and associated enterprises that support these principles through their actions and develop strong local supply chains that allow for higher quality products and experiences.

By agreeing to this set of transformative principles, we will create common ground for a model of tourism that places destination needs at its center, and we will support each other on this journey to build a new future.