Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries

COMCEC

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
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List of Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMCEC</td>
<td>The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSTC</td>
<td>The Global Sustainable Tourism Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>The Organization of Islamic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>The United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>The World Tourism Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEF</td>
<td>The World Economic Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Study Objective and Methodology: The objective of this study is to identify sustainable destination management strategies, compare sustainable destination management strategies and practices in the OIC Member States with global best practices, and provide policy recommendations for the OIC Member States. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recommends that “sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.¹ In this study, we submit that effective sustainable destination management adopts strategies aimed at increasing awareness of sustainability issues at the destination level, the protection of natural and cultural heritage assets, management of environmental impacts, managing demand and seasonality effects, and ensuring community well-being and tourist satisfaction.

The study used both primary and secondary research tools and sources to fulfill its objective. The secondary sources used include previous market studies, academic articles and research papers, government, regional, international organizations, and press publications. The primary research tools comprised of in-depth interviews, an online stakeholders' survey, and seven case studies. Twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted in person and by telephone with respondents from destination management organizations and other tourism stakeholders to provide insights into best practices in sustainable tourism. Furthermore, a survey with 292 respondents was conducted online in October 2018 to understand the importance of sustainable tourism strategies to tourism stakeholders, and seven country case studies to provide insights into sustainable tourism strategies and practices.

Report Key Findings

The need for Sustainable Tourism: Governments around the globe have realized that tourism can have a negative impact on a destination's natural assets. Local communities in many destinations have become vocal protesting perceived negative effects of tourism. In a number of European cities such as Barcelona and Amsterdam, local communities have led protests calling for protection against congestion and low air quality.² It is forecasted that tourism growth up to 2050, without further interventions to ensure sustainability, will lead to an increase of 111% in energy consumption, 105% in greenhouse gas emissions, 150% in water consumption, and 252% in solid waste disposal. However, with targeted efforts in the energy and water efficiency areas, emissions mitigation and solid waste management, this scenario could be reversed with a reduction of 18% in water consumption, 44% in energy supply and demand, and 52% in carbon dioxide emissions.³ In recognition of the negative effects of tourism and the importance

¹Díaz, M., R., & Rodríguez, T., F., E., (2016). Determining the sustainability factors and performance of a tourism destination from the stakeholders' perspective. Sustainability 8(9), 951-968.
of sustainable tourism, several charters and declarations, whether on the international, regional or local levels, have attempted to establish criteria for sustainable tourism.\(^4\)

**Dimensions and Aims of Sustainable Tourism:** Sustainable tourism needs to consider the ecological, economic, and social sustainability of the destination. Sustainable tourism aims to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of the destination as well as to ensure the well-being of local communities and the satisfaction of tourists. This requires efficient destination management, continuous monitoring, and the cooperation of tourism stakeholders.\(^5\)

The UNWTO identified twelve goals for sustainable tourism, including ensuring the competitiveness and local prosperity of the destination, improving local employment conditions in the tourism sector, securing equal distribution of benefits from tourism and ensuring the well-being of the local community as well as empowering them through the use of a participatory approach in tourism planning and decision making, providing tourists with a fulfilling experience, using resources efficiently, and respecting the cultural heritage of the destination, protecting the physical integrity, environmental purity, and biological diversity of the natural areas and habitats.\(^6\)

In the following figure, the aims of sustainable tourism are linked to the triple bottom line approach to illustrate both the continuity and development of the sustainable tourism concept.

![The Triple Bottom Line and Aims of Sustainable Tourism](source.png)

*Source: DinarStandard Analysis based on TBL concept and UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Goals*

**Challenges to Sustainable Tourism Strategies Implementation:** Sustainable tourism strategies implementation faces a number of obstacles including lack of awareness and understanding of the concept sustainable tourism, the prioritization of economic objectives over environmental and social issues, inadequate coordination and incorporation into wider policy on the different

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\(^6\)UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook*. UNWTO.
governmental levels, weak stakeholder involvement and support, and insufficient resources committed to sustainability strategies implementation. The most common barrier to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies is the prioritization of economic goals whether by governments in general or destination management organizations. The tendency of governments to focus on short-term objectives entails the prioritization of economic over social and environmental issues. The lack of coordination between the various departments and different levels of government represents another main barrier to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies. In some instances, national and regional plans for tourism development are at odds with local sustainability needs. Implementing sustainable tourism strategies requires close coordination and frequent communication between various government departments including those entities responsible for environmental conservation, resource management, transportation, and taxation among others.

Stakeholder support is essential for the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies, which emphasizes the need for stakeholder engagement and consultation in developing strategies to ensure stakeholder buy-in and support. However, stakeholder engagement efforts are in many instances influenced by the relative power of the various stakeholders with their different agendas, which can lead to the exclusion of some stakeholders, such as local NGOs who are more focused on environmental and social issues, from sustainable tourism policy development. Finally, the resources committed to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies seem to be quite inadequate. As mentioned earlier, the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies is costly with no immediate return on investment which may explain the reluctance of governments to allocate the resources necessary for achieving short-term sustainable tourism objectives.

Sustainable Tourism and Destination Management: In most destinations, destination management organizations (DMOs) are tasked with developing and managing tourism in their destination. Destination management is defined as "the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialization of the tourism product [originating from within the destination], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination". In the previous COMCEC report on Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies, the responsibilities of DMOs were classified into three areas; marketing, operational and strategic. As illustrated in the following table, DMO activities are primarily geared towards ensuring the sustainability of tourism at the destination level. The marketing activities are aimed at increasing destination competitiveness and therefore economic viability and local prosperity, while the operational activities are aimed at achieving visitor fulfillment and improving local control, employment quality and community well-being. The DMO strategic activities, including resource stewardship, monitoring and

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11 COMCEC. (2018). Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries. COMCEC.
evaluation, and crisis management, are aimed at preserving the physical integrity, cultural richness, biological diversity, and resource efficiency at the destination.\textsuperscript{12}

**DMO Activities Serving Sustainable Tourism Goals**

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{DMO Activities} & \textbf{Sustainable Tourism Goals} \\
\hline
Marketing & \\
• Product Development & • Economic Viability \\
• Pricing Guidance & • Local Prosperity \\
• Distribution Support & \\
• Destination Promotion & \\
\hline
Operational & \\
• Visitor Experience Management & • Visitor Fulfillment \\
• Stakeholder Coordination & • Local Control \\
• Industry Support & • Employment Quality \\
• Resource Stewardship & • Community Well-being \\
\hline
Strategic & \\
• Monitoring & Evaluation & • Resource Efficiency \\
• Crisis Management & • Physical Integrity \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textit{Source: DinarStandard Analysis based on UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Goals}

**Governance:** Beyond the fact that DMO activities are mainly geared at achieving sustainability at destinations DMOs are responsible for implementing sustainability policies and strategies in many areas as well as engaging, coordinating with and supporting stakeholders in sustainable tourism.\textsuperscript{13} However, in most countries, several other government bodies, including government environmental agencies in many instances, are involved in developing sustainable tourism strategies. It is also worth noting that there are many international and regional organizations involved in promoting sustainability at the destination level, with some of these organizations establishing sustainable tourism guidelines for member countries such as in the case of the European Commission.\textsuperscript{14}

Regulatory frameworks are used by governments to promote sustainable tourism practices by imposing sanctions in cases of non-compliance. Governments have developed regulations in several areas that seek to advance sustainable tourism development, including land use planning and development, employee rights, tourists’ health and safety, environmental protection, protection of local communities, use of non-renewable resources, and equal access.\textsuperscript{15} Many countries are using environmental impact assessments to encourage tourism businesses to monitor their environmental footprint.

**Sustainable Tourism Strategies:** In an attempt to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism, destination sustainability strategies cover several areas. These strategies include increasing awareness of sustainability issues at the destination level, the protection of natural and cultural heritage assets, management of environmental impacts (e.g., use of non-renewable resources, pollution reduction, waste management, and planning of future tourism development and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{UNWTO2013a} UNWTO. (2013). \textit{Sustainable tourism for development guidebook}. UNWTO.
\bibitem{COMCEC2018} COMCEC. (2018). \textit{Destination Development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries}. COMCEC.
\bibitem{UNWTO2013b} UNWTO. (2013). \textit{Sustainable tourism for development guidebook}. UNWTO.
\end{thebibliography}
activities), managing demand and seasonality effects, and ensuring community well-being and tourist satisfaction. In this section, examples will be provided of the various sustainable tourism strategies in these areas. The following figure illustrates how various strategies address sustainable tourism goals and tourism impacts. In this section, examples will be provided of the various sustainable tourism strategies in these areas.

**Sustainable Tourism Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable Tourism Goals</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Vitality</td>
<td>Managing Demand and Seasonality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Prosperity</td>
<td>Managing Demand and Seasonality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Quality</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Equity</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Fulfillment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring Tourist Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local control</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Richness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Protection of Cultural Heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Efficiency</td>
<td>Managing Environmental Impact (Non-Renewable Resources: Usage)</td>
<td>Protection of Natural Heritage</td>
<td>Managing Environmental Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Purity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DinarStandard Analysis*

**Increasing Awareness:** A number of strategies including the provision of guided tours, information at visitor centers and awareness and educational programs have been used to increase awareness among local communities, tourists, and tourism businesses of the importance of sustainable tourism and local community well-being. In Colombia, outreach programs conducted at schools and with tourism businesses increased the understanding of the importance of wetlands for Bogota’s water supplies and environmental quality. In Kenya, a large scale environmental education program is conducted for 100,000 school students each year, in addition to conducting low-cost wildlife viewing tours of national parks for residents.16

**Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage Areas and Assets:** Several strategies are used to preserve natural areas and assets including limiting access, or limiting the provision of, facilities for sensitive environments. In Brazil, tourism activities in the Abroholos are confined to designated dive sites and a 1.6-kilometer nature trail has been provided for tourists on the island of Siriba. Furthermore, entering the park’s waters is limited to 15 medium-sized vessels daily, which limits the maximum of visitors to 225 per day. By limiting the provision of facilities for visitors (such as toilets, souvenir shops and food and beverage facilities), tourists can be directed to areas where they cause less damage to sensitive environments.17

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Managing Demand and Seasonality Effects: Destinations have used marketing tools, including product/service offerings, pricing and promotion, as well as regulations to manage tourism seasonality and to help tourism remain within the destination’s carrying capacity. Product/service offerings and price can be used to attract different types of visitors; depending on the carrying capacity of the site, DMOs can target high numbers of low budget tourists or low numbers of high budget tourists. In Slovenia, the Skocjan Caves facilities, including its visitor center and walkways, are built in a way to make the caves accessible to a large number of tourists safely while preserving the caves at the same time.18 In Italy, the Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows into areas that are not recognized as tourist destinations with the objective of decongesting saturated areas and improving competitiveness by widening the product offer and establishing a more sustainable model.19

Managing the Environmental Impacts of Tourism: The negative environmental impacts of tourism have garnered increased attention recently and have been the focus of many governmental and non-governmental initiatives at international, regional and local levels. The tourism industry has launched several efforts at conserving non-renewable resources, reducing pollution and waste, and planning future tourism developments. Governments have employed a number of strategies to promote best practices in this area, from providing support and financial incentives to tourism businesses and imposing taxes on non-renewable resources consumption to mandating environmental impact assessments. In Germany, the federal government has supported many tourism industry and NGOs, such as the Hotel and Catering Energy Campaign initiated by the German Hotel and Restaurant Association. This effort identifies specific energy and water consumption and carbon emissions reduction measures and voluntary audits for the domestic hospitality industry leading to accreditation. Germany also has a mandatory environmental impact assessment system aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and monitoring water and energy usage in the tourism industry.20 Laws and regulations have been the primary tools used to align tourism development planning and activities with sustainability objectives. Zoning regulations have been used to indicate the areas suitable for different kinds of tourism development, while building standards and regulations specify the design, density and height of buildings, building materials, and waste disposal systems for tourism developments in different areas. In Costa Rica, the National Sustainable Tourism Plan identifies the 10 areas and specifies a General Land Use and Tourism Development Plan for each of the 10 areas.21

Tourist Satisfaction: Tourist satisfaction is vital to the sustainability of tourism; strategies in this area include the provision of innovative products, ensuring a quality experience and monitoring tourist satisfaction to take corrective actions when needed. In the Philippines, setting limits of the number of divers allowed helps reduce stress on the reefs as well as help to ensure that tourists have a high-quality experience. In Estonia, “bogshoe” walks at the Soomaa National Park using snowshoes offer a unique experience that allows tourists to fully explore remote areas of the park and to walk over the delicate bog vegetation without causing damage.22 In Sweden, a four-year initiative was launched in 2012 to improve hospitality services quality

19 Please refer to Italy’s case study for further information and sources.
and destination's quality. Monitoring tourist satisfaction, through the use of exit surveys, is valuable for establishing the quality performance of the destination and taking corrective measures when needed.

**Ensuring Local Community Well-being:** To help promote local community well-being, governments must increase the economic benefits for local communities while also minimizing negative social and environmental impacts from tourism. In Tunisia, the Lake Ichkeul Park supports the local community through the provision of basic training and credit schemes in an effort to increase local employment in tourism and increase the local economic benefits from tourism. In Costa Rica, a Social Progress Index, which uses environmental and social indicators, is being used to better monitor the impact of tourism growth on local community well-being.

**Sustainable Tourism Stakeholders:** To create a sustainable tourism development model, destinations need to develop comprehensive long-term plans since environmental conservation measures typically need time, cooperation and coordination among various public and private entities as well as with local communities. There is a multitude of stakeholders that need to be engaged in sustainable tourism development, including tourism/destination management bodies, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, regional and international organizations, domestic non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, the tourism industry, tourist, and the local community.

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24 COMCEC. (2018). *Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries*. COMCEC.
26 UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook*. UNWTO.
28 UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook*. UNWTO.
ensuring the support of stakeholders and their implementation of sustainable tourism strategies and practices. In Denmark, the Danish National Tourism Forum receives continuous feedback and advice from the Danish Tourism Advisory Board, which has members from a wide range of stakeholders representing different interests.

**Funding Sustainable Tourism:** In recognition of the importance of sustainable tourism, both public and private sector entities have committed funds to conservation and sustainability efforts. In many instances, governments use the revenue generated from tourism to fund sustainability activities. Governments also support sustainable tourism indirectly by encouraging private sector financing and investment in sustainability through subsidies, green loans and insurance for green assets. Public institutions can play an important role in linking tourism projects with green and other financing instruments such as group lending by microfinance institutions. However, governments also promote sustainable tourism directly through financing or co-financing sustainable tourism projects. Most destinations have sought to diversify the funding sources with the use of innovative financing strategies in light of tight public budgets. Green financing has expanded recently in the tourism sector with the growing interest in sustainable tourism. There are a number of initiatives and funds on national, regional, and international levels. These provide financing for tourism businesses interested in taking into account environmental and social issues in all of their operations.

Funding sources for sustainable tourism can be classified as being of either domestic or foreign origin. Domestic sources include public and private sources. Public sources including national and local governmental bodies and public financial institutions while private sources include private financial institutions and domestic conservation organizations whose funding comes from private sources such as individuals, companies or foundations. Foreign sources of funding include bilateral investors, regional and international financial institutions, and development organizations. It is important to note that while domestic and regional financial institutions are typically well positioned to overcome investment barriers in certain locations, international institutions are better able to reduce investment risks by linking projects in several countries.

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30 Please refer to Denmark’s case study for more information and sources.


Financing for sustainable tourism faces a number of challenges including the "maturity mismatch" between the needs of sustainable tourism projects and the available financial instruments, lack of information on green investment impact in tourism, and the lack of support for green business practices. With regards to the available financial instruments, in most cases there is “maturity mismatch” caused by the fact that many sustainability activities and projects, especially infrastructure investments, are typically short-term while investors usually look for projects where assets can be liquidated quickly. Additionally, tourism SMEs may be unable to provide the collateral needed for securing external financing especially since they are service providers dealing mainly in “intangibles” which are difficult to quantify and use as collateral. Information on green investment in tourism is very limited, thus far most green financing has focused on energy efficiency and ignores other sustainability areas.\textsuperscript{36}

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainable Tourism:** There are various categories of indicators; those who provide early warning signals such as a decline in the number of tourists with the intention to return, those that measure pressures on the system such as water shortages, those that measure the biodiversity and socio-economic impact such as deforestation, those that measure management endeavors such as the cleanup cost for coastal contamination, and those that measure the impact of management intervention such as lower pollution levels.\textsuperscript{37} Decision makers, in collaboration with stakeholders, need to choose the indicators best suited to their destination in terms of the salient tourism impact issues that need to be monitored and addressed.\textsuperscript{38} There are a number of indicators that destination managers can choose from to track their sustainability performance and intervene with corrective measures when needed. The UNWTO’s Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations tracks 12 areas, including economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community well-being, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental purity. The Sustainable Tourism Index, launched by the Economist Intelligence Unit, uses performance indicators to rank countries for best sustainability practices, while, the European Tourism Indicator System is used to monitor European destinations' performance in four sustainable tourism areas.\textsuperscript{39} In the following figure,

several selected indicators covering some areas of sustainable tourism are presented and grouped in terms of their coverage of economic, social, and environmental impacts.

**Select Sustainable Tourism Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Impact</th>
<th>Social Impact</th>
<th>Environmental Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (%)</td>
<td>• % of men &amp; women employed in the tourism sector</td>
<td>• Water/Energy consumption per tourist night compared to general population per resident night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism employment as % of total employment</td>
<td>• Ratio of tourists to locals (annual average, peak season &amp; peak day average)</td>
<td>• Waste production per tourist night compared to general population per person (kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Daily spending per overnight tourist</td>
<td>• % of residents satisfied with tourism impacts on the destination’s identity</td>
<td>• % of tourism enterprises reducing water/energy consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• % and value of local products and produce sold to tourism facilities and businesses</td>
<td>• % of the destination’s events that are focused on traditional/local culture and heritage</td>
<td>• % of habitat being affected by tourism infrastructure and facility development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average length of stay of tourists (nights)</td>
<td>• Number of incidents against local norms by tourists</td>
<td>• %, number of tourists using public or alternative transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average hourly wage in tourism compared to other sectors</td>
<td>• Cultural and historical assets protection</td>
<td>• % of tourism enterprises using a voluntary environmental, quality or sustainability certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• % of repeat/return visitors (within 5 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OIC Member States vs. Global Best Practices Comparative Analysis:**

**Governance and Regulatory Environment:** As mentioned earlier, DMOs are responsible for implementing sustainability policies and strategies in many areas as well as engaging, coordinating with and supporting stakeholders in the area of sustainable tourism. However, in most countries, a number of other government bodies, including government environmental agencies in many instances, are involved in developing sustainable tourism strategies. In leading non-OIC countries, several public, private, and non-governmental entities cooperate in the area of sustainable tourism, each with a distinct well-defined role. In many best practice countries, to ensure coordination between the various bodies, special umbrella organizations are established with key stakeholders from the tourism sector. In OIC countries, mainly government and in some instances non-governmental organizations are involved in promoting sustainable tourism practices, however, the OIC countries case studies indicate an absence of umbrella organizations facilitating coordination as in the case of best practices countries.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Leading non-OIC country examples provided in the report show a high level of formal engagement with industry stakeholders, with well-established formal organizations that allows for collaboration and coordination between the different stakeholders. Engagement and support initiatives also illustrate the commitment of the leading non-OIC countries to promoting sustainable tourism and encouraging the various tourism stakeholders to adopt sustainable tourism practices. OIC countries, based on case study examples, may have some forms of formal structure that aligns the broader tourism industry with sustainability efforts, but falls short on the process on ongoing engagement and consultation – which in the strongest example presented, notably Denmark, is systematic and well supported through formal organizational structures.

**Sustainable Tourism Strategies:** Leading non-OIC country examples presented in the report have robust and comprehensive initiatives with well-defined goals covering the various sustainable tourism sector—openconsultationtemplate/phases/wbg_towards_more_effective_impact_measurement_in_the_tourism_sector_consultations.pdf.

40 The UNWTO’s Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations, the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Sustainable Tourism Index, and the EU’s European Tourism Indicator System.
tourism strategies. New Zealand presents the strongest example in terms of protecting natural and cultural heritage through designating them as world heritage sites, with 28 Natural World Heritage Sites, and 120 Cultural World Heritage Sites. Both Denmark and Italy have community well-being elements incorporated into eco-certification, which are endorsed by destination management organizations, of hospitality establishments at their destination. In all examples, tourism sector players are encouraged through the use of incentives to adopt more sustainable practices. OIC countries, based on case study examples, have also launched initiatives covering all sustainability strategy areas, many of these initiatives are still emergent or in the process of development. Jordan seems to have the strongest initiatives in various areas due to the support of bilateral and international donors.

Access to Funding: Both public and private domestic sources are used to fund sustainable tourism initiatives in OIC and leading non-OIC countries. However, it is worth noting that the ability of the private sector to finance sustainability initiatives is hindered in many OIC countries by the shortage of resources of tourism businesses and their inability to get loans due to either absence of collateral or scarcity of financial instruments to support sustainability initiatives. In terms of foreign funding, both OIC and non-OIC countries have received international funding, however, while many OIC countries have received bilateral funding, leading non-OIC countries mainly received funding from regional organizations.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainable Tourism: Leading non-OIC countries have formal procedures in place for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability. The indicators used by the countries, provided as examples in the report, are internationally recognized and comprehensive; they cover economic, socio-cultural, and environmental tourism impacts as well as sustainable destination management performance. Examples from the OIC country case studies are currently focused on measuring the economic and to some extent the environmental impacts of tourism, however, they seem to lack formal procedures for continuous monitoring and reporting on sustainable tourism. Nonetheless, this seems to be changing in some destinations in light of the various initiatives and efforts that are being supported by both bilateral donors and international organizations.
Key Recommendations:

Policy Recommendations Framework

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

One consideration in implementing the recommendations is where countries fall within the following matrix that considers a country’s dependence on tourism and its sustainability risk. In the detailed policy recommendations charts to follow the quadrant most relevant to the recommendations provided is highlighted.

Country Segmentation Chart

Source: Based on WEF Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017
Policy recommendations related to each of the sustainable destination management parameters:

1. **Supportive Regulatory Environment** – *National level*

   Governments need to establish and enforce policies that promote the adoption of sustainable tourism practices.

   **Governments to impose sanctions and incentives conducive to sustainable tourism practices:** Sanctions should be imposed for non-compliance, and incentives (for example, tax cuts for use of renewable energy, energy efficient hotels, etc.) should be offered for compliance.

2. **Stakeholder Engagement** – *Destination/national level*

   Establish an umbrella organization that encompasses government sectors, DMOs, and tourism businesses to streamline sustainable tourism efforts.

   **Member Countries should consider forming strategic alliances with entities such as airlines:** Some aspects of tourism sustainability are outside the control of governments. Air travel for example results in devastating environmental impact, and there are steps that airlines that take to reduce its negative impact.

3. **Effective Tourism Sustainability Strategies**

   Strategies are discussed in detail in the next few pages, in the section pertaining to policy recommendations related to sustainable tourism strategies, and include: (1) Increasing awareness, (2) Protection of natural and cultural heritage, (3) Managing demand and seasonality, (4) Managing environmental impacts, (5) Ensuring community well-being, (6) Ensuring tourist satisfaction.
4. **Access to Financing Tools – Destination/national/regional level**  
   **Apply for international funding for sustainable tourism projects:** Several international organizations offer funding for projects related to sustainability and it would be wise to apply for funding for relevant projects.

   **Establish regional organizations to support sustainable tourism efforts and provide funding:** The European Commission, for example, provides funding to projects related to sustainable tourism. Similarly, a regional or OIC-wide organization can be dedicated to providing funding to support tourism sustainability projects in member countries.

   **Facilitate Green Finance:** Green finance refers to a range of innovative financial instruments that encourage green investments. This encourages more private sector capital to flow to sustainable projects than to non-sustainable projects.

   **Governments to encourage private sector financing and investment in sustainable tourism projects:** Governments can encourage the private sector to invest in sustainable projects through subsidies, green loans and by providing insurance for green assets.

5. **Monitoring Destination Sustainability – Destination/national/regional level**  
   **Monitor Current Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Perhaps the most important factor for achieving sustainable outcomes at the destination level is robust and independent monitoring of current practices on site.

   **Translating and Implementing Agenda 2030 in a Sustainable Tourism Context:** This is one of the roles that the country-wide advisory and monitory body, proposed above to monitor performance, can be given real meaning.

   **Aligning Science, Policy and Capital in Pursuit of Sustainable Tourism:** Sustainable tourism policies need to work at all levels across society, including those of academics, entrepreneurs and social policy planners.

   **Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sustainability:** The OIC should take the lead in creating and producing a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sustainability for quick and easy use by its Members so that cross-country comparison can be made.

   **Establish an OIC-level sustainable tourism monitoring system:** Every member country needs to determine its position regarding its overall tourism climate based on where it sits in destination life cycle models, what its tourism resources are and what its total tourism budget it. This involves an on-going process of acquiring valid and reliable data across these sectors in ways that, ideally, lead to cross-country comparisons. If the OIC is to truly benefit its members, then as many as possible need to be involved to improve the quality of the information and hence the decisions that can be based on it.

   **DMOs to play a role in monitoring performance:** The DMO roles should be widened to encompass a sustainability monitoring role, which is separate from its marketing role.
Policy recommendations related to each of the sustainable tourism strategies:

1. **Increasing Awareness – Destination/national level**
   
   **Conduct local media campaigns:** Increase local community as well as tourist awareness of tourism sustainability issues through a series of integrated media campaigns.

2. **Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage – Destination/national/regional level**
   
   **Seek to list natural and historical heritage sites on UNESCO’S World Heritage List:** This will enlist the support of UNESCO in safeguarding the sites through technical assistance, and professional training, in addition to providing emergency assistance in case of immediate danger.

   **Assign adequate resources to sustainable development efforts.** Protected areas can further develop alternative revenue streams from entry fees (a portion of entry fees for cultural heritage sites can be allocated to its protection), and private sector funding.

   **Issue regulation to protect cultural and natural heritage assets.**

   Establish multilateral organizations charged with the protection of shared natural or cultural heritage sites.

   **Protect biodiversity.**

3. **Managing Demand and Seasonality – Destination level**
   
   **Develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices:**

   Destinations need to be proactive in working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices, which includes monitoring.

4. **Managing Environmental Impacts – National Level**
Embrace the Paris Climate Agreement: It is imperative that governments commit to implementing the Paris Climate Agreement that aims to combat climate change, as well as increase the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

5. **Ensuring Community Wellbeing – Destination/national level**

**Build Capacity at the Community Level:** It is essential, and a necessary component of any long-term, sustainable tourism initiative. The key here is establishing and nourishing a meaningful relationship between the destination planners/developers and the local community.

**Create a Culture of Sustainable Entrepreneurship:** The role of local-to-place businesses, and their capacity to change quickly as circumstances alter, will do much to help build capacity, sustain local employment and ensure that benefit remains with those people responsible for the maintenance of the local tourism environment over the short-term. One way of attempting to create a culture of sustainable entrepreneurship is the use of taxation to promote businesses that employ, retain and encourage local employment, and that buy local services and goods from sustainable sources.

6. **Ensuring Tourist Satisfaction – Destination Level**

**Take measures to ensure tourist satisfaction:** Providing innovative products and services, ensuring a quality experience, and continually monitoring tourist satisfaction and taking corrective measures when needed, are some of the ways to ensure tourist satisfaction.
Background and Methodology

Background

Tourism accounted for 10% of both global GDP and total employment in 2017, highlighting the importance of this sector in ensuring sustainable development, especially considering its forecasted growth by 3.3% a year until 2030.\(^{41}\) It is forecasted that tourism growth up to 2050, without further interventions to ensure sustainability, will lead to an increase of 111% in energy consumption, 105% in greenhouse gas emissions, 150% in water consumption, and 252% in solid waste disposal. However, with targeted efforts in the areas of energy and water efficiency, emissions mitigation and solid waste management, this scenario could be reversed with a reduction of 18% in water consumption, 44% in energy supply and demand, and 52% in carbon dioxide emissions.\(^{42}\) The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) proposes that "sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems".\(^{43}\) In this study, we submit that effective sustainable destination management, which preserves the essential resources and assets essential to the tourism industry, adopts strategies aimed at increasing awareness of sustainability issues at the destination level, the protection of natural and cultural heritage assets, management of environmental impacts, managing demand and seasonality effects, and ensuring community well-being and tourist satisfaction.

Acknowledging that the 57 Member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have a substantial potential to improve sustainable destination management, this study aims to provide tourism policy-makers in member states’ governments with recommendations regarding sustainable tourism strategies that can be used by governments to ensure sustainable destination development. In this study, chapter one explores sustainable destination governance, key stakeholders, sustainable tourism strategies, funding models and resources, and key performance indicators that are used to measure DMO effectiveness. Chapter two presents eight case studies from the OIC and the non-OIC countries to shed light on best practices in sustainable destination management. Chapter three compares practices of the OIC and the non-OIC countries in areas of sustainable destination management and strategies. Chapter four provides recommendations based on study findings for policy-makers in the OIC member states for sustainable destination management and strategies.

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\(^{43}\) Díaz, M. R., & Rodríguez, T. F. E., (2016). Determining the sustainability factors and performance of a tourism destination from the stakeholders’ perspective. Sustainability 8(9), 951-968.
Objective

The objective of this study is to:

- Identify sustainable destination management strategies
- Compare sustainable destination management strategies and practices in the OIC Member States with global best practices
- Provide policy recommendations for the OIC Member States: Provide customized policy recommendations on sustainable destination management for Member countries based on the country’s dependence on tourism and its sustainability risk.

Methodology

The study combines primary and secondary research tools and sources to fulfill its objectives:

- Primary Data: A number of tools/strategies were used including:

  o In-depth Interviews: Twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted face to face and by telephone with tourism stakeholders to provide insights into destination sustainability management and sustainable tourism practices. Interviewees included respondents from destination management organizations and tourism industry professionals as well as respondents from non-governmental organizations who would supply valuable information on sustainable tourism strategies, with referrals used to identify respondents. Content analysis was used to analyze interview transcripts, and qualitative data insights were integrated in relevant areas of the study.

  o Online Survey: A survey with 292 respondents was conducted online in October 2018 to understand the importance of sustainable tourism strategies to tourism stakeholders. SPSS was used to analyze the survey and descriptive data insights were integrated in relevant areas of the study. 13% of responses were from individuals working in destination management organizations while the rest were from various tourism industry businesses including 23% from tour operators, 20% from travel agencies, 18% from accommodation facilities, and the remaining respondents were from travel transport companies, non-governmental organizations, recreation facilities, and tourism consultancy firms. 57% of responses were from the OIC countries and the remaining from non-OIC countries. It is important to note that the small sample size only allowed for descriptive analysis and precluded segmentation analysis.

  o Case Studies: Seven country case studies, four OIC member countries and four non-OIC, were selected to provide insights into destination management and product development strategies. The countries covered were Denmark, Jordan, Italy, Maldives, Oman, Palestine, and Uganda. Both field visits and in-depth interviews were used to collect data in the case studies of Maldives, Oman, and Uganda, while in-depth interviews were used to complement secondary data in the desk case studies.
Secondary Data: A number of secondary sources were used, including:

- Previous Market Studies: Market research on tourism and sustainable destination management, including COMCEC's report on "Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies in the OIC Member Countries".
- Trade and Sector Reports: Information was gathered from the reports published by the Economist Intelligence Unit and the BBC.
- Academic Articles and Research Papers: Information was gathered from Sustainability, TOURISMOS, Tourism Management, Resources, and DESA Discussion paper series.
- Government Data: Data were collected from various government publications and websites, including ministries' and official destination management organizations' websites.
- International Organizations Publications: Including the UNWTO, UNEP, UNESCO, the World Bank, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the European Commission.
Introduction

Defining Sustainable Tourism
As of 2017, tourism accounted for 10% of both global GDP and total employment, highlighting the importance of this sector for sustainable development especially considering its forecasted growth by 3.3% a year until 2030.44 Concerns regarding the negative impacts of tourism, which started with the upsurge of mass tourism in the 1960s, led to the rise of “green tourism,” however, the concept of “sustainable tourism” didn’t gain heightened attention until the early 1990s.45 The most widely-used definition for sustainable tourism is the one used by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which proposes that "sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems".46

The Need for Sustainable Tourism
Governments around the globe have realized that tourism can have a negative impact on a destination’s natural assets, such in the case of Thailand’s Koh Tachai island which was indefinitely closed to visitors. Local communities in many destinations have become vocal protesting the perceived negative effects of tourism. In a number of European cities such as Barcelona and Amsterdam, local communities have led protests calling for protection against congestion and low air quality.47 It is forecasted that tourism growth up to 2050, without further interventions to improve sustainability, will lead to an increase of 111% in energy consumption, 105% in greenhouse gas emissions, 150% in water consumption, and 252% in solid waste disposal. However, with targeted efforts in the areas of energy and water efficiency, emissions mitigation and solid waste management, this scenario could be changed with a reduction of 18% in water consumption, 44% in energy supply and demand, and 52% in carbon dioxide emissions.48

COMCEC’s (cite) previous study “Destination Development and Institutionalization strategies in the OIC Member Countries,” provides an overview of the impact of tourism on destinations outlining both positive and negative economic, social, and environmental impacts as illustrated in the following figure. While in general, the economic impact of tourism has been predominantly positive for host communities, its socio-cultural and environmental impacts can be at best described as mixed. As the following figure illustrates, the positive economic impacts

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of tourism can be observed in its contribution to gross domestic product and employment in tourism destinations. The positive socio-cultural impacts can be witnessed in the increased civic involvement and pride of host communities as a result of interaction with visitors appreciative of their culture as well as the resulting cultural exchange leading to mutual respect. With respect to the negative impacts of tourism on destinations, import and export leakages can have an adverse effect on tourism destinations on the economic level, while loss of cultural identity and cultural clashes can occur on the socio-cultural level, in addition to environmental degradation as a result of tourism activities on the environmental level.49

Figure 1: Impact of Tourism50

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

In recognition of the negative effects of tourism and the importance of sustainable tourism, several charters and declarations, whether on the international, regional or local levels, have attempted to establish criteria for sustainable tourism. Examples of these charters and declarations include the UNWTO’s “Global Codes of Ethics for Tourism” in 1999 which puts forward a set of voluntary principles to guide tourism industry players including principles pertaining to wellbeing of industry workers and local communities. The World Ecotourism Summit’s Québec Declaration on Ecotourism in 2002 highlighted the importance of the development of ecotourism in both the preservation of tourism resources and poverty alleviation in host communities. Another example is the Davos Declaration on “Climate Change and Tourism” in 2007 which sought to address the global challenges facing tourism particularly that of global warming. 51

The Evolution of the Sustainability Concept

The Triple Bottom Line concept was developed in the early 1990s to tackle the issue of sustainability by expanding the measurement of businesses’ performance beyond the traditional focus on economic impacts to the environmental and social spheres. While the economic impact could be easily measured in monetary terms, the environmental and social performance, with issues such as biodiversity and indigenous values, proved to be more difficult to quantify.52

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49 COMCEC. (2018). Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries COMCEC.
50 COMCEC. (2018). Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries COMCEC.
1996, Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, launched by the UNWTO, was one of the earliest efforts in the area of sustainable tourism. This was followed by a number of international, regional, and national efforts to develop guidelines and action plans to foster sustainable tourism including the UNWTO’s “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism” in 1999.\(^5\)

Initially, the focus was biodiversity conservation with Agenda 21.\(^4\)

In 2015, Agenda 2030 was adopted during the 70\(^{th}\) Session of the UN General Assembly by 154 heads of state or government, featuring tourism in 3 of its 17 Sustainable development goals (SDGs), namely goals 8, 12, and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources. Goal 8 stresses the importance of ensuring “inclusive and sustainable economic growth” with decent work opportunities especially for youth and women in the tourism sector, which provides 1 in 11 jobs worldwide. Goal 12 encourages the adoption of “sustainable consumption and production patterns” and monitoring the impact of sustainable tourism in terms of job creation and promotion of local culture and products.\(^5\) Goal 12 also stresses the importance of “robust measurement and monitoring of the sustainable development impacts of tourism” in achieving sustainable development.\(^5\) Goal 14 highlights the importance of conservation of healthy marine ecosystems and stresses on the need for tourism development to be aligned with the conservation efforts.\(^5\)

In 2017, the UN General Assembly highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism by designating this year as the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development” in an effort to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism among all tourism stakeholders and mobilize them to cooperate in achieving sustainability.\(^5\)

**Theories on Sustainable Tourism and Limits to Tourism Growth**

Theories on sustainable tourism and the limits to tourism growth can be classified into three models; the resource-based, activity-based and community-based models of sustainability. While the focus of the resource-based model is on carrying capacity, the activity-based model focuses on the product cycle while the community-based model focus is participatory planning. The resource-based model, the first model to be developed with its focus on carrying capacity, is interested in measuring and setting an optimal number for tourists visiting destinations without incurring negative impacts. However, this idea of setting a “static limit,” as expected, was not highly supported by the tourism industry.

The activity-based model, which can be described as industry-oriented, with its focus on the destination life cycle, is more concerned with the ability of the tourism industry to generate growth through the introduction of new products and the development of the infrastructure. In this model, limits to growth are not set by the ability of the destination and its resources to

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“absorb” tourism, but rather set by the ability of the tourism industry to modify tourism products.

The community-based model seeks to address the conflict of perspective between the resource-based and activity-based sustainability models. In this model, limitations to tourism growth are set through the participation of the community and other stakeholders in decision making related to the use of resources. Thus, in this model, limits to tourism growth are “socially-constructed” and dependent on the various stakeholders’ perspective of the threshold beyond which the negative impacts are unacceptable.59

Dimensions and Aims of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism needs to take into account the ecological, economic, and social sustainability of the destination. Sustainable tourism aims to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of the destination as well as to ensure the well-being of local communities and the satisfaction of tourists. This requires efficient destination management, continuous monitoring, and the cooperation of tourism stakeholders.60

Various studies have tried to identify the dimensions or criteria of sustainable tourism. One study divided sustainability into two areas the human system and the ecosystem, with the human system covering the economic, political, and socio-cultural spheres in addition to the quality of the tourism products and services, while the ecosystem covers the environmental sphere including environmental policies and management, the quality of air and water as well as the biodiversity of flora and fauna.61

The UNWTO identified twelve goals for sustainable tourism, including ensuring the competitiveness and local prosperity of the destination, improving local employment conditions in the tourism sector, securing equal distribution of benefits from tourism, and ensuring the well-being of the local community as well as empowering them through the use of a participatory approach in tourism planning and decision making, providing tourists with a fulfilling experience, using resources efficiently, and respecting the cultural heritage of the destination, protecting the physical integrity, environmental purity and biological diversity of the natural areas and habitats.62 In the following figure, the aims of sustainable tourism are linked to the triple bottom line approach to illustrate both the continuity and development of the sustainable tourism concept.

62 UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook*. UNWTO.
Figure 2: The Triple Bottom Line and Aims of Sustainable Tourism

Challenges to Sustainable Tourism Strategies Implementation

The implementation of sustainable tourism strategies faces a number of obstacles including a lack of awareness and understanding of the concept tourism sustainability, the prioritization of economic objectives over environmental and social issues, inadequate coordination and incorporation into wider policy on the different governmental levels, weak stakeholder involvement and support, and insufficient resources committed to sustainability strategies implementation. The most common barrier to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies is the prioritization of economic goals whether by governments in general or destination management organizations in particular. The tendency of governments to focus on short-term objectives entails the prioritization of economic over social and environmental issues. With sustainable tourism goals being short-term and costly while political terms and agendas cover four to five years, government administrations focus on initiatives that can be more noticeable to the local communities. The short-term focus of destination management fueled by the constant competition between destinations leads in many instances to destinations compromising their natural heritage and resources sustainability by adding new developments and activities and increasing tourists’ consumption patterns to prevent destination decline. This approach can lead to the deterioration of tourism resources which can eventually cause loss of destination competitiveness, leading inadvertently to the destination decline.63

The lack of coordination between the various departments and different levels of government represents another main barrier to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies. In some instances, national and regional plans for tourism development are at odds with local sustainability needs. Implementing sustainable tourism strategies requires close coordination and frequent communication between various government departments including those entities

responsible for environmental conservation, resource management, transportation, and taxation among others. This level of coordination can be difficult to achieve in the absence of a clear defined role for the different government bodies and in the event that sustainable tourism is not placed high on political agendas and recognized as such by the various governmental bodies.\textsuperscript{64}

Stakeholder support is essential for the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies, which emphasizes the need for stakeholder engagement and consultation in developing strategies to ensure stakeholder buy-in and support. However, stakeholder engagement efforts are in many instances influenced by the relative power of the various stakeholders with their different agendas, which can lead to the exclusion of some stakeholders, such as local NGOs who are more focused on environmental and social issues, from sustainable tourism policy development. Finally, the resources committed to the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies seem to be quite inadequate. As mentioned earlier, the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies is costly with no immediate return on investment which may explain the reluctance of governments to allocate the resources necessary for achieving long-term sustainable tourism objectives.\textsuperscript{65}


1. Sustainable Destination Management

In most destinations, destination management organizations (DMOs) are tasked with developing and managing tourism in their destination. Destination management is defined as "the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialization of the tourism product [originating from within the destination], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination."\(^{66}\) In the previous COMCEC report on Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies, the responsibilities of DMOs were classified into three areas: marketing, operational and strategic.\(^{67}\) As illustrated in the following table, DMO activities are essentially geared towards ensuring the sustainability of tourism at the destination level. The marketing activities are aimed at increasing destination competitiveness and therefore economic viability and local prosperity, while the operational activities are aimed at achieving visitor fulfillment and improving local control, employment quality and community wellbeing. The DMO strategic activities, including resource stewardship, monitoring and evaluation, and crisis management, are aimed at preserving the physical integrity, cultural richness, biological diversity, and resource efficiency at the destination.\(^{68}\)

**Figure 3: DMO Activities Serving Sustainable Tourism Goals**

Thus, it can be argued that in their essence DMO activities are serving sustainable tourism goals. However, as this chapter illustrates, there are many other governmental and non-governmental

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\(^{67}\) COMCEC. (2018). Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries. COMCEC.

\(^{68}\) UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
bodies involved in the development and implementation of sustainability goals through regulations and strategies, which operate on international, regional, national, and local levels.

**Governance and Regulatory Environment**

1.1.1. Governance

Beyond the fact that DMO activities are mainly geared at achieving sustainability at destinations, DMOs are responsible for implementing sustainability policies and strategies in many areas as well as engaging, coordinating with and supporting stakeholders in the area of sustainable tourism. However, in most countries, a number of other government bodies, including government environmental agencies in many instances, are involved in developing sustainable tourism strategies. It is also worth noting that there are a large number of international and regional organizations involved in promoting sustainability at the destination level, with some of these organizations establishing sustainable tourism guidelines for member countries such as in the case of the European Commission. It is also worth noting that at the country level, in leading best practice destinations, local communities are involved in the development of sustainable tourism strategies. An example of this is Denmark where tourism board membership consists of members from the local community, local tourism businesses, and in many instances representatives of the municipal councils.

In Australia, a number of government bodies, including the DMO Tourism Australia, the Department of Environment, the Australian Trade Commission, and the Department of Agriculture, work on promoting sustainable tourism at the destination level. Tourism Australia focuses on improving destination competitiveness and the sustainable development and promotion of the tourism industry, whereas The Department of Environment implements governmental policies on the environment, heritage, water, and climate action. The Department of Agriculture develops and implements sustainable policies and programs in the areas of agriculture, fisheries, food, and forestry.

In Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and Visit Sweden collaborate in the development of tourism strategies and destination marketing activities. The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is also responsible for coordination with other government bodies and dissemination of information related to tourism. Visit Sweden, a public-private partnership, is responsible for promoting Sweden internationally; it encourages sustainability practices by endorsing ecotourism in rural areas. The Council for the Promotion of Sweden Abroad includes members from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, the Ministry of Culture, the Swedish Institute, Business Sweden and Visit Sweden. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, which is an umbrella organization for local and regional authorities, promotes cooperation between industry players and local and regional bodies by providing networking opportunities.

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69 COMCEC. (2018). *Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries.* COMCEC.
70 UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook.* UNWTO.
In New Zealand, several public bodies in collaboration with some private entities are involved in destination sustainability. The Ministry for the Environment is responsible for environmental protection, while the Ministry for Culture and Heritage is responsible for the protection of New Zealand’s cultural heritage. Tourism New Zealand, a public entity, is responsible for increasing destination competitiveness as well as being responsible for monitoring the environmental performance of New Zealand’s tourism product and experience. The Tourism Industry Association, a private entity representing tourism associations, works on developing the tourism sector in a sustainable way. The Sustainable Business Council, a private entity, supports the business sector in adopting innovation and encourages responsible entrepreneurship.74

Management of destination sustainability faces a number of challenges including the failure to coordinate at the various levels of government, the constant changing of government officials, and in some cases, their lack of tourism expertise. In many instances, even in the case of countries leading in sustainable tourism practices, there is a failure to coordinate at the various levels of government with successful regional initiatives not carried out in other regions of the same country. In the United Kingdom, even with the existence of a national tourism law, sustainability practices are not uniformly promoted and monitored across the four nations of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. While Scotland’s government has been very supportive of sustainable tourism practices and has set very demanding waste regulations which brought significant change to the tourism industry, government support for sustainability initiatives in England has lagged behind. The constant human resources shuffle in ministries of tourism and environment compounds the problem, as well as the fact that in some instances, the parties assigned to work on the sustainability efforts do not have a tourism background.75

1.1.2. Regulatory Environment

Regulatory frameworks are used by governments to promote sustainable tourism practices by imposing sanctions in cases of non-compliance. Governments have developed regulations in a number of areas that seek to advance sustainable tourism development, including land use planning and development, employee rights, tourists’ health and safety, environmental protection, protection of local communities, use of non-renewable resources, and equal access.76 Many countries are using environmental impact assessments to encourage tourism businesses to monitor their environmental footprint. In France, the UK and Japan, many tourism-related businesses are required to carry out environmental impact assessments. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency mandates that environmental impact assessments are carried out for all tourism-related infrastructure projects. France has developed regulations setting carrying capacity limits and sustainable ways of tourism transport. Germany has a mandatory environmental impact assessment system aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and monitoring water and energy usage in the tourism industry. In Indonesia, the

government has included environmental conservation targets into its national tourism law, however, it has not developed an action plan with well-defined targets.\textsuperscript{77}

In New Zealand, the Resource Management Act of 1991, published by the Ministry of Environment, provides guidelines for managing the country’s environment and natural resources and sets out “national environmental standards” in several areas, including biodiversity, the coastal environment and land use planning. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage published several regulations concerned with the protection of cultural heritage assets, including the Heritage Historic Places Act of 1993 and the National War Memorial Act of 1992.\textsuperscript{78}

Licensing is used to complement regulations in areas where there is a need to ensure at least a minimum level of compliance or to limit which businesses can operate in certain sensitive environments or protected areas. Land use planning and development regulations cover zoning regulations specifying which areas are suitable for different tourism developments as well as regulations concerning building standards including design, density and height of buildings, building materials, and waste disposal systems.\textsuperscript{79}

There are also a number of policy instruments that are used by governments to promote the tourism industry’s adoption of sustainable practices such as taxation and the provision of financial incentives. Beyond highlighting the importance of sustainability in national tourism policies, environmental taxes can be imposed on touristic locations to be paid either by tourism operators or tourists.\textsuperscript{80} In terms of financial incentives, governments either provide direct financial support or access to financial support given by international development agencies or commercial financial institutions. The effectiveness of financial assistance in fostering change can be increased through tying such assistance to specific sustainability-related forms of tourism or minimizing environmental impacts and supporting conservation. Besides general tourist or business taxes, some governments impose taxes on specific inputs or outputs to promote sustainable tourism practices, such as user fees on water usage or taxes on waste disposal to encourage recycling and effluent taxes to influence tourism businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In Costa Rica, the government offers both subsidies and tax exemptions for private nature reserves that offer ecotourism services for the protection of biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and water management.\textsuperscript{81} In Italy, a tax credit system was introduced in 2015 for the renovation of tourism accommodation establishments, with particular focus on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. The tax credit covers between 30% and 65% of the cost. This tax credit system is expanding in 2018 to cover the renewal of the structures most closely related to green tourism such as campsites and agritourism.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{82}Please refer to Italy’s case study for further information and sources.
1.2. Sustainable Tourism Strategies

In an attempt to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism, destination sustainability strategies cover several areas. These strategies include increasing awareness of sustainability issues at the destination level, the protection of natural and cultural heritage assets, management of environmental impacts (e.g., use of non-renewable resources, pollution reduction, waste management, and planning of future tourism development and activities), managing demand and seasonality effects, and ensuring community well-being and tourist satisfaction. The following figure illustrates how various strategies address sustainable tourism goals and tourism impacts. In this section, examples will be provided of the various sustainable tourism strategies in these areas.

Figure 4: Sustainable Tourism Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Vitality</th>
<th>Social Equity</th>
<th>Environmental Purity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Prosperity</td>
<td>Visitor Fulfillment</td>
<td>Resource Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Quality</td>
<td>Community Wellbeing</td>
<td>Physical Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Awareness</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Managing Environmental Impact (Non-Renewable Resources, Waste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Demand and Seasonality</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Protection of Cultural Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
<td>Ensuring Local Community Well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

Increasing Awareness

A number of strategies including the provision of guided tours, information at visitor centers, and awareness and educational programs have been used to increase awareness among local communities, tourists, and tourism businesses of the importance of sustainable tourism and local community well-being. In Colombia, outreach programs conducted at schools and with tourism businesses increased the understanding of the importance of wetlands for Bogota’s water supplies and environmental quality. In Kenya, a large scale environmental education program is conducted for 100,000 school students each year, in addition to conducting low-cost wildlife viewing tours of national parks for residents.83

In New Zealand, the Ministry for the Environment published a “Practical Guide on Protecting and Restoring New Zealand’s Natural Heritage” to increase local communities’ awareness of the need for protecting and restoring ecosystems, while the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment published a number of “Sustainability Best Practice Guides” for tourism, to promote sustainability practices among businesses working in areas of accommodation, food and beverages, land and marine activities, transport, and visitor attractions. New Zealand’s Ministry for the Environment also administers the “Community Environment Fund” dedicated to raising local communities’ awareness of environmental regulations.84

Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage Areas and Assets

Several strategies are used to preserve natural areas and assets including limiting access or limiting the provision of facilities for sensitive environments. In Brazil, tourism activities in the Abroholos are confined to designated dive sites and a 1.6-kilometer nature trail on the island of Siriba. Furthermore, entering the park’s waters is limited to 15 medium-sized vessels daily, which limits the maximum of visitors to 225 per day. By limiting the provision of facilities for visitors (such as toilets, souvenir shops, and food and beverage facilities), tourists can be directed to areas where they cause less damage to sensitive environments.\textsuperscript{85}

Designation is one of the key strategies in preserving natural and cultural heritage sites and also raising financial resources for ongoing maintenance. Designation as a national cultural heritage site attracts tourists, which can help generate the revenues necessary for maintaining the site.\textsuperscript{86} Furthermore, such designation (e.g., as a UNESCO World Heritage Site) bestows international legal protection and also enables site managers to get support and guidance on planning and implementation of sustainability practices.\textsuperscript{87} In New Zealand, 28 natural and 120 cultural sites were designated as World Heritage Sites. Furthermore, several regulations concerned with the protection of cultural heritage assets, including the Heritage Historic Places Act of 1993 and the National War Memorial Act of 1992 have been established.\textsuperscript{88}

Managing Demand and Seasonality Effects

Destinations have used marketing tools, including product/service offerings, pricing and promotion, as well as regulations to manage tourism seasonality and to help tourism remain within the destination’s carrying capacity. Product/service offerings and price can be used to attract different types of visitors; depending on the carrying capacity of the site, DMOs can target high numbers of low budget tourists or low numbers of high budget tourists. In Slovenia, the Skocjan Caves facilities, including its visitor center and walkways, are built in a way to make the caves accessible to a large number of tourists safely while preserving the caves at the same time. In Colombia, the DMO in coordination with various stakeholders, including the Foundation Humedal La Conejera (FHLC) and the local community, worked to develop a regulation manual on sustainability of the wetlands in La Conejera. The manual, which was developed using a participatory approach, included guidelines for managing the wetlands within a carrying capacity framework and demarking public access areas. Promotion is used to attract visitors during off-peak seasons as well as encouraging them to visit areas of that have low traffic. In Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service is launching a program to encourage tourists to visit Rift Valley lakes to help decrease the pressure caused by high visitor traffic at Lake Nakuru.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{86}UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
In Sweden, several regional initiatives have been undertaken to extend the tourism season to reduce the vast seasonal variations by focusing on attracting tourists from various markets targeting their different holiday schedules. In 2012, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth provided financial support to over 40 regional and local organizations to develop sustainable tourism through various initiatives aiming at extending the tourist season, developing innovative sustainable products and services, and enhancing accessibility and destination competitiveness. In Italy, the Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows into areas that are not recognized as tourist destinations with the objective of decongesting saturated areas and improving competitiveness by widening the product offer and establishing a more sustainable model.

**Managing the Environmental Impacts of Tourism**

The negative environmental impacts of tourism have garnered increasing attention recently and have been the focus of many governmental and non-governmental initiatives at international, regional, and local levels. The tourism industry has launched several efforts at conserving non-renewable resources, reducing pollution and waste. Governments have employed a number of strategies to promote best practices in this area, from providing support and financial incentives to tourism businesses and imposing taxes on non-renewable resources consumption to mandating environmental impact assessments. In Germany, the federal government has supported many tourism industry and NGOs, such as the Hotel and Catering Energy Campaign initiated by the German Hotel and Restaurant Association. This effort identifies specific energy and water consumption and carbon emissions reduction measures and voluntary audits for the domestic hospitality industry leading to accreditation. Germany also has a mandatory environmental impact assessment system aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and monitoring water and energy usage in the tourism industry.

In France, the UK, and Japan, many tourism-related businesses are required to carry out environmental impact assessments. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency mandates that environmental impact assessments are carried out for all tourism-related infrastructure projects. In New Zealand, several funds are dedicated to the promotion of sustainability practices and the conservation of the environment, including the “Waste Levy and Waste Minimization Fund” which supports initiatives to improve resource efficiency and recycle waste. In Italy, a tax credit system was introduced in 2015 for the renovation of tourism accommodation establishments, with particular focus on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. The tax credit covers between 30% and 65% of the cost.

Laws and regulations have been the primary tools used to align tourism development planning and activities with sustainability objectives. Zoning regulations have been used to indicate the areas suitable for different kinds of tourism development, while building standards and

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91 Please refer to Italy’s case study for further information and sources.


95 Please refer to Italy’s case study for further information and sources.
regulations specify the design, density and height of buildings, building materials, and waste disposal systems for tourism developments in different areas. In Costa Rica, the National Sustainable Tourism Plan identifies the 10 areas and specifies a General Land Use and Tourism Development Plan for each of the 10 areas.\textsuperscript{96}

**Tourist Satisfaction**

Tourist satisfaction is important to the sustainability of tourism; strategies in this area include the provision of innovative products, ensuring a quality experience and monitoring tourist satisfaction to take corrective actions when needed. In the Philippines, setting limits on the number of divers allowed helps to reduce stress on the reefs as well as help to ensure that tourists have a high-quality experience. In Estonia, “bogshoe” walks at the Soomaa National Park using snowshoes offer a special experience that allows tourists to fully explore remote areas of the park and to walk over the delicate bog vegetation without causing damage.\textsuperscript{97}

In Italy, the Cammini d’Italia atlas and website was launched to offer travelers and tourists a real intermodal infrastructure of green roads where they can choose to travel Italy on foot, by bike, on horseback or with other forms of sustainable mobility.\textsuperscript{98} In Sweden, a four-year initiative was launched in 2012 to improve hospitality services quality and destination’s quality.\textsuperscript{99} Monitoring tourist satisfaction, through the use of exit surveys, is valuable for establishing the quality performance of the destination and taking corrective measures when needed.\textsuperscript{100}

**Ensuring Local Community Well-being**

To help promote local community well-being, governments must empower local communities by encouraging their participation in tourism strategy development and implementation, as well as increase the economic benefits while minimizing negative economic, social and environmental impacts from tourism on local communities, including leakages, social clashes, and environmental degradation. In Tunisia, the Lake Ichkeul Park supports the local community through the provision of basic training and credit schemes in an effort to increase local employment in tourism and increase the local economic benefits from tourism.\textsuperscript{101} In Costa Rica, a Social Progress Index, which uses environmental and social indicators, is being used to better monitor the impact of tourism growth on local community well-being.\textsuperscript{102}

In New Zealand, Qualmark, the official tourism quality assurance system supported by the government, includes elements to ensure local community well-being such as the provision of support to local community by sponsoring community events or community groups and charities.\textsuperscript{103} In Denmark, the Green Key certification, endorsed by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, criteria include elements to ensure local community well-being such as the


\textsuperscript{98} Please refer to Italy’s case study for further information and sources.


\textsuperscript{100} COMCEC. (2018). *Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries*. COMCEC.


\textsuperscript{102} UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook*. UNWTO.

consumption of local products, the support of local businesses, decent employment, and social responsibility. Still, ensuring local community well-being is a key and long-term challenge for sustainable tourism development.

Survey Insights

The survey findings suggest that respondents believe that their respective destinations are to a large extent addressing the strategy areas that should be prioritized. The following matrix shows that the strategies that were rated higher in terms of priority by the respondents were to a great extent addressed efficiently, while the strategy areas the respondents considered to have lower priority also had lower levels of performance. The strategy area the respondents rated the highest in terms of both importance and performance was ensuring tourist satisfaction. Protection of natural and cultural heritage, and planning tourism developments were rated higher in terms of priority than managing demand and seasonality, which also had the lowest performance rating in the high-performance strategies. With respect to the strategy areas that were rated by respondents lower in terms of importance, most of the strategies in this category were those related to the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable tourism, which can be due to the fact that survey respondents were mostly industry professionals who are more worried about the economic dimension of sustainable tourism. The area that received the higher priority as well as higher performance rating was that of local community wellbeing. It is important to note that while respondents may have assigned lower priority to strategies such as local community wellbeing, non-renewable resources sustainability and reduction of pollution and waste management, these strategy areas are being considered as priorities in most destinations’ current tourism strategies. From this perspective, the fact that these areas were lower in performance levels indicates lower focus on these areas. This sheds a light on the importance of creating awareness of the importance of the environmental and social dimensions of tourism sustainability.

**Figure 5: Sustainable Tourism Strategies Importance Performance Matrix**

![Sustainable Tourism Strategies Importance Performance Matrix](source: DinarStandard)

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104 Please refer to Denmark’s case study for further information and sources.
The following graphs provide details of respondents’ priority and performance rating of the various sustainability strategies. With respect to priority as cited earlier, respondents believe that tourist satisfaction should be the highest priority area, followed closely by planning tourist developments, the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and managing demand and seasonality. Increasing awareness of sustainability issues and ensuring local community well-being were rated as high to medium priority areas by more than half of the sample. Ensuring non-renewable resources sustainability and reducing pollution were at the end of the list but still with half of the respondents rating it as a high to medium priority area.

**Figure 6: Survey Findings - Priority Areas for Sustainability Policies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Very low priority</th>
<th>Low priority</th>
<th>Medium priority</th>
<th>High priority</th>
<th>Very high priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring local community well-being</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing demand and seasonality effects</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing awareness of sustainability issues at destination</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning tourism developments &amp; activities</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring tourist satisfaction</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing pollution &amp; waste management</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring non-renewable Resources Sustainability</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of cultural heritage assets and sites</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of natural heritage areas and sites</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard

With respect to performance, as the following graph illustrates, 15-35% of respondents feel that their destinations’ performance is inadequate, with reduction of pollution being the most problematic area and ensuring tourist satisfaction being the least problematic one. The findings indicate that a large percentage of survey respondents (74-86%) feel that most of the destination sustainability policies are inadequate.

**Figure 7: Survey Findings - Performance of Sustainability Policies**

Source: DinarStandard
Sustainable Tourism Stakeholders

1.2.1. Stakeholders and their Roles

To create a sustainable tourism development model, destinations need to develop comprehensive long-term plans since environmental conservation measures typically need time, cooperation, and coordination among various public and private entities as well as with local communities. There is a multitude of stakeholders that need to be engaged in sustainable tourism development, including tourism/destination management bodies, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, regional and international organizations, domestic non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, the tourism industry, tourist and the local community.

Figure 8: Sustainable Tourism Stakeholders

As discussed earlier, DMOs play an important role in sustainability at the destination level, they also play an instrumental role in coordinating between the various sustainable tourism stakeholders. On the other hand, there are various governmental bodies at national, regional, and local levels that also play an instrumental role in sustainable tourism policies and strategies. Governmental bodies manage tourism-related resources and plan infrastructure development as well as coordinate between and provide support to stakeholders. Beyond funding and financing sustainable tourism initiatives, governmental bodies also play an important role in disseminating information as well as coordinating and providing a supportive environment for private sector sustainable tourism initiatives. Governmental bodies also carry the responsibility for introducing needed financial market reforms to encourage the private sector to adopt sustainable tourism strategies and initiatives.

Regional and international organizations have an important role in integrating sustainable tourism development policies and agreements as well as providing financial and technical assistance in the area of sustainable tourism. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has played a leading role in protecting natural, cultural and historical heritage. UNESCO has bestowed international legal protection to 1,073 sites around the globe through World Heritage

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106 UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
107 UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
109 UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
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designation. UNESCO’s World Heritage & Sustainable Tourism Program also provides support and guidance to heritage site managers on planning and implementation of sustainability practices.\textsuperscript{110} The United Nations Environment Program has partnered with the global financial sector to provide specific funding programs for sustainable tourism.\textsuperscript{111} Regional, national, and international organizations also play an important role in raising awareness of sustainability issues and conservation strategies. In Europe, several regional initiatives were launched to increase awareness of sustainable tourism and promote the implementation of sustainable tourism management standards for protected areas.\textsuperscript{112} The European Federation of Protected Areas (Europarc), a federation representing over 400 organizations managing protected areas across the continent, launched the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas to promote the implementation of sustainable tourism practices in protected areas. This was achieved by providing certification to protected areas management entities who have developed a sustainable tourism action plan with the participation of stakeholders.\textsuperscript{113}

Local non-governmental organizations engage and represent the interests of various tourism stakeholders and are in many instances involved in supporting the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies as well as providing training or consultation on sustainability issues.\textsuperscript{114} NGOs have been particularly instrumental in increasing awareness of key stakeholders about the importance of sustainable tourism and presenting a solid business case for tourism companies to adopt such practices. This includes providing access to international expertise and technology.\textsuperscript{115} In Indonesia, the Indonesian NGO Indecon, in collaboration with international donor organizations, engages a multitude of stakeholders to promote ecotourism and sustainable tourism in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{116}

Education and training bodies, including universities and research institutions, play a pivotal role in the collection and dissemination of information, while also raising awareness about sustainable issues. In addition, universities and research institutions provide training and consultation in areas related to sustainable tourism. Tourism industry players, including the various tourism service providers, have an important role in terms of product development, creation of employment opportunities, and integrating sustainability practices in their operations.\textsuperscript{117}

In many instances, the tourism industry has played a proactive role in sustainable tourism by making voluntary commitments to conservation. Large hotel chains, such as Accor Hotels Group, Marriott International, and Intercontinental Hotels Group, have reportedly improved their environmental performance by reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as energy and water consumption at their establishments around the globe. Even though some may argue that since

\textsuperscript{114} UNWTO. (2013). \textit{Sustainable tourism for development guidebook.} UNWTO.
\textsuperscript{117} UNWTO. (2013). \textit{Sustainable tourism for development guidebook.} UNWTO.
95% of the tourism industry businesses are small or medium enterprises (SMEs), the environmental impact of such practices by large companies is minimal. However, large hotel and tourism companies can have significant impact on sustainability due to their wide global supply chains. Some hotel chains have used supply chain analysis to identify suppliers that have negative impacts on their local areas. One example is the Accor Hotels Group, which altered its food purchase practices in favor of preserving water in developing countries.\textsuperscript{118} In 2012, Accor launched its PLANET 21 program that pledges 21 commitments in favor of sustainable development. These include reducing carbon dioxide emissions and energy use as well as managing water usage and improving waste recycling practices at all their hotels by 2015.\textsuperscript{119} The tourism industry has led sustainability efforts in some areas such as in the aviation sector where industry bodies coordinated efforts to reduce emissions. The International Air Transportation Association (IATA) has encouraged efforts in developing biofuels; It has also supported the UN-sponsored Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation.\textsuperscript{120} The tourism sector can also contribute to sustainability through the development of innovative products that improve tourist experiences as well as help conservation efforts. An example of this is the ‘bogshoe’ walks at Soomaa National Park in Estonia where tour operators came up with the idea of tourists using snowshoes to enable them to explore the Soomaa National Park and walk over the delicate bog vegetation without damaging it, thus providing a special service to tourists and conserving the bogs and wildlife. Tourism industry players have also been involved in creating awareness of sustainability issues and encouraging certification schemes such as in the case of the PAN Parks Foundation, established by a Dutch tourism company in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund. This effort offers sustainable tourism guidance and certification schemes for parks in Europe. Pan Parks Certification provides certified parks with marketing, promotion, and networking opportunities through the Pan Parks Network communication channels.\textsuperscript{121}

Tourists are particularly important to sustainability since they are the main source of revenue for the sector as well as the main consumers of tourism assets, thus their behavior is directly linked to sustainability issues. Increasing the awareness of tourists about sustainability issues at the destinations they visit is essential for persevering destination resources and enhancing the sustainability of tourism. Furthermore, most tourists fly to their destinations, and therefore have a massive impact globally, if not at the actual destinations they visit. Tourists also use the internet and other digital devices, which have a significant carbon footprint, to live stream their holiday activities.\textsuperscript{122} In some destinations, tourists have taken a proactive role whether by providing financial support through voluntary contributions or by helping in monitoring the environmental impact of tourism. In Argentina, tourists were invited to help guides in the Iguazu Forest Natural Reserve to fill forms registering wild fauna and flora on their tours of the reserve.\textsuperscript{123}


\textsuperscript{123} UNWTO. (2013). *Sustainable tourism for development guidebook.* UNWTO.
An important aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure the well-being of local communities since in many destinations the livelihood of the local community is dependent on revenues from tourism. Interaction with the local community shapes the tourist experience to a large extent. In some instances, local communities offer tourism services, such as in the case of Ichkeul in Tunisia and in the Danube Delta in Romania where local communities offer homestays to tourists. Thus, engaging local communities in sustainable tourism efforts is crucial. Engagement of local communities can take a number of forms from consultations on specific issues to having formal forums for local community and other stakeholders to including local community members in tourism management boards. The local community needs to be engaged in sustainable tourism efforts since tourism has a direct impact on their well-being. The local community perception of the importance of tourism for their livelihoods may influence their interaction with tourists, which in turn can affect sustainable tourism. In Vietnam, Lake-related tourism around Ba Be provides employment opportunities to the local community who are involved in offering tourism services such as boat rides, homestay facilities, and guide services. The revenues and employment opportunities generated by tourism have helped in raising the local community's awareness of sustainable tourism encouraged participation in conservation efforts.

1.3.2. Engaging Sustainable Tourism Stakeholders

The internalization of sustainability values and practices and the creation of a tourism culture mindful of sustainability issues need the continuous and active encouragement of stakeholder engagement as well as support for capacity building. Providing pertinent information to create awareness and being open to stakeholder ideas gathered through the various communication channels, from formal or informal meetings to surveys and other means are essential for ensuring the support of stakeholders and their implementation of sustainable tourism strategies and practices. In Denmark, the Danish National Tourism Forum receives continuous feedback and advice from the Danish Tourism Advisory Board, which has members from a wide range of tourism stakeholders representing different interests.

The previous COMCEC report on “Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies” identified a hierarchy of stakeholder engagement according to the International Association for Public Participation. This hierarchy begins by informing stakeholders then progresses to consulting and involving stakeholders and evolves to the highest level of engagement in the form of collaboration and empowerment of stakeholders. The choice of engagement level can sometimes be based on stakeholder level of interest in the strategies and policies in question, and their ability to affect the results. This suggests that stakeholders with low levels of interest

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125 UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
128 Please refer to Denmark’s case study for more information and sources.
and little influence may be informed through “first level” engagement strategies through the use of newsletters and emails.\textsuperscript{129}

Educational institutions and local communities have low influence but high interest in sustainable tourism, they need to be consulted in sustainable tourism strategies. Consultation can be initiated using a variety of tools such as feedback loops, focus groups, and surveys. For stakeholders with high influence in strategy area but low interest in the sustainable tourism strategies, they need to be involved to ensure their needs and interests are met to avoid potential conflicts. These stakeholders can be invited to join workshops, special forums, and joint planning and strategy formulation sessions. Tourism businesses are considered as having both high influence and high interest in sustainable tourism, thus their opinions and suggestions need to be assimilated in developing sustainable tourism strategies. Collaborating with these stakeholders can be carried out through regular meetings or special committees for stakeholders.\textsuperscript{130}

While direct engagement techniques, such as stakeholder meetings and ongoing advisory groups, can be very useful in terms of generating acceptance and creating a sense of ownership, it is both time consuming and resource intensive as well as not adequately accessible and representative of all stakeholders. This has led to an increase in the adoption of modern technology tools to ensure broader engagement. Some of the earliest engagement efforts in this area was led by the WTO in 2002. This was done in preparation for the conferences for the International Year of Ecotourism that was held as an international web-conference, which was carried out through emails for stakeholders who were not able to attend the regional meetings. In Australia, stakeholders were also consulted using on-line tools in the formulation of the medium to long-term strategy for the Tourism Industry in 2003.\textsuperscript{131}

To facilitate cooperation between stakeholders, it is important to communicate the importance of sustainable tourism and identify the areas of mutual interest through dialogue. In some instances, the tourism industry may have conflicting interests with other stakeholders such as destination management bodies or local communities with regards to some such as optimal carrying capacities. However, meaningful and sincere dialogue can help navigate these differences and find mutual areas for collaboration. An important area for engagement and collaboration with the tourism industry is the creation and implementation of sustainable tourism regulations.\textsuperscript{132}

\textbf{Survey Insights:} As the following figure illustrates, findings from the destination management organizations and tourism industry survey for this study indicate lower levels of involvement and collaboration in tourism sustainability strategies; close to half of the respondents reported being only informed of strategies as opposed to being consulted or involved. Respondents were also asked about the incentives their organizations receive to implement sustainable tourism strategies. 37\% of the respondents stated that they didn’t receive any incentives. 40\% of respondents mentioned receiving capacity building or training, 35\% cited benefiting from consultation or advice on sustainability issues, and 21\% mentioned receiving free sustainability or eco certification and financial incentives.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{129} COMCEC. (2018). \textit{Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries}. COMCEC.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} COMCEC. (2018). \textit{Destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC member countries}. COMCEC.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} UNWTO. (2013). \textit{Sustainable tourism for development guidebook}. UNWTO.
\end{itemize}
Figure 9: Survey Findings - Level of Engagement

Source: DinarStandard

Funding Sustainable Tourism

1.2.2. Funding Sources

In recognition of the importance of sustainable tourism, both public and private sector entities have committed funds to conservation and sustainability efforts. Most destinations have sought to diversify their funding sources with the use of innovative financing strategies because of tight public budgets. Green financing has expanded recently in the tourism sector with the growing interest in sustainable tourism. There are a number of initiatives and funds on national, regional, and international levels. These provide financing for tourism businesses interested in taking into account environmental and social issues in all of their operations.\(^{133}\)

Funding sources for sustainable tourism can be classified as being of domestic or foreign origin. Domestic sources include public and private sources. Public sources including national and local governmental bodies and public financial institutions while private sources include private financial institutions and domestic conservation organizations whose funding comes from private sources such as individuals, companies or foundations. Foreign sources of funding include bilateral investors, regional and international financial institutions and development organizations.\(^{134}\) It is important to note that while domestic and regional financial institutions


are typically well positioned to overcome investment barriers in certain locations, international institutions are better able to reduce investment risks by linking projects in several countries.\(^{135}\)

**Figure 10: Sustainable Tourism Funding Sources**

![Diagram showing Sources of Sustainable Tourism Funding](source: DinarStandard analysis)

In most cases, governments support sustainable tourism indirectly by encouraging private sector financing and investment in sustainability through subsidies, green loans and insurance for green assets. Public institutions can play an important role in linking tourism projects with green and other financing instruments such as group lending by microfinance institutions. However, governments also promote sustainable tourism directly through financing or co-financing sustainable tourism projects. Government funding is typically focused on preserving destination competitiveness, promoting social inclusion, and reducing investment in polluting technologies. In the UK, the government invests in tourism clean tech ventures that provide services while reducing negative environmental impacts. In Spain, a EUR 60 million grant initiative was spearheaded by the Ministry of Energy to increase digitalization and energy efficiency in local tourism destinations. The grant offered financing up to 60-80% per project for up to EUR 6 million per project with the remaining 20-40% to be financed by the companies applying for the grants. In Turkey, the Turkish Development and Investment Bank (TSKB) offers both financing and consultancy services for green investment in the tourism sector, providing funding in areas such as energy, water, and waste management as well as social impact management.\(^{136}\)

In many instances, governments use the revenue generated from tourism to fund sustainability activities. In Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service, which manages a number of national parks, uses revenue generated from visitors to the park to finance its biodiversity and conservation activities. An example of this is the Lake Nakuru where concession fees from the lease of two lodges and entrance fees from visitors provide financing for conservation activities. The park is visited by 245,000 visitors a year of which 149,500 are international tourists and 95,500 are local visitors. International tourists pay $80 for entrance while local visitors are charged $11.\(^{137}\)

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International and regional bodies and development organizations have actively been involved in financing sustainable tourism through a variety of initiatives. The United Nations Environment Program has partnered with the global financial sector, including banks, insurers, and investors, to promote sustainable finance. The participating institutions from the financial sector sign up to the “UNEP Statement of Commitment by Financial Institutions on Sustainable Development” to provide specific funding programs for sustainable tourism. An example of a participating institution is Triodos Bank, which makes loans available to sustainable tourism businesses that are – or on their way to becoming – Green Tourism-certified.\textsuperscript{138}

In EU countries, the European Commission provided funding, under the Program for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) to around 100 projects over the period 2014-2016, including projects aiming at developing transnational cycle or hiking routes, environmentally-friendly tourism, and European Cultural Itineraries. Furthermore, the European Commission financed along with national governments, under the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) initiative, the promotion of 140 lesser-known destinations who had outstanding sustainable tourism engagement. The European Commission also developed “A Guide on EU Funding to the Tourism Sector” to enable those seeking financing to identify the various existing sources. In the Baltic region, the Nordic Investment Bank provides financing for sustainable projects. As of 2017, financing was provided to five projects in the tourism-related areas, including a wastewater treatment system in the city of Bergen in Norway, green road infrastructure projects in Finland, and environmental projects of SMEs in Iceland.\textsuperscript{139}

Survey Insights

Findings from the destination management organizations and tourism industry survey conducted in the framework of this study indicate that the most common funding source for sustainability activities is domestic public funding (67%) followed by domestic private funding (54%), with foreign funding being the least identified source by survey respondents (44%). When asked to choose from possible means to improve funding, 68% indicated that government can provide collateral for tourism SMEs to obtain loans for sustainable tourism activities, while 63% indicated the need to increase awareness of international and regional funding/financing opportunities for sustainability. 59% of survey respondents thought government providing interest-free loans can improve funding of sustainability activities. Commercial banks providing low interest loans was also identified by half of the respondents as a viable option, while 38% cited voluntary contributions from tourists as a possible alternative to funding sustainability activities. Only 31% of the respondents identified crowd funding as a possible solution to increase funding for sustainability activities.

1.2.3. Innovative Sustainable Tourism Financing Tools

Innovative tools have emerged for sustainable funding as a way to reduce transaction and borrowing costs. Some of these innovative tools used to finance sustainable tourism include green bonds and sukuk, energy efficiency facility loans, smart incentives for eco-certification, enterprise challenge funds, crowdfunding and voluntary contributions from tourists. Green

\begin{footnotesize}
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finance consists of financial instruments, such as green bonds, designated for safeguarding environmental benefits through addressing areas such as clean energy production, air pollution, biodiversity loss, resource efficiency, and waste and water management. Green bonds, which enable green investors to monitor the management of funds and their environmental impact, have been used successfully in a number of destinations to fund sustainability activities. In France, green bonds were used by the French National Railway Company in 2017 to fund its sustainability strategies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the consumption of natural resources. In Mexico, green bonds were also used to finance the construction of the New Mexico City Airport.\textsuperscript{140} Islamic green bonds, sukuk, have also been used to finance environmentally-sustainable infrastructure projects. Malaysia was the first country to develop and introduce green sukuk in 2016 as a result of the collaboration of the World Bank Group Global Knowledge and Research Hub, the Central Bank of Malaysia and the Securities Commission.\textsuperscript{141} In 2018, Indonesia also launched sovereign green sukuk, which reach $1.25 billion.\textsuperscript{142}

Energy efficiency loan facilities have been the most widespread type of loans in the tourism sector. In Morocco, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in coordination with the state electricity organization of Morocco provided subsidized loans to support the use of solar water heating in hotels. In the United Kingdom, interest-free loans and 100% capital tax allowances were made available for the use of energy-efficient equipment through the Low Carbon Trust. Smart incentives for eco-certification have been used to promote sustainable tourism and encourage businesses to become certified. In Barbados, eco-certification expenditures and community tourism programs are compensated at a rate of 150% against tax-assessable income. Both Italy and Spain provide grants for eco-certification.\textsuperscript{143}

Enterprise challenge funds offer subsidies to private investment projects in developing countries through the use of competitive calls to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the Solomon Islands, the Wilderness Lodge, an ecotourism provider, managed to double guest accommodation with the support of the Australian Agency for International Development’s (AusAID) Enterprise Challenge Fund (ECF) with the aim of protecting the world’s most intact coral reefs and providing economic opportunities to the local community.\textsuperscript{144}

Crowdfunding, which can be debt- or equity-based, is a $35 billion market used by startups to obtain capital to start their operations. This can be an important tool for tourism businesses pursuing sustainability activities. WalQlike, a tourism application for exploring cities, is using crowdfunding to expand. New crowdfunding platforms are emerging that are dedicated to tourism such as TravelStarter. Voluntary contributions from tourists have been used as a tool for ensuring the conservation of tourism attractions in many destinations. In the United Kingdom, a public-private partnership consisting of 180 tourism businesses generates an annual

\textsuperscript{141} World Bank Group (n.d.). Blog.
\textsuperscript{142} Bahuet, C. (2018). Indonesia’s green sukuk: A leap towards financing for the sustainable development goals. UNDP Website.
revenue of around $300,000 for the conservation of the Lake District National Park by collecting voluntary contributions from guests.145

1.2.4. Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Funding

According to the UNCTAD’s World Investment Report, the developing countries’ annual investment gap in sustainable development sectors over 2015-2030 amounts to $2.5 trillion. Even with current levels of government funding, the private sector role is deemed essential in achieving Sustainable Development Goals whether through the adoption of good practices or investing in sustainable development.146 Funding sustainable tourism faces a number of challenges including the “maturity mismatch” between the needs of sustainable tourism projects and the available financial instruments, lack of information on green investment impact in tourism, and the lack of support for green business practices. With regards to the available financial instruments, in most cases there is “maturity mismatch” caused by the fact that many sustainability activities and projects, especially infrastructure investments, are typically short-term while investors usually look for projects where assets can be liquidated quickly.

Additionally, tourism SMEs may be unable to provide the collateral needed for securing external financing especially since they are service providers dealing mainly in “intangibles” which are difficult to quantify and use as collateral. Information on green investment in tourism is very limited, thus far most green financing has focused on energy efficiency and ignores other sustainability areas. Policy support for green businesses has also been limited; governments need to play a more proactive role to encourage financing and investments in sustainable tourism, from the provision of grants and subsidized loans, to businesses which integrate sustainable tourism strategies in their operations, to promoting green financing to businesses working in the tourism sector, to providing public credit guarantees to small tourism businesses to enable them to pursue sustainable tourism strategies. Furthermore, governments need to increase awareness of the benefits of adopting sustainability strategies and encourage the adoption of such strategies through the provision of incentives.147 Governments can provide support to local entrepreneurs to improve tourism product offerings enhancing sustainable tourism, such in the case of Italy, where a tax credit system was introduced to incentivize the renovation and upgrading of hotels and other tourism accommodation establishments. The tax credit covers between 30% and 65% of the cost and focuses on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. Since 2018, this tax also benefits renovation projects in green tourism, such as campsites and agritourism. Alongside this measure, another tax credit was introduced to support digital technology in tourism.148

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146 UNCTAD Website.
1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainable Tourism

1.3.1. Sustainable Tourism Indicators

Tourism stakeholders, including DMOs, governmental bodies, educational institutions, regional and international organizations, tourism industry players, and local communities, have been involved in the development of sustainable tourism indicators especially those pertaining to social and environmental impacts. In many instances, stakeholders have also been involved in collecting data for monitoring and evaluation of tourism at the destination, especially when the destination management organizations or responsible governmental bodies have limited financial resources. In Argentina, the tourist guides in the Iguazu Forest Natural Reserve were given training to document wild fauna and flora on their tours of the reserve. Tourists were also invited to participate in documenting the fauna and flora on these tours.149

There are also several accreditation systems developed by both commercial and not-for-profit organizations, such as Green Tourism in the UK, Viabono in Germany, and Green Globe in the United States. In 2007, various stakeholders, including the UNWTO in collaboration with the UN Environment Program, The UN Foundation and the NGO Rainforest Alliance, created the GSTC which provides a globally recognized sustainable tourism certification. In 2012, a number of tourism stakeholders, including the WTTC, a number of large hotel groups, a UK sustainable tourism-focused NGO, and the accounting firm KPMG, worked together to create tools and standards for measurement of carbon emissions which have since been implemented by over 15,000 hospitality organizations.150

Some would claim that the unification of sustainable tourism standards can encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, however, others argue that the different environmental, social, and economic conditions of individual countries underscore the need for specific sustainability standards that are relevant to their situations. Issues like water management may be a priority for a country like South Africa but not for other countries with very different needs and limitations.151

There is universal agreement however that the use of indicators is crucial for effective monitoring as they provide the means to measure the seriousness of current risks, signal the need for intervention, and evaluate the impact of interventions. Sustainable tourism indicators, which can be either qualitative or quantitative, cover various areas from economic sustainability to social, cultural, and environmental tourism impacts as well as the effectiveness of destination management. The most widely used indicators are the economic impact indicators, which include basic tourism indicators such as tourist arrivals and spending as well as specific sustainability indicators such as carrying capacity, which can be measured in a variety of ways from measuring tourist numbers in peak seasons to measuring tourist usage of natural resources such as average use of water per tourist.152

There are various categories of indicators; those that provide early warning signals such as decline in number of tourists with the intention to return, those that measure pressures on the

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149 UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. UNWTO.
system such as water shortages, those that measure the biodiversity and socio-economic impact such as deforestation, those that measure management endeavors such as the cleanup cost for coastal contamination, and those that measure the impact of management intervention such as lower pollution levels. In many instances, the same indicator is used for different purposes, thus, an indicator used for measuring pressures on the system can also be used after management intervention to measure the impact of such interventions.

Decision makers, in collaboration with stakeholders, need to choose the indicators best suited to their destination in terms of the salient tourism impact issues that need to be monitored and addressed. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development has worked on providing guidelines for the development of national indicator programs that are destination-specific. Beyond the continuous efforts by international organizations in this area, there are a number of sustainable tourism indicator initiatives around the globe, launched by various stakeholders from governmental bodies and educational organizations to tourism businesses and local communities. There are a number of indicators that destination managers can choose from to track their sustainability performance and intervene with corrective measures when needed. In the following table, examples of international and regional indicators and the areas they cover are presented. The UNWTO’s Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations tracks 12 areas, namely economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community well-being, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental purity. The Sustainable Tourism Index, launched by the Economist Intelligence Unit, uses performance indicators to rank countries for best sustainability practices, while the European Tourism Indicator System is used to monitor European destinations performance in four sustainable tourism areas.

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In the following table, several selected indicators covering the different areas of sustainable tourism, are presented and grouped in terms of their coverage of economic, social, and environmental impacts.

**Table 2: Select Sustainable Tourism Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Impact</td>
<td>Total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (%)</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism employment as % of total employment</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily spending per overnight tourist</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average length of stay of tourists (nights)</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of seasonal jobs in tourism</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The longevity of tourism businesses (rate of turnover)</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% and value of local products and produce sold to tourism facilities and businesses</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average hourly wage in tourism compared to other sectors</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local unemployment rate in off-season</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of repeat/return visitors (within 5 years)</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Impact</td>
<td>% of men &amp; women employed in the tourism sector</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ratio of tourists to locals (annual average, peak season &amp; peak day average)</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of residents satisfied with tourism impacts on the destination’s identity</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of the destination’s events that are focused on traditional/local culture and heritage</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dinar/Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Impact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of incidents against local norms by tourists</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural and historical assets protection</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average carbon footprint of tourists &amp; same-day visitors travelling from home to the destination</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of tourists or vehicles at key areas</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of tourists per square meter at key areas</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of tourism enterprises involved in climate change mitigation schemes</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water consumption per tourist night compared to general population water consumption per resident night</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waste production per tourist night compared to general population waste production per person (kg)</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy consumption per tourist night compared to general population energy consumption per resident night</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of tourism enterprises reducing water consumption</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of tourism enterprises using recycled water</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of tourism enterprises reducing energy consumption</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of coastline covered by buildings and infrastructure</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of habitat being affected by tourism infrastructure and facility development</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of volume of water used in tourism, compared to other sectors</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%, number of tourists using public or alternative transport</td>
<td>Indicators of Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CO2 emissions (kg per PPP $ of GDP)</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of tourism enterprises using a voluntary environmental/quality/sustainability certification</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard

**Survey Insights**

Findings from the destination management organizations and tourism industry survey conducted for this study indicate a medium level of awareness of indicators used in various destinations. When asked about whether they are aware of any indicators used at their destinations, only 60% of the respondents stated they were. The indicators they were aware of covered tourist satisfaction and protection of cultural assets (65%), visitor spending and employment in tourism (60%), efficiency in using resources (47%), quality of life of local communities and physical integrity of natural areas and sites (43%), and reduction of waste (40%). 75% of the respondents who cited their destinations using indicators were satisfied with the effectiveness of the indicators in monitoring sustainable destination development. When asked which areas should be prioritized, findings suggest that most survey...
respondents (75-80%) believe that monitoring all tourism impact areas should be highly prioritized by governments. The protection of cultural assets was identified by the highest percentage of respondents as very high priority.

Figure 11: Survey Findings - Priority Area for Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very low priority</th>
<th>Low priority</th>
<th>Medium priority</th>
<th>High priority</th>
<th>Very high priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of waste and pollution</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency in using resources</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical integrity of natural areas and sites</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life of local communities</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist satisfaction</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of cultural heritage sites and assets</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor spending</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard

1.3.2. Challenges in Monitoring and Evaluation

Three main challenges facing sustainability monitoring and evaluation are the difficulty encountered in selecting an adequate number of indicators, the lack of reliable data and inadequate reporting on sustainability issues on the part of SMEs. In terms of selecting an adequate number of indicators, it is important to point out that there is no ideal number of indicators; very few indicators would not cover all aspects of sustainable tourism and a lengthy list of indicators would not be practical. The use of economic indicators solely would mean social or environmental impact would be ignored. Stakeholders typically can propose hundreds of indicators, which makes it challenging to reach agreement on a condensed list that covers all areas. Experts in the field generally recommend the use of 12-24 indicators to cover key issues at any particular destination. To illustrate how challenging this task can be, consider the example of Samoa where a list of 270 indicators for destination monitoring had to be reduced to 20.157

The second challenge that faces sustainability monitoring is the lack of reliable data, particularly cross-boundary. To enable regional and international cooperation in common areas of sustainable tourism, reliable data needs to be shared and used for identifying sustainability issues and prioritizing areas for indicator coverage. The third challenge is the lack of sustainability reporting. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that stakeholders in the tourism industry are primarily SMEs (95% of the sector) and they have yet to adopt consistent and clear sustainability reporting practices. This makes it difficult to monitor tourism company performance in the area of sustainable tourism.

2. Case Studies

2.1. Field Case Studies

2.1.1. Maldives

Background

The Maldives is known for its white sand beaches and clear waters. Its twenty-six\textsuperscript{158} atolls stretch across from north to south, making Maldives one of the most geographically dispersed sovereign states in the world. Out of the 1,192 islands, only 187\textsuperscript{159} are inhabited, and 138\textsuperscript{160} islands are registered as resorts. Statistics reports from the Ministry of Tourism stated that in 2017, a total of 1,389,542 tourists visited the Maldives\textsuperscript{161}, out of which 46.5\% belonged to the European market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Maldives - Tourism Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism % of GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WTTC - Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Tourism is the largest industry in the Maldives. Tourism started in the Maldives in the 1970s with secluded tourist resorts and operation of safari vessels. Tourism expanded after community-based tourism in the form of guesthouse started operations in 2009. Hoteliers or property owners started involving the local community within the operations of the establishments on the islands – from buying local produce, to outsourcing watersports activities, to hiring employees to work at the establishment. The guesthouse concept industry opened a door of investment in tourism for the local community.

With the increase in the number of tourist arrivals, the destination started to develop in order to cater for the increasing demand. In 2018, the airport development project included opening a new runway at Velana International Airport which is designed to serve large passenger carrying aircrafts. The new international passenger terminal is planned to accommodate 14 international air traffic movements and 1800 passengers per hour. Upon completion of development, the airport will be able to serve 7.3 million passengers and will reach the ultimate target of two million tourists per year with over $3.5 billion in receipts by the end of 2020.

Tourism has drastically affected the environment and raised awareness about the importance of preserving it. Maldivians used to engage in coral mining and harpoon fishing. Relevant government authorities have now prohibited fishing and sale of specific marine life, including


Sustainable Destination Management

Strategies in the OIC Member Countries

Turtles\textsuperscript{162}, which are now considered a protected species in the Maldives. Many industry professionals expressed concerns over lagoons being destroyed to pave way for infrastructural developments.\textsuperscript{163} Whilst the country has made efforts to reduce the carbon footprint, Maldives has yet to find alternative methods for development. Maldives is a low-laying island destination and is therefore directly threatened by climate change. More and more hoteliers are concerned about the environment and are eager to contribute to it. New properties are installing solar panels. International tourism establishments invest in the Maldives with the concept of sustainable tourism in their minds, knowing that although the initial expenses are huge, it is essential for tourism sustainability.

The negative impacts of tourism are not only limited to the environment, but also extend to the society and economy as well. As a country dependent on its imports, a huge percentage of the foreign currency is spent on imports for the tourism sector. With the opening of new properties, a large number of job opportunities is given to expatriates. In addition to the foreign currency spent on the country's imports, salaries to the foreigners who are employed in the Maldives are also draining foreign currency reserves. Women's participation in the industry is also relatively lower compared to that of men. Although some resorts have taken the initiative to press for progress and promote a gender-balanced work environment\textsuperscript{164} with consideration to the figures from approximately 10 years ago, the gender parity gap still remains at large in the Maldives.

Maldives has managed to compete against destinations such as Bahamas and Fiji due to the unique natural scenery of the islands. Hoteliers have made an enclave in resort islands, whereby the visiting tourists can get everything they need or require in that particular island itself. The 'one island, one hotel' concept is very prominent in marketing the islands. Maldives is not limited to the blue waters and white beaches – the temperature plays an equal role in differentiating the destination from competing ones. Apart from slight monsoon rains, the temperature in the country remains almost constant throughout the year, which is not very common in other countries such as the UK or other European countries where they experience temperature changes from positive to negative within the year.

**Sustainable Destination Management**

**Destination Governance**

When tourism first started in 1972 in the Maldives, it was not regulated. The government leased islands to the elites who were able to afford it. The industry called them 'pioneers of tourism in the Maldives,' which they rightfully earned as these pioneers ventured in to a very challenging start in the industry. The very first tourism act came out in 1978. Slowly, but steadily, the industry started progressing towards a more sustainable direction. At present, the industry is a partnership between the private sector and the government. The islands are leased according to the regulations set by the Ministry of Tourism along with other relevant government bodies, as are the developmental guidelines. The Ministry has a 5-year master plan, which was the result of collaboration between public and private tourism stakeholders. The implementation of the

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master plan involves both parties and is a convergence of the interests of both, private players as well as the public sector. The master plan is compiled with the aid and contributions of a team of consultants from several international entities including the Asian Development Bank, UNEP, UNWTO, and the World Bank. It traces the changes over time, and assesses the component parts of Maldives tourism, and includes a detailed analysis of the proposed strategy in moving forward. All contributing factors to the industry are outlined and detailed in the master plan.

Besides the Ministry of Tourism, there are several government bodies which set rules and guidelines to be followed to ensure that neither properties nor individuals act in a manner that is harmful to the environment or that affects the culture. The Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) ensures protection of the environment and is responsible for the planning and implementation of sustainable development regarding all aspects relating to energy, water, sanitation, and energy. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is connected to the MEE, is responsible for setting regulations for the protection and conservation of the environment and biodiversity. It is also responsible for setting regulation concerning pollution and waste management. Its mandate was set forth by the Environment Protection and Preservation Act (4/93). The act stipulates that any developmental work or project should have an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of its likely influence conducted and consented by MEE.165 EIA is an assessment of the likely influence a project may have on the environment. EIA was formulated to enhance environmental sustainability and further facilitation of environmentally-sound development.

**Figure 12: Maldives - Ministry of Tourism**

![Diagram of Maldives Ministry of Tourism](Source: Maldives Ministry of Tourism Website)

In addition to government bodies, Maldives has a number of organizations that guide the tourism industry including the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), the Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO), the Liveaboards Association of Maldives (LAM) as well as the Guesthouses Association of Maldives (GAM). These organizations work as advocates and recommend guidelines to tourism establishments.

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Sustainable Tourism Strategies

To ensure the preservation of the country’s natural heritage and assets, the government of Maldives has a set of principles and guidelines that has to be followed when an island is being developed into a resort. Beach allocation for each room, height of the rooms in the property, total area allowed to use for the resort – all of the aforementioned are set by the government. There are certain regulations specifically designed for the protection of the environment during the construction of tourism developments, ensuring sustainable infrastructure development in the resorts. However, enforcement of these regulations is weak.

In 2009, a plan to achieve carbon neutrality for the country by 2020 was announced to be achieved by reducing electricity emissions and using solar panels and windmills. A voluntary tax was imposed on tourists visiting luxury resorts of the Maldives to fund this initiative. The government has also sought to address the most pressing environmental threat the country faces, namely climate change. The Increasing Climate Change Resilience of Maldives through Adaptation in the Tourism Sector Project (TAP), funded by the UNDP and the government of Maldives, aims to develop policies, standards, codes, and regulatory guidance for the development of tourism infrastructure to adapt to climate change. Initiatives were undertaken to increase awareness of tourism industry stakeholders of the importance of waste management issues for tourism sustainability.

Coral stone was mainly used for construction and can be seen today on ancient mosques. The craftsmanship and details that went into decorating the mosques can be seen from the exterior itself and is a true display of local skills. Unfortunately, neither the government nor any private parties have paid much attention to preserving these cultural and heritage sites whereas measures have been taken to protect certain natural sites rich in biodiversity, such as Hanifaru Bay in Baa Atoll and the nature park in Fuvahmulah. Certain actions are prohibited, using guns for fishing, shark fishing etc., and fines are imposed on people who fail to abide by the regulations set in these natural sites.

To ensure the industry growth remains constant, within the industry, policy makers and industry professionals have made efforts to address tourist needs. The Maldives Visitor Survey, which is undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism each year, provides a comprehensive observation of their behavior, outlining their experience throughout the journey. The 2017 survey further proved that the beach, coral reefs, lagoons, and the overall natural beauty of the islands are key factors that attract tourists to the Maldives. Additionally, the peacefulness and privacy provided to all tourists are a contributing factor when tourists decide to come to the Maldives. Due to the regulations and policies set forth by the government, the tourists are

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ensured their privacy. Looking at other destinations in the world, the beaches are often crowded, if not, privacy is not ensured for a traveling couple as the beaches are public.

The guesthouses component is an addition to the destination’s portfolio in an effort to diversify and attract tourists. Maldives was previously famous as a diving destination, but many of the hotels have been winning international awards and are being recognized for their world-class service spas. In terms of product diversification, it is evident that the country has significantly expanded. Service-wise, Maldives has improved remarkably. Most establishments offer a selection of cuisine at the resort, ranging from gourmet to Chinese, Indian, Mediterranean, and Thai as well. Maldives is doing great as a destination, product and service wise.

In terms of quality of life of the local community, Maldives had a very low level of interaction between tourists and locals as many of the visitors preferred the additional privacy. For tourists who wished to interact with the locals, resorts offered day trips to nearby islands. With the inception of guesthouse tourism, more locals were hired by the industry, improving the interaction and benefits to the local community. With the development of the industry, many locals have professionally progressed due to the trainings provided by the resorts.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The Tourism Master Plan was developed through consultations with public and private sector stakeholders through meetings and stakeholder workshops. The government has also cooperated with NGOs to formulate a policy limiting boats’ anchoring in order to minimize the impact on corals and reefs. The Liveaboards Association of Maldives has requested to put buoys at certain islands for boats to dock by hanging a rope on buoy instead of anchoring. However, interviews with tourism industry stakeholders highlighted the need for better communication between developers and policy makers, as interviewees expressed their belief in the importance of discussing guidelines prior to implementation.

The tourism industry has been proactive in implementing their own sustainability strategies. Almost all resorts have a desalination plant to provide bottled drinking water to the tourists instead of having to use plastic bottled water. Certain resorts have taken the next step and combined innovation with sustainability by installing their own glass studio. SonevaFushi is equipped with an in-house state-of-the-art glass factory, which is used to turn glass waste into tableware. The resort not only collects its own waste, but also welcomes the waste from neighboring resorts in the atoll. Alif Alif Bodufolhudhoo was the first local island to impose Maldives’ very first ban on single-use plastic bags. Corporate entities soon started following this initiative – Dhiraagu partnered with Parley’s ‘For the Oceans’ campaign under efforts to reduce the use of single-use plastics and encourage people to opt for reusable bags. Several food and beverages establishments have also joined the movement and introduce paper/metal straws and requested customers to ditch the plastic straw.

**Funding**

Both domestic and foreign sources are used to fund tourism sustainability activities. As mentioned earlier, the government is using tax revenue to fund some of its initiatives. The

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government has also introduced a green tax in the 8th amendment to the Maldives Tourism Act. Many sustainability initiatives are funded by the tourism industry, an example of this is the Kudadoo Private Island which is fitted with solar panels paid for by the property owners. However, this may not be possible for all properties since many have already taken extensive loans to build their properties. Funding from international organizations, such as the UNDP, is also being used to tackle serious environmental threats to the sustainability of tourism in the Maldives.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainable Tourism

Impacts of tourism are mainly measured through the use of economic indicators such as tourism sector contribution to GDP. The Maldives is currently in the process of developing monitoring and evaluation tools and a reporting system with the support of the UNWTO. At present, Maldives has no sustainability certification for the destination. Individual resorts including Anantara Veli, Anantara Digu, and Anantara Naladhu as well as Jumeirah Vittaveli have received the Green Globe certification, which is awarded to recognize the commitment of the resorts to environmental protection and local culture.

Lessons Learned

To ensure the implementation of sustainable practices and enforcement of regulations, continuous monitoring is needed to establish adherence levels to standards of sustainability.

Tourism stakeholders needs to be more involved in development of tourism sustainability regulations. Stakeholders need to be invited more to events and discussions leading to the development of the industry. Continuous communication and engagement are needed to increase awareness of the importance of sustainability.

Support from international organizations, such as the UNWTO in the Maldives’ case, can be instrumental in developing destination-specific monitoring tools for sustainable tourism.

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2.1.2. Oman

Background

The Sultanate of Oman is located on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Possessing primarily desert climate, it enjoys the serenity of sand dunes, the shade of date palm oases, respite in wadis, reflection in mountain ranges, relaxation on beaches, and year-round refreshment in Dhofar, Oman’s southernmost region known for summer monsoons and moderate weather. In addition to climate variability, Oman is also home to unique geologic structures and vast natural beauty. Neighboring Gulf countries lack the topographical diversity, as well as the cultural diversity that has shaped Oman’s multi-cultural heritage. Ecologically, Oman is a significant site for turtle nesting, bird migration, and marine life. Attracted by the opportunity to enjoy adventure on both land and sea, visitors and residents enjoy outdoor life both recreationally and professionally through internationally-recognized competitive events and marathons. Geology enthusiasts have found a fascinating laboratory in Oman’s “Mars-like” terrain where unique rock and cave formations continue to be a source of wonder and research. The interior life of Oman’s people is equally an enriching experience for international visitors. While political instability and civil strife have marred the appeal of travel to the Middle East, Oman was crowned Arab Tourism Capital in 2012\(^{176}\) and ranks as the fourth safest country in the world while maintaining peaceful diplomatic relations worldwide.\(^{177}\) Tourists can securely access Bedouin life and traditional Arab hospitality while moving freely around the country, with or without a tour guide. Tourism has created jobs and enables Oman to reduce its dependence on oil as a source of income. Artisans, farmers, silversmiths, weavers, etc. have been able to market their products to an international customer base. Rural women are underrepresented in Oman’s hospitality industry, but some have found opportunities to directly and indirectly sell wares to tourists, host guests at handcraft cooperatives, and offer immersive cultural experiences. Considering the scarcity of female tour guides, cultural tourism programs allow women to also be ambassadors of Oman and directly benefit from the tourism economy. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector in Oman directly contributed $2 billion or 2.6% to the nation’s GDP in 2014 and indirectly contributed more than $4 billion or 5.7% of the GDP. Both figures have shown steady annual growth and the WTTC predicts that by 2025, direct and indirect GDP contribution from tourism will rise to 3.3% and 7.3% respectively.\(^{178}\)

### Table 4: Oman - Tourism Statistics

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International tourist arrivals</td>
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<tr>
<td>International tourism inbound receipts</td>
<td>US $1,539.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average receipts per arrival</td>
<td>US $811.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism % of GDP</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism employment</td>
<td>53,251 jobs (2.7% of total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*

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Sustainable Destination Management

Destination Governance

Initially, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry oversaw tourism operations but in 2004, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) was established and strong legislature supportive of tourism was enacted like approving visas on arrival and conceptualizing laws for foreign ownership and investment. There is currently no distinct DMO in Oman. The MoT is currently responsible for destination management, however, there is a plan to create a new DMO according to the Oman Tourism Strategy. The MoT has five distinct Directorate Generals: Planning, Following Up and Information; Administration and Financial Affairs; Investors and Quality Control; Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development.¹⁷⁹

The Directorate General of Planning, Following Up, and Information is primarily responsible for the overall tourism strategy, reviewing project plans from all Directorate Generals, researching and implementing strategies in line with the sector's objectives. The Directorate General of Administration and Financial Affairs participates in strategy development while proposing and implementing administrative and financial rules and regulations, monitoring the Omanization process in the tourism sector, and receiving guests and delegations of the Ministry. The Directorate General of Investors and Quality Control designs, plans, approves, and implements quality control throughout the tourism sector, issues licenses for tourism services, monitors compliance with the Ministry's rules and regulations, facilitates investment opportunities and incentives, and collects relevant feedback from citizens, tourists, and related companies. The Directorate General of Tourism Promotion works in tandem with related parties to promote tourism in Oman, tailors promotional tools to identified target audiences, establishes and operates the tourism Call Center and prepares events to stimulate tourism in low season periods. The Directorate General of Tourism Development ensures compatibility of tourism products, sets specifications for consultancy work for government tourism projects, supervises the castles and forts handled by the Ministry, and monitors their maintenance and development.

Figure 13: Oman - Ministry of Tourism

Source: Oman Ministry of Tourism Website

The Oman Tourism Strategy calls for the creation of a National Council for Sustainable Tourism and a specialized Oman Observatory for Sustainable Tourism. The Council would establish and operate a national Tourism Sustainability Certification Program to integrate environmental and social/cultural sustainability into new and existing tourism projects. The Oman Tourism Strategy also recommends creating an Environmental and Cultural Sustainability Program that would raise awareness of environmental protection and preservation through tourism in host communities. Additionally, adding an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism is recommended to prioritize and maximize cooperation in executing the OTS, as well as an Office of Strategy Management to oversee the development and implementation of the OTS.

A key player in realizing the MoT’s vision for tourism sustainability is the government’s tourism investment company, the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran). Established in 2005, Omran is the master developer of major tourism, heritage, and urban development projects. They are mandated by the government to sustainably drive investment and growth of the tourism sector in Oman and oversee the most progressive hospitality assets and mixed-used developments in the country. Their existence is in line with the government’s vision for tourism to be a major economic driver of the future and generator of employment.

The Ministry of Tourism currently functions as the regulator, policy maker, and promoter of the tourism sector. Its mission is to provide professional, high-quality services to diversify the Omani economy and create jobs by offering world-enriching tourism experiences with Omani personality. Its vision is to provide services efficiently and effectively to position Oman as a top-of-mind destination for vacations, discovery, and meetings, attracting 11 million international and local tourists annually by 2040. The MoT’s mission and vision is in line with Oman’s national policy of diversifying sources of income and the creation of jobs while preserving the environment, social development, and cultural preservation. It seeks to increase investments in the tourism sector and enhance its contribution to the GDP, recognizing that tourism is a major opportunity to realize sustainable development in the Sultanate of Oman and promote peaceful coexistence between cultures.

The Ministry of Tourism commissioned Spain’s THR Innovative Tourism Advisors to prepare a new Oman Tourism Strategy (OTS) spanning from 2016 to 2040. It clearly reported Oman’s tourism resources, tourism products, and destination goals and strategies through a multi-disciplinary and collaborative research and analysis process that included more than 700 individuals over a 12-week period. The ambitious plan is aligned with Oman’s national development plan, Vision 2020, to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil and gas. Tourism, with a focus on high-end and luxury accommodations, is a promising tool to achieving this goal while encouraging nationwide economic growth, expanding the services sector and enhancing the private sector.

**Sustainability Strategies**

Currently, Muscat is the only city in Oman with flights to most major international destinations. The expansion of international and domestic flight options to different cities in Oman can increase traffic to destinations outside of the capital city. Most tourism services rely on bus and SUV transportation for movement between destinations. The proposed rail network will also aid access between destinations for travelers.

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Five World Heritage Sites were designated by the UNESCO in the Sultanate of Oman: Bahla Fort of the Nabhani Dynasty, the archeological sites of al Bat, al Ayn, and al Khutm, the Land of Frankincense, the Aflaj irrigation systems, and the ancient city of Qalhat. Each destination is a significant historical attraction that draws visitors beyond the appeal of Muscat, Oman’s capital city. UNESCO designation ensures protection of historically significant sites and funding to maintain them.

Omran actively creates tourism experiences while upholding its established Sustainability Framework focused on four core categories: Economy, Society, Environment, and Cultural Heritage. Though no current government legislation exists to mandate sustainable construction, operations, or energy use, in 2012 Omran committed to ensuring that all of Omran’s construction projects are designed to meet the criteria for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certification by the United States Green Building Council. Additionally, all future Omran properties must promote domestic tourism, be designed with interiors that are a modern expression of Omani architecture and decorated by art from Omani artisans and include environmental stewardship initiatives. The relative newness of LEED and sustainability in Oman requires creativity and innovation in finding solutions to environmental challenges. For example, recycling facilities are far and few between; therefore, hotels located outside of city centers need to find their own approach to recycling and reusing segregated waste streams.

Because of Oman’s intensely hot summers, the peak tourist season is well-defined from November to March, though year-round in Salalah, Oman’s southernmost governorate. During the low season, domestic tourism is promoted through discounted hotel stays, holiday packages, and the sale of day passes to the country’s most coveted resorts. An Oman Experience Agency is planned to conceptualize and direct the growth and marketing of premium tourist experiences that are authentic, attractive, and complementary to create extraordinary value for guests, residents, and the enterprises that unite them. The Signature Experiences Program (SEP) will ensure that affiliates who receive this designation deliver a consistently superior product and tourism experience across the board, as well as an Oman Tourism Services Quality Unit that will develop an Oman Tourism Quality Assurance Framework that recognizes achievement and quality improvements in the tourism sector. To market this evolving structure, a Visit Oman Marketing Agency will be aligned with the Oman Tourism Strategy and join the ranks as a world-class marketing platform.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring local community well-being, the rate of Omanization or the percentage of Omani nationals employed by a business is used as an indicator of sustainability. As a nationwide strategy to up-skill the Omani workforce, there are required percentages of employment for Omani nationals in various sectors. Omran continues to improve their Omanization rate, as well as their percentage of procurement spending on locally-based suppliers and CSR programs embedded in every project. Furthermore, through a program called Intajee, Omran assists farmers in strengthening their market presence and positioning them as suppliers for major tourism developments. Greenhouses were provided, as well as training and crop selection, to ensure that farmers of host communities directly meet the needs of neighboring resorts, thereby ensuring fresh and locally grown produce for hotel guests and a direct market supply chain for the farmers.

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The *Zaree* program is an all-female, micro-enterprise business and the first of its kind in the Middle East. Supported by Omran, *Zaree* is a culturally appropriate tourism approach for Omani women to engage the thousands of guests who arrive primarily via Khasab Port in Musandam, the northern exclave of Oman. Female tourists are adorned in traditional dress, decorated with henna, and welcomed by Omani women who have become both entrepreneurs and ambassadors of Oman.8

Omran builds employee energy awareness, invests in energy-saving devices, and compresses the work day to exclude a lunch hour as a strategy to reduce energy consumption. Fortunately, Oman has renewable groundwater supplies, but water conservation is still needed to meet future demands. Project-generated waste produced and recycled, as well as office waste produced and recycled are measured. Periodic sustainability reports are written in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3.1 guidelines for sustainable reporting.8

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The Oman Tourism Strategy identifies governmental ministries, public companies and organizations (like Omran and Oman Air), regional authorities, and other government bodies as public-sector stakeholders. Private sector stakeholders include Destination Management Companies (DMCs), tourism products and services, professional services, transport services, associations, accommodations, tourism education and training, and international and regional organizations. It is planned for stakeholders to be invited to contribute to and support the Oman Tourism Strategy. Initiatives to this end will be developed to ensure synergy and obtain consensus for implementation plans.10

**Funding**

Omran’s sustainable destination management activities are self-funded. The Oman Tourism Strategy calls for Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) where the majority of funding is supplied by the private sector and the remaining by the public sector. With the anticipated growth of demand, additional resources will be needed for the provision of infrastructure and services beyond public funding. The required investment for the Oman Tourism Strategy is estimated at more than $200 billion between 2016 and 2040, with an estimated 88% supplied by the private sector.10

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainability**

Measuring the impact of tourism development has primarily been done by Omran, the government’s national developer, through Social Return on Investment (SROI) Reports and Sustainability Reports. Each report relies on surveys and testimonials regarding how individuals have benefited from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and how the CSR program has expanded its reach. Environmental impact is measured in metrics of waste generation and recycling, water consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, volunteer-hours of employees and participation in campaigns, awareness events, etc. are also reported.184

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184 Interview with Badriya Siyabi, Omran’s CSR Coordinator.
Omran has implemented an environmental management system certified under IS: 14001. Environmental impact is measured by greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, and water consumption. Omran was the first company in Oman to pursue LEED building certification and the first in the Sultanate to obtain U.S. Green Building Council membership. Alila Jabal Akhdar, one of Omran’s hospitality assets, was the first LEED-certified hotel in Oman, and its site manager was the first Omani to earn the LEED Accredited Professional (AP) certification.

The Oman Tourism Strategy proposes a National Council for Sustainable Tourism to establish and operate a national Tourism Sustainability Certification Program that will integrate environmental and social/cultural sustainability in new and existing tourism projects, as well as a specialized Oman Observatory for Sustainable Tourism. Other plans include a Host Community Participation and Benefits Program that centers around a “Tourism is Everybody's Business” awareness effort, a “Made in Oman” product certification, and the creation of a Tourism Reinvestment Fund for host communities. A proposed “Our Environment, Our Future” campaign will educate host communities about environmental protection and preservation, while receiving coaching from regional technical teams about tourism sustainability, especially in protected areas.

Lessons Learned

Targeting a specific tourist Profile; Realizing and appreciation Omani identity at a core level helps to affirm that it need not be “everything for everyone.” Oman has clearly identified that to develop sustainably, it needs to know what kind of visitor suits it as a destination instead of trying to find points of appeal for all tourists.

Diversifying accommodations: In the past, traditional hotels were the only accommodation option offered. The current concept of expanding accommodation offerings to include guest houses, homestays, camps, heritage lodges, and the recently added category of green lodges, gives host communities greater opportunity to benefit from tourists who seek a more culturally immersive experience.

Focusing on existing experiences: By strengthening and maintaining historical sites, as well as creating experiences centered around them, tourists can access the country’s unique past. Visitors will be granted access to wildlife reserves which can fund conservation efforts as well as raise awareness about fragile ecosystems in the country.

Leading by example; Omran deserves to be recognized as a forward-thinking effort that is pioneering sustainability in Oman ahead of legislature. By committing to LEED certification, CSR programs, and Local Development Initiatives (LDIs), Omran is setting the example of planning for a not-yet-realized future, knowing that the ultimate benefit of raising environmental standards, empowering communities, and investing in the human capital and potential of its citizens is a worthwhile endeavor, regardless of the up-front costs or capital to be fronted. Six Senses Zighy Bay (SSZB) is also an excellent example of being innovative in solving...
environmental conflicts and acting ahead of legislation. By leading and teaching others through public reporting, workshops, and lobbying, companies like Omran and SSZB are paving a path worthy to be followed by other responsible leaders in the tourism industry. Both have succeeded in translating international development concepts into an Omani context and have done so well.

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188 Interview with Mr. Nachiketa Tuteja.
2.1.3. Uganda

Background

Uganda, located in East Africa, is tremendously diverse with spectacular scenery and rare biodiversity - it is predominately a nature-based and adventure tourism destination, combining the Rift Valley landscapes, tropical rainforests, savannah plains, snowcapped mountains, volcanoes, the source of the River Nile, as well as a diversity of cultures such as the indigenous tribes of Karamajong and the Batwa. Uganda has a combination of temperate and tropical climates with substantial rain creating its green lush landscapes. It has two dry seasons, December to February and June to August, which are the peak visitor periods. Tourism is seasonal but experienced all year round in Uganda. Uganda's leisure tourism product is focused around its 10 national parks and 3 game reserves. Two of Uganda's national parks (Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Rwenzori Mountains National Park) have UNESCO World Heritage status. Overall, Queen Elizabeth National park currently receives the highest volumes of visitors, including foreigners and nationals, followed by Murchison Falls National Park. Foreign visitor volumes are the highest in Murchison Falls National Park followed by Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, home to the mountain gorillas. The River Nile at Jinja is also a popular location for adventure sports such as white-water rafting, as well as mountain climbing in the Rwenzori’s and Virunga Volcanoes at Mgahinga National Park. Bird watching is a niche which offers significant potential with many endemics in the country. Primate viewing is one of the key products of Uganda, particularly mountain gorillas and chimpanzees, but there are 13 species in the country.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Uganda - Tourism Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International tourist arrivals</td>
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<td>International tourism inbound receipts</td>
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Source: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017

Mountain gorilla tourism is the flagship activity of Uganda for foreign tourists and without a doubt Uganda’s competitive edge globally, an activity often combined with secondary more traditional safari destinations and other primate experiences. However, regionally the mountain gorilla product is shared with Rwanda and DR Congo which means it must compete for market share. It is not an inexpensive product by any means, with the individual tourist permit sold at $600, on top of relatively high-priced accommodation and transportation that accompany the experience. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is the best example on the subject of this report because tourism has played a pivotal role in this part of Uganda for both the conservation of the ecosystem and the socio-economic development of the adjacent communities. Gorilla tourism has been developed into a high value product which generates substantial revenue for conservation as well as the local and national economy. Historically, Bwindi forest generated

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significant income for local communities, leading to significant deforestation up to the late 1980s. Since 1991, tourism has provided an alternative direct economic value, contributing significant funds towards its existence in terms of conservation, and a share of revenue for communities, albeit it currently less significant to former years of gold mining and lumbering.

Tourism in Uganda began in the 1950s and by the 1970s it was their third largest foreign exchange earner, however during 1971-1986 the severe political instability of the country led to the decline in the tourism industry. During this time, the wildlife areas were also heavily poached and most tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, was destroyed as the sector was neglected. Political peace came to most of the country in 1987 and the tourism industry began its revamp. It is now one of the fastest-growing sectors of Uganda’s economy. Tourism is hinged on the country’s precious wildlife resources, and the wildlife resources are also hinged on tourism for their existence, their contribution to the country’s economic development and overall sustainability of their natural environment. Sustainable tourism development is fundamental for Uganda, and without preserving the country’s ecosystems, tourism would disappear. Improved conservation initiatives and efforts over the last 15 years or so has enabled populations of key wildlife species to have grown, and the tourism infrastructure to develop around that. Uganda is an interesting case because whilst it may be underperforming in terms of visitor numbers, product development and quality of service delivery compared to some of its neighbors, it is in many ways a success story for integrating nature-based tourism and sustainable conservation.

**Destination Tourism Sustainability Development**

**Destination Governance**

Tourism in Uganda began in the 1950s, and by the 1970s it was the country's third largest foreign exchange earner. However, the troublesome political times of 1971-1986 caused the tourism industry to plummet. Today tourism has found its feet again and the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) is the DMO established by the Uganda Tourist Board Statute 115 in 1994 to manage this growth. Since June 2011, Uganda’s Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry which sits above UTB, separated into the Independent Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to ensure tourism was targeted as a core sector of the economy again. The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) was established in 1994. According to the Tourism Act (2008), UTB’s mandate is to promote and popularize Uganda as a viable holiday destination both locally and internationally in order to increase the contribution of tourism earnings to GDP, improve Uganda’s competitiveness as an international tourism destination, and increase Uganda’s share in the African and World tourism market. The strategic goals highlighted in the national development plan aim for the tourism sector to achieve wider development objectives including: decentralization of tourism sector responsibilities to lower local levels, institutional

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and human resource capacity building, product development, improved marketing and promotion, improved research and planning, and overall infrastructure development.\textsuperscript{193}

The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is in charge of most of Uganda’s natural areas that were set aside by Government as national parks and wildlife reserves for protection of wildlife heritage and wilderness ecosystems and to contribute directly to the country’s economic development through tourism and provision of ecosystem services. As Uganda’s tourism is nature-based with the majority of leisure tourists visiting the protected conservation areas, UWA is pivotal in tourism governance in Uganda. With 10 national parks, 12 wildlife reserves, 5 community wildlife management areas, and 13 wildlife sanctuaries under its authority, UWA’s role in managing tourism in Uganda’s key destinations as well as attracting investors to the sector has been significant.\textsuperscript{194}

\textbf{Figure 14: Uganda - Tourism Bodies}

Due to the fact that Uganda’s tourism product is based around its national parks it has meant that much of its tourism management is in fact led by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). UWA has also been incentivized to focus on tourism development because it generates the necessary funding for their conservation work and operational costs. Strategic Planning in UWA took root in 2001 when the first ever strategic plan in the organization was first developed.

The Uganda Wildlife Policy (1999), the National Tourism Policy (2003-2010), the National Development Plan (2010-2015), and nowadays the Tourism Sector Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20 have consecutively guided the tourism sector.\textsuperscript{195} The Tourism Policy of Uganda 2003 kick started tourism’s role once again as a vehicle for poverty eradication (after the decline during its instability period) although somewhat limited by resource and market constraints to date.\textsuperscript{196} The policy further emphasized the need to facilitate the flow of tourists within the region and promotion of East Africa as a single tourist destination. Later, the Tourism Act 2008 reconstituted UTB and gave it a wider scope of functions aimed at promoting Uganda as a preferred tourism destination. UTB’s mission became to develop, promote and coordinate a

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sustainable and competitive tourism industry.\textsuperscript{197} At the ministerial level, UTB operations are guided by the Tourism Sector Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20. The Tourism Sector Development Plan was built around the aspirations of National Development Plan II. The plan is consistent with the tourism master plan (2014/15–2024/25) by generating specific interventions and budgeted projects that lie on the critical path of tourism development over the period 2015/16–2019/20.\textsuperscript{198}

In 2017, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda also launched the East Africa Tourism portal, working more closely together to shape tourism as a connected region. The portal is a joint tourism promotional initiative among the three East African Countries under the East African Community arrangement. UTB contributed Uganda’s content. The portal is not only an online regional tourism marketing tool but is also expected to promote the joint tourism initiatives of the three-member states such as sensitization of the general public about all the other joint tourism initiatives including single tourist visa, interstate pass etc.\textsuperscript{199}

There are a number of tourism associations in Uganda, including The Uganda Tourism Association, the Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO), the Uganda Hotel Owners’ Association (UHOA), the National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association of Uganda (NACCAU), the Uganda Association of Travel Agents (TUGATA), the Uganda Safari Guides Association (USAGA), Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA), and the Association of Uganda Women in Tourism Trade (AUWOTT).

In the regional destinations there are ‘Regional Tourism Clusters’ made up of public and private sector participants who are encouraged, somewhat informally, by UTB to help develop the tourism product using local knowledge and be part of the promotion and growth of tourism in their regions, as well as sustainability aspects. The level and quality of activity by these clusters varies between regions, partly because they are relatively informal set-ups with no specific targets or regulation. The main activity revolves around World Tourism Day when the stakeholders are to organize an event.\textsuperscript{200}

Sustainability Strategies

On a national level, the tourism policy aims to enhance the tourism sector on a sustainable basis framed around the following strategies: identify the key issues and hot spots related to the sector, build upon the work of existing initiatives including the Tour Operator’s Initiative, conduct training and education on sustainable tourism practices and approaches targeting both operators and tourists, develop/adopt a code of conduct that could be abided by the industry, promote labeling and recognition mechanisms that recognizes continuous improvement, and promote sustainable building and design in the sector.\textsuperscript{201}

To ensure the sustainable development of tourism in Uganda, alternative sources of income were provided for local communities bordering conservation areas to improve their living


\textsuperscript{200} Interviews with UTB and Boniface.

Since 1996, Uganda Wildlife Authority has been implementing the community conservation programs. As a statutory requirement, UWA has been implementing a revenue sharing scheme whereby 20% of entry fees to national parks is paid to local governments neighboring protected areas (as provided for in the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap: 200 of 2000) to support conservation and development projects as well as offsetting costs of conservation incurred by neighboring communities, hence promoting co-existence. Revenue sharing funds have been used to implement various community projects ranging from schools, bore holes, problem animal trenches, and the donation of livestock to individuals.202

Local communities adjacent to national parks are considered key stakeholders. There has been a shift from traditional conservation approaches to community conservation since the 1990s to harmonize the relationship between the parks and local people. Revenue sharing is one of the strategies funded by tourism. The Wildlife Act (UWA) includes the enhancement of economic and social benefits from wildlife management by establishing wildlife use rights and the promotion of tourism.203 UWA contributes 20% of park fees to a local community fund. A sustained impact has been relatively low to date due to inadequate community participation in the program, inequitable and limited distribution of funds. In the past, the focus of the program was mainly on social infrastructural projects that appeared to have little effect. The new revenue sharing guidelines emphasis focus on supporting livelihood and problem animal management projects in the frontline villages, a shift hoping to increase the impact of the program. Previously, funds were allocated to the district which was a constraint in its success.204 The new guidelines provide the criteria for selection of revenue sharing projects and beneficiaries where communities identify the projects and the project management committee selected by the communities participates in project screening. The sub county chiefs, community development officers together with protected area management, are supposed to mobilize and sensitize communities on the revenue sharing guidelines, participate in project selection, and monitor implementation of the projects. The selected projects from the frontline villages will inform the parish and sub county plans.205

Tourism has played a role in preserving the cultures and have focused on tourism sites surrounding wildlife areas. Various conservation initiatives by partner NGOs such as the Flora and Fauna International (FFI) have supplemented UWA efforts to enhance benefits of people living adjacent to protected areas through the Cultural Values Conservation Project. The impacts of such efforts are not yet measured. UWA also has a cultural product within each national park which links to the specific cultural values of these areas.206

With support from the World Bank, the Hotel Training & Tourism Institute (HTTI) is to receive a facelift and equipment so that it can produce graduates who are well-groomed and match the industry needs of the private sector. This will fill a gap in the sector, which lacks high quality

204 Interview Bonifence.  
human resources trained in sustainable tourism strategies to drive forward a high-quality service delivery.\textsuperscript{207}

In order to manage waste generated by tourism-related activities, UWA management will procure waste bins and place them in appropriate locations. Deliberate efforts will be made to sort waste so as to separated biodegradable and non-biodegradable for easy management.\textsuperscript{208}

Managing seasonality is important to sustain the industry and to finance conservation efforts more thoroughly. UTB have put some emphasis on domestic tourism to increase volumes in times of low international seasons. They have focused on recreation, sports and events to tap this market. Regional tourism clusters were funded and steered to organize regional signature events with the target of attracting domestic tourists. These included cultural festivals, a world tourism day event, faith-based tourism, wildlife marathons, and cycling. The knock-on effect to local hoteliers, restaurants, and other businesses was a success. In the low season, less than half the numbers of visitors received in high season visit the park for gorilla tourism – UWA introduced discounted gorilla permits for tourists in certain months which successfully increased the demand in off-season periods. This has now stopped as the demand has grown in the last year.\textsuperscript{209}

UWA promotes protected areas as tourism destinations at national, regional, and international levels. Their strategy is to partner with private service providers to make the tourism products and the protected areas as destinations, develop mechanisms for increasing visitation during low seasons, create global and national awareness of the protected areas and their tourism potential, and develop and strengthen e-marketing programs.\textsuperscript{210}

UWA uses zoning as a planning tool to subdivide protected areas into distinct spatial areas according to their resource values and/or sensitivity. Four zones have been identified i.e. Tourism, Wilderness, Administrative, and Collaborative zones. The zoning strategy for BINP seeks to achieve harmonious balance between the following:

- Protection of representative areas of biodiversity and ecological processes
- Infrastructure development necessary to manage the park
- Tourism activities, which generate income and raise the profile of BINP
- Sustainable extraction of natural resources by the local people
- Cultural values promotion

In the tourism zone, this follows the primary tourist activity routes of the park’s interior, especially gorilla tracking. The primary management objective is to protect the natural and cultural values of routes, simultaneously with a quality visitor experience.\textsuperscript{211}


\textsuperscript{209} UTB interview.


\textsuperscript{211} Uganda Wildlife Authority. (n.d.). Website.
The Civil Aviation Authority is currently developing a 20-year master plan for expansion and development of airports and aerodromes thereby improving connectivity to the tourist sites. The previously long journey time between Kampala city and Entebbe where the airport is located has recently been reduced with the opening of a new bypass road but long distances to the Albertine Rift attractions remain and represent a competitive disadvantage for Uganda.212

The government offers a 100% waiver on the importation of tourist vehicles. The private sector did have to raise its prices with a new 18% VAT levied on safaris in 2010. The 24 taxes to tourism are not a strong incentive at the moment nor make Uganda very price competitive.213 With a lack of an operational tourism policy, the investment environment is also not hugely attractive. However, it is relatively easy to do business in Uganda with less red tape compared to some of its neighboring destinations. The absence of incentives especially regarding middle-range businesses, was also considered as detrimental to a rapid expansion of the tourism sector through diversification and the improvement of its products and services. In terms of marketing UTB do provide opportunities for subsidized spots at international fairs214 and UWA help organize fam trips. UWA also offers a free gorilla permit for every 30 purchased by operators.215

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The Ministry (MTWA), in consultation with key stakeholders, has updated a number of the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks to guide the development of the sector. These include the Museum and Monument Policy and the Wildlife policy. It is felt that on a policy level, stakeholder engagement has been good in Uganda.216

UTB recognize that the future success of the tourism sector in Uganda rests solidly on the collective drive of the entire tourism industry. To bring Uganda’s tourism to the next level, there is continued need to forge closer collaborations. In 2016/2017, UTB supported and partnered with various governments, social and private sector groups to promote tourism. In terms of increasing visitor volumes, UTB work with private sector companies to strengthen their hold in the international market via exhibitions and also work with PR firms in North America and Europe. Domestically, they work with tourism-related associations and media, as well as individual firms.217 The Uganda Tourism Association acts as the umbrella for the other associations and tends to coordinate the meetings between the stakeholders and UTB on a weekly basis.218

UWA is the main tourism driver in the key destinations. Wildlife conservation has diverse issues, diversity of stakeholders, and therefore need to increase stakeholders’ participation to enhance benefits from conservation. Networking and co-ordination will be geared towards exchange of information and expertise through meetings, field visits, workshops, and online forums for efficient conservation of wildlife resources, and avoiding duplication. Annual stakeholders’

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213 Interview Boniſence.

214 Interview UTB.

215 Interview UWA.

216 Interviews with UTB, UWA, Boniſence and Fidelis.


218 Interview UTB.
forums will be re-activated as a way of ensuring information sharing. UWA holds community meetings to disseminate conservation education and awareness in different locations around protected areas. UWA has a tourism program as a key part of their General Management strategy. The overall objective is to sustainably generate income for conservation and livelihood improvement and to achieve this through developing appropriate tourism infrastructure especially in protected areas where most tourism is based. The plan was prepared through multi-stakeholder consultations.219

The Regional Tourism Clusters are the only committees on a destination level that involve public and private sector stakeholders – there are a total of 15 in Uganda, some a lot more active than others. The organization is generally loose, and they do not meet regularly, the main gathering being on World Tourism Day when they are encouraged to organize an event with the support of UTB. On other occasions, they meet around training days that they have facilitated. Their main objective is to manage the product and sustainability in their specific geographic areas. They are, however, not pushed heavily by Kampala to be more active and are reliant on the individuals in that area to utilize the platform.220

Funding for Sustainability Activities

Funding from the government to tourism has been limited. While the government has emphasized their intent to prioritize the tourism sector and provide substantial support, in reality until the expiry of the Tourism Policy in 2010 there were very little resources allocated. In 2009/2010 for example despite tourism’s contribution of more than half a billion dollars to the economy, employing around 500,000 people (almost double the civil service) and generating 4.3% to GDP, the government allocated only UGX 2 billion (US$1 million) budgetary support to the sector. Objectives aside, tourism promotion and marketing activities for Uganda as a whole remain very limited due to insufficient government funding, combined with the small budgets across the majority of the fragmented private sector. The approved UTB budget for 2016/2017 was UGX11 billion, with UGX 9 billion released. UGX 4 billion was allocated to tourism marketing and promotion, 0.19 billion to tourism research and development, UGX 0.72 billion to Quality Assurance and UGX 1.8 billion to UTB support services. UTB is funded by the Ministry of Finance.221 222

UTB partners with various government and private tourism stakeholders not only to support investments in the tourism sector but also to collaboratively implement the National Tourism Master plan. The Uganda Tourism Act 2008 mandates UTB to encourage investment in the tourism sector and wherever possible, to direct such investment to the less developed Tourism areas as well as to provide finance and any other assistance to strengthen the Private entities in the tourist sector where necessary and appropriate.

The Word Bank has funded some of the work in the tourism sector. They funded sustainable development tourism plans for four districts in Western Uganda which include Mgahinga National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Rwenzori Mountain National Park, Kibale

220 Interview UTB and Bonifence.
222 Interview UTB.
Sustainable tourism in Uganda is currently predominantly focused on growing and sustaining the visitor numbers to ensure the sustainability of the sector as a whole. UTB have embraced electronic methods of monitoring and evaluation in the last couple of years to help produce more timely reports and improve the organization’s performance. In order to meet the demands of tourists, UTB need to understand their visitors better and formulate more targeted marketing strategies. Visitor exit surveys have become an annual norm to guide UTB operations and at the close of 2016/17 they conducted a visitor survey to understand the levels of visitor satisfaction with their Ugandan tourism experience. However, the research unit only has one staff member which affects the productivity of the unit. This is presented as a challenge in the scarcity of tourism statistics and makes it difficult to monitor and measure performance or the organization and the tourism sector at large.225

Uganda is strong on sustainability as a vision but weak in implementation on the ground, especially outside its protected areas. UWA also recognizes that there is currently inadequate

monitoring of impacts from tourism on PA resources. This is attributed to the lack of capacity to monitor various development in and around the national parks. Tourist numbers are steadily increasing in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park with gorilla tourism continuing to take the lead. In the short-term, this is likely to have negative impacts on the park. It is therefore important to continuously monitor the likely impacts of tourism on the ecosystem and animal behavior.

In protected areas, the Monitoring and Evaluation framework provides for a compulsory annual, midterm review and end of plan evaluation. The goal behind the Monitoring and Research Program is the provision of information for planning, decision-making and evaluation in biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of wildlife resources. In the monitoring framework, the main issues identified in terms of tourism have been waste management and park staff. They are also focused on understanding the impact of resource extraction on tourism. There has been an increasing pressure to habituate more wild gorillas for tourism. It is an attractive proposition when conceding the revenue that can be generated from each gorilla permit sold to a tourist, at $600 per day. Districts add pressure because they are keen on the revenue share generated from the park. No study has been carried out to understand the most viable population that can be habituated out of the 30 gorilla families. Bwindi has around 400 individual gorillas and currently over a third are habituated for gorilla tourism. The park authorities work with local government officials to guide and enforce EIA compliance. The Warden Ecological Monitoring (WEM) will continuously monitor compliance with EIA mitigation measures spelt out in the different EIA certificates and will be assisted by the Planning and EIA Unit at UWA Headquarters. Restoring and maintaining healthy Ecosystems includes indicators to measure the negatives impacts of tourism facilities.

In a relatively new program to be launched within the next year, although some work began in 2014, the UNEP introduced the Sustainable Tourism Program and the Uganda Tourism Ecosystem Platform (UTEP) in order to help localize the tourism value chain for the benefit of local communities. This platform is intended to support the tourism industry players including the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO), Uganda Tourism Association (UTA), Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA), Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA), and Enterprise Uganda among others.

Lessons Learned

Careful design of tourism experiences around the country’s fragile natural resources, and in the case of gorilla tourism it is a high value and low volume product generating substantial revenues for successful conservation of protected areas - tourism and conservation can be integrated – they have limited the tourism development in order to protect the resource on which it is based.

Whilst revenue sharing with local communities could be improved in the utilization of funds, it has helped to contribute to local community development and conservation efforts. Specifically, revenue sharing is encouraging communities not currently living next to protected areas in


Regional cooperation can play an important role in sustainable destination management. Uganda has launched the East Africa Tourism portal in 2017 with Rwanda and Kenya as a joint tourism promotional initiative among the three East African Countries, under the East African Community arrangement.

228 Interview UWA.
2.2. Desk Case Studies

2.2.1. Denmark

Background
The beautifully charming northern country Denmark, with its rich history, culture, natural wilderness and broad offer of touristic activities, has since long attracted visitors. Ranked the third happiest country in the world in 2018,229 this country is known for its very high standards of living and an excellent tax, health, education, and welfare system, which result in a stable and thriving society with one of the smallest wealth gaps in the world.230 Denmark is a Scandinavian country, but its southern location and Germanic influence confers it some advantage with regards to its neighboring countries.

Table 6: Denmark - Tourism Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International tourist arrivals</th>
<th>10,424,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International tourism inbound receipts</td>
<td>US $6,684.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average receipts per arrival</td>
<td>US $641.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism % of GDP</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism employment</td>
<td>80,788 jobs (3% of total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*

The chic and picturesque city of Copenhagen is a favorite destination for Europeans and especially Scandinavians, but it only accounted for 24% of total bed nights in 2016.231 The capital has beautiful architecture, parks, numerous museums, and a thriving gastronomic offer with food stall markets and fine dining restaurants, including the two-Michelin-star restaurant Noma, ranked best restaurant in the world in 2012.232 Among the many sites that attract tourists in and around the capital are the Tivoli Gardens, the colorful waterfront Nyhavn, the bronze sculpture The Little Mermaid at the Langelinje Pier, the Kronborg, Fredensborg and Frederiksborg castles, the Royal Seer Park, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and the ARKEN Museum of Modern Art.233 234 Many young Europeans also choose this destination for its lively nightlife and the proximity to Sweden, which offers an opportunity for a day visit to another country.

While city tourism dominates the market in Denmark, the country’s resources go well beyond the colorful and lively capital, and coastal and nature tourism also have a share of the market.

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Sustainable Destination Management

Strategies in the OIC Member Countries

Denmark has over 7,000 kilometers of coastline,235 with over 200 blue-flag beaches,236 which is one of the main holiday attractions for both locals and foreigners. It provides suitable and attractive opportunities for family holidays with expansive and uncrowded beaches to sunbathe and swim in summer. Watersports such as kayaking, fishing, kitesurfing, and windsurfing are also an attraction. Denmark has four national parks, one of them declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014. Nature outdoor activities in these places include hiking, cycling, horseback riding, oyster picking, camping, bird watching, and are quite popular. In fact, coast and rural tourism represents 72% of all bed nights in Denmark.237 Caravan and camping holidays account for a significant share of the tourism market with almost eight million night stays in 2017.238 Nature and camping tourism is dominated by Danish and other Scandinavian holidaymakers.

A challenge facing the Danish tourism industry is the market price competitiveness, since the price of tourism services is a key competitive parameter worldwide. Denmark is one of the most expensive countries to visit, with its capital ranking as the second most expensive holiday destination in Europe239. However, Denmark does not seem to be able, nor willing, to compete on wages or conditions of employment with poorer countries. Therefore, “its competitiveness in the tourism industry must necessarily be based on other parameters such as positive experiences, superior quality and excellent service.”240 The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 places Denmark in the competitive index in the 31st position,241 ranking 129th in ‘Price Competitiveness’.242 As such, although on an upward trend,243 the sector can be further developed to fulfill visitors’ expectations of very high quality service to satisfy their price-to-quality expectations.

Sustainable Destination Management

Destination Governance

The purpose of tourist associations is to encourage tourists to visit a particular area, typically a city or municipality. Denmark’s first tourist association, Danish Tourist Association, however, was nationwide, and was founded in 1889 in Copenhagen. In the following years, several independent local tourist associations were established, and these formed a joint federation in 1905.244

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In 1967, Denmark's Tourist Board (now VisitDenmark) was established by a division of the then federal association, the Tourist Association for Denmark. From a total membership of 1400 in 1895, the membership of the associations grew to 64,000 in 1987; in 1999 it had dropped to 34,000. Board membership consists of members from the local community, local tourism businesses, and in many instances representatives of the municipal councils. Most tourist associations are involved in the operations of the local tourist office.

Today, tourism in Denmark falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs through the Danish National Tourism Forum, whose aim is to coordinate the promotion of Danish tourism. The Forum is made up of several members, including a chairman from the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, VisitDenmark's Chairman, and members from regions and local governments of Denmark, as well as observers and a researcher, jointly representing a broad range of interests across the tourism industry. The National Tourism Forum is responsible for developing a national strategy for Danish tourism and for collecting tourism data, undertaking an annual analysis of the development of Danish tourism, and reporting annually to the Minister. The Danish Tourism Advisory Board, which advises the National Tourism Forum, has a chairman, 17 members and two observers, who represent a wide range of stakeholders with tourism interests.

Figure 15: Denmark - Tourism Bodies

VisitDenmark is the Forum's agency charged primarily with the management of the international branding and marketing of Denmark strategic tourism development and with promoting the country as a tourist destination in the international marketplace. The agency is also responsible for market research and monitoring trends and activity in Danish tourism. It cooperates with the Ministry of Business and Growth, Danish National Tourism Forum and regional tourism development agencies. VisitDenmark's board of directors consists of representatives of the Danish Ministry of Business and Economic Affairs, the regional growth forums, business organizations, and private businesses.

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Three tourism development agencies – the Danish Coastal and Nature Tourism, the Danish Business and Conferencing Tourism, and the Danish City Tourism – have also been established in order to generate growth in their particular field. Each agency develops and implement their own strategies independently under the umbrella of the national tourism strategy.

Sustainability Strategies

Denmark is one of the world’s top countries when it comes to sustainability. It was ranked 3rd in the 2018 Environmental Performance Index Report. The city of Copenhagen is known for its progress in waste recycling, clean water, effective infrastructure, a world-leading public transport system, and the widespread usage of bicycles as a preferred means of transport with 400 kilometers of cycle lanes. It is no surprise that it was rated second in the 2016 Global Destination Sustainability Index with a 79% overall performance rate.

Denmark suffered a decrease in tourism in the years 2007-2011. Besides the worldwide financial crisis which affected the sector across the globe, this loss in market share was mainly attributed to the level of satisfaction in the relationship between price and quality, Denmark is one of the most expensive countries in Europe, and Copenhagen is ranked the second most expensive holiday destination. Following this period, in June 2014, the Danish Parliament approved a plan for growth in tourism aiming to 1) increase satisfaction by raising the quality of services and experiences, 2) boost coastal and rural tourism to attract tourists from neighboring countries, 3) stimulate city and business tourism to attract tourism from growth markets, 4) promote tourism under a national strategy.

The city of Copenhagen is strongly committed to integrative sustainability which takes into consideration its three dimensions – the economic, the social and the environmental. It has a comprehensive strategy and aims to become the first capital to be carbon-neutral by 2025. The capital’s DMO, Wonderful Copenhagen, has an internal sustainability committee led by a dedicated sustainability manager, as well as a committee with external industry stakeholders, and a committee with external non-industry stakeholders such as NGOs and authorities. Its strategy is expressed in the Integrated Sustainability document. Examples of steps taken towards implementing sustainable tourism in the city are its endorsement of the Green Key program and certification. As stated on its website, “the Green Key award is a leading standard of excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation within the tourism industry. This prestigious eco-label represents a commitment by businesses that their...
tourism establishments adhere to the strict criteria as stipulated by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). In the criteria considered to issue certification are elements such as the consumption of local products, the support of local businesses, waste recycling, decent employment, social responsibility, which are all conducive to a circular economy. An organization that was founded in Denmark to promote environment-friendly practices in tourism businesses, Green Key has grown internationally and has around 2900 members in 57 countries. It works together with NGOs, authorities, and universities to promote and monitor eco activities. Wonderful Copenhagen also works to raise awareness about sustainability among visitors and residents and organizes training programs on sustainability in the MICE industry.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Denmark has formal organizations that allows for collaboration and coordination between the different stakeholders. The Danish Tourism Advisory Board, for example, has members who represent the interests of industry stakeholders in different areas. This Board provides advice on policy making, strategies and regulations to the Danish National Tourism Forum.

Within the framework of its 2017 Smart Tourism Strategy, VisitDenmark provides support to digitalize Danish tourism’s value-chains to increase the coordination and co-operation within the Danish tourism industry. It also provides relevant data and data sources in a common knowledge-hub to tourism actors within the framework of its smart insights initiative with the aim of increasing cooperation and coordination among the various stakeholders.

**Funding**

Total Governmental investment to enhance Danish tourism in the year 2015 was $102.5 million. VisitDenmark is funded from the state and its allocated budget is $17.4 million. The Danish Coastal and Nature tourism has a budget of $1.5 million and Danish Business and Meeting Tourism has a budget of $425,000. Danish City Tourism is funded from the budget for Wonderful Copenhagen, the capital’s official tourism organization, which is in turn, funded by the Capital Region of Denmark as well as private businesses and organizations.

The Danish government has contributed with direct funding for sustainability activities in the past. In 2010 it was agreed that approximately $6.2 million would be invested to improve conditions for bicycle tourism on Danish islands. The government also designated a budget of $155,000 to the NGO Hold Denmark Rent to strengthen green tourism through raising awareness about garbage on the beaches and in nature and by promoting responsible choices among tourists.

Tourism in Denmark also benefits from European funding such as in the case of the BSTC, the

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258 From interview with Denmark Green Key Program Manager.
Baltic Sea Tourism Center, which is a sustainable development project together with Poland, Germany, Lithuania, and Sweden. This project aims to set up an organization to develop, manage, and promote tourism in the Baltic Region. Among its objectives is protecting coastlines, parks, and other natural and cultural resources, and developing long-term, sustainable tourism strategies. The European Regional Development Fund has allocated a budget of $1.43 million to this project.266

Monitoring Tourism Sustainability

The destination’s sustainability progress is measured through data and details of the sustainability performance included in the Annual DMO Report and externally audited sustainability report using GRI G4, GSTC or similar criteria.267 Some of Copenhagen’s environmental performance are the following: 2.5 metric tons of CO₂ emissions per capita, in 2015 57.4% of the city’s energy was derived from renewable sources, the city’s ambient outdoor air pollution level (PM10) is 13 μg/m³, low rate of traffic congestion (21%), 424 hectares of green area per 100,000 inhabitants, and 68% of hotel room inventory and 89% of congress venues have sustainability certification.268

Conventional indicators in Denmark include bed stays per annum, average length of stay, average expenditure, and jobs created. However, Copenhagen’s DMO is also considering other indicators that do not only show economic factors, but relate more directly to social and cultural sustainability, such as tourist satisfaction (77% of visitors leave with the intention to recommend) and perception of local community about tourism (80% of citizens support visitor growth and 98% of capital citizens believe that tourism contributes positively to the region).269

Lessons Learned

It is important to identify and prioritize pertinent tourism sustainability issues and set a clear strategy to tackle these issues. Denmark has a strong and stable economy and a clear vision for the growth and sustainability of the tourism and travel industry. Its main focus is on the development of coastal and rural tourism, tackling seasonality, and the improvement of competitiveness through better value for money.

Tourism sustainability strategies are more effective when part of wider sustainability efforts and strategies. Denmark is highly environmentally-aware and has strong environmental policies which regulate all areas of production and services, and which naturally extend to the tourism industry. Additionally, employment conditions are generally very good.

Presenting a good business case for sustainability can facilitate adoption of sustainability strategies. Copenhagen is committed to sustainable management of the city as a destination through its 2020 Strategy promoting the concept ‘Localhood,’ which seeks to boost all economic, cultural, and social benefits for both tourists and locals. The Localhood program, initiated by the

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DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, aims to rejuvenate the tourism experience by introducing new products and creating an emotional connection to the Copenhagen brand through content, to ensure higher levels of tourist satisfaction. One of the main motivations for adopting sustainable and environmentally-friendly policies for stakeholders is the pragmatic financial benefit, since it provides an advantage over destinations and businesses without certification with respect to the growing market of responsible travelers.
2.2.2. Italy

Background

Italy is also the home of the Renaissance and currently has 50 UNESCO world Heritage Sites. As such, it has an innumerable amount of cultural and architectural resources, including museums, monuments, and ancient ruins. With cities like Rome, Venice, Verona, Florence, and Pisa, the sites to visit are incredible and some of the world’s most famous, like the Coliseum and leaning tower of Pisa. It has excellent weather and a never-ending list of scenic coastal towns, and incredible Mediterranean beaches. Italy is also well known for its traditional and varied gastronomy, and its fashion industry, which undoubtedly are two very important resources. According to the 2017 edition of the UNWTO Tourism Highlights, Italy had 52.4 million visitors in 2016.

Table 7: Italy - Tourism Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International tourist arrivals</th>
<th>50,731,770</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International tourism inbound receipts</td>
<td>US $39,449.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average receipts per arrival</td>
<td>US $777.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism % of GDP</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism employment</td>
<td>1,118,990 jobs (5% of total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017

Italy was ranked 8th in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 edition. The tourism and travel industry contributed to the country’s economy with $76,286.3 million, that is 4.2% of GDP, and it generated 1,118,990 jobs, 5% of total employment. In 2015, the total contribution of the entire tourism sector to the Italian economy was €171 billion, amounting to 11.8% of GDP and 12.8% in terms of employment.

Although Italy has a great culture of tourism and the necessary infrastructure to welcome tourists, certain cities have suffered various degrees of saturation, which entail negative impacts on the local population and the environment, most notably, Rome, Venice, and the coastal Cinque...

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Terre Natural Park. In these cases, mass tourism has become unsustainable for the future of the destination, for the residents, the environment, and the tourists themselves, and potentially pose a threat to the sustainability of natural and historical heritage, to the environment, and to the quality of tourism at the destinations.

The beautiful city of Venice, with a population of 250,000, received just under four million international tourists in 2016 who spent at least one night and an increasing number of day visitors. This makes for an economic environment highly dependent on tourism and entails negative effects like a decrease in availability of apartments and soaring rental prices for locals, a labor market almost exclusively dependent on tourism, low wages, and enormous amounts of pollution and waste produced. Both the GDP and employment in Venice are more than twice as high as for Italy overall. Over-tourism has led to some acts of tourism phobia and constant demonstrations against big cruisers sailing into the canals. Overcrowding makes it very difficult for locals to carry out their daily lives and mass land and sea traffic strain the resources. This has also contributed to local citizens moving away from Venice. In 2016 the Venice municipality established an innovative measure on key festive days sectioning off certain areas to tourists. In 2018, Venice installed turnstiles as a temporary measure to limit massive tourist flow to certain areas of the city. These measures have not had continuity or any substantial impact, not least because they were implemented unilaterally by the public authorities, with no participation of the private sector.

Rome is one of the most famous destinations worldwide because of its high concentration of history, art, and culture sites combined with all the opportunities offered by the many conferences, fairs, and exhibitions, with all the opportunities for shopping, medical visits, education, and business. In 2016, the travel and tourism industry brought $7.8 billion to Rome’s economy. In the same year, the total number of arrivals to the capital exceeded 16 million. The ratio of visitor per capita is six arrivals per resident; this is higher than most other European cities. Overcrowding have caused an increase in environmental stress and the competition for public space use can lead to a decrease in local residents’ quality of life.

**Sustainable Destination Management**

**Destination Governance**

The Italian Government Tourist Board ENIT (Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo) was founded in 1919 and has been promoting Italy as a tourist destination for the last 100 years. ENIT functions under the direction of the Tourism Minister. After 2014, and following a change in the statute, it operates as a public economic entity, with legal autonomy with regards to management, accounting, and organization. Its principal task is promoting Italy as a tourist destination by marketing its many resources and attractions, both as a whole and of each region. It is therefore

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responsible for the development of national and international promotion strategies. Similarly, it provides support and consultation services to the central government, regional authorities, and public and private entities with regards to promoting tourism products. The Board also carries some activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its various diplomatic and consular offices worldwide.280

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activities and Tourism is responsible for the legislative framework for the tourism industry in Italy, working together with various public bodies that represent the regions and municipalities. It works through the Directorate-General (DG) for Tourism, which sets the strategic policy agenda. The DG works closely and in coordination with regional and provincial authorities to develop and launch national tourism policies, since the autonomous regions, according to the Italian Constitution, have the authority to regulate businesses locally, develop strategic marketing activities, and manage European Structural Funds.281 The Standing Committee for the Promotion of Tourism in Italy was established in 2014, and is composed of private and public entities. Its task is to draft a five-year National Tourism Plan.

Figure 16: Italy Tourism Bodies

Source: OECD

The responsibilities of the DG include developing, integrating, implementing, coordinating, and promoting national, European, and international tourism policies. It is also the link through which regional governments relate to the central government regarding tourism development.282 The DG for Tourism is also responsible for managing activities in the sector that go beyond the competence of the regional authorities, such as providing funding and incentives to generate or increase demand, issuing and delivering certifications to professionals, managing relations with international organizations, and participating in the adoption and implementation of European Union legislation.

The Italian Government Tourist Board ENIT (Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo) has the broad and principal responsibility of marketing and promoting Italy as a tourist destination. In 2015, ENIT became a public economic entity and, under the supervision of the Minister of Cultural Heritage,  


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Activities and Tourism, it regulates its own accounting and administration. ENIT has the authority to enter into agreements with regions and autonomous provinces, local authorities, and other public bodies. The Board of Directors includes two members appointed by the Minister.

The National Tourism Observatory (ONT), established in 2006, is responsible for studying, analyzing, and monitoring economic, social and technological dynamics related to tourism, in addition to gathering qualitative and quantitative information on tourists, including their interests. Its main objectives are to collect and present data on trends and tourist activities and to provide forecasts for the development of strategic plans on promoting and marketing Italy’s tourism offer.

Sustainability Strategies

The tourism industry generates pollution through an increase in consumption of resources which impacts on ecosystems of tourist destinations. However, sustainable tourism encompasses socio-cultural and socio-economic impacts as well. Strategies should, therefore, be developed to lower CO₂ emissions and reduce environmental impact, but also to maximize positive cultural, social, and economic impacts and minimize negative ones.

Italy supports the development of sustainable tourism by promoting new cultural attractions and by encouraging tourism enterprises to upgrade their services and infrastructure. Recent legislation has established measures for the protection and restoration of cultural heritage, the development of Italian culture, and the re-launching of tourism.

Italy is ultimately known for its art and culture and, as mentioned in the National Strategic Plan, most "visits are still too heavily concentrated on several sites of extraordinary value but subject to heavy pressure, thus increasing the risk of loss of territorial identity." The Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows into areas that are not recognized as tourist destinations with the objective of decongesting saturated areas, thus protecting cultural heritage and reducing the impact on local communities and improving competitiveness by widening the product offer and establishing a more sustainable model.

Italy’s transport infrastructure is somewhat outdated or, in some cases, deficient and inter-modality transport which integrates various means of transport into the same system has been identified as lacking as well. The level of education and skills in the tourism industry for a country with such history and demand, still leaves room for improvement. Programs should be initiated to enhance quantity and quality in the education offer in tourism management to suit the level and demand of tourism in Italy.

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In line with the Tourism Strategic Plan, Italy took a step recently towards improving sustainable transport in the tourism sector. An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Tourism and the Italian electricity and gas distributor ENEL to promote, develop, and improve electric infrastructure for sustainable touristic mobility, including charging stations throughout the major destinations, villages, and roads. This will improve the offer quality and reduce noise and air pollution.\textsuperscript{290}

The Ministry of Tourism is also promoting a slow and sustainable sector of the industry by creating and promoting a slow mobility network infrastructure of green paths in some of the most famous, historical, and picturesque routes.\textsuperscript{291} In collaboration with regional and autonomous administrations, the Ministry launched the Cammini d’Italia atlas and website, in order to offer travelers and tourists a real intermodal infrastructure of green roads where they can choose to travel Italy on foot, by bike, on horseback, or with other forms of sustainable transport. The year 2016 was declared the National Year of the Paths through a directive of the Ministry which brought together state, region, municipalities, local authorities, public and private, to enhance 6600 kilometers of nature, religious, cultural, and spiritual roads that cross the entire country, a part of Italy little known, but fundamental in the offer of slow Italian tourism.\textsuperscript{292}

In the Liguria, which is a boomerang-shaped region with 300 kilometers of coast along the Mediterranean and bordering France, some coastal towns experimented problem with poor transport infrastructure which could not manage the tourism flow. A solution was devised to implement a train shuttle between some of the villages affected to carry tourists.\textsuperscript{293}

Another initiative supported by the Ministry as stated by the General Manager of the Directorate General for Tourism, Francesco Palumbo, at the second convention of the Sustainable Development Festival, is the promotion of projects which offer a touristic product in which “tourists do not leave a footprint, rather they help towards sustainability.”\textsuperscript{294} The University of Bologna launched one such project: Sea Sentinels, Divers United for the Environment, through which recreational divers help to protect the maritime environment by contributing through downloading and sending in questionnaires after each submersion regarding underwater species and other aspects.\textsuperscript{295, 296}

In 2018, the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE in Italian) approved an investment plan worth €740 million to strengthen Italy’s cultural offer, strengthen urban systems, and promote tourism. €59 million are to be invested in sustainable development.\textsuperscript{297} €6million were allocated for the development of unique projects on issues related to data


\textsuperscript{293} From interview with Regione Liguria Tourism Project Manager


collection, sustainable mobility, flow management, and lease regulation. The main aims are to achieve a better management of flow of tourists in some of the most important destinations, to monitor flows in real time, and to offer smart mobility services for tourists and residents alike.\(^{298}\)

MiBACT created FactorYmpresa Turismo, a national program to support and reward innovative business ideas in the tourism sector. It offers small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs the opportunity to access tutoring services and funding, with the aim of providing appropriate tools to grasp the new market trends, favoring repositioning, innovation, and specialization.\(^{299}\)

In 2015, Italy introduced a tax credit system to incentivize the renovation and upgrading of hotels and other tourism accommodation establishments. The tax credit covers between 30\% and 65\% of the cost and focuses on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. Since the year 2018, it also benefits renovation projects in green tourism such as campsites and agrotourism. The initial budget allocated for the period 2015-2017 was €170 million, but the program has been extended until 2020 and the budget increased to €240 million. Alongside this measure, another tax credit was introduced to support digital technology in tourism.\(^{300}\)

To further help tourism businesses to stay competitive, the Ministry published in 2014 the so-called “Art Bonus Decree”, with a budget of €460 million until 2020 allocated to urgent measures and incentives to help fund the restoration of public cultural patrimony, including digital tourism activities. The decree includes a tax credit measure to support the restoration and upgrading of tourism structures to create more efficient and sustainable buildings as well as a 30\% tax credit to support digitalization of tourism activities.\(^{301}\)

**Stakeholder Engagement**

In an attempt to coordinate strategies and activities in the Italian tourism industry, public and private stakeholders came together in 2016 to produce the National Strategic Plan for Tourism for the period 2017-2022. The Strategic Plan involves all tourism stakeholders and operators and is the result of a joint effort to counter the somewhat fragmented approach existing until recently. It provides a clear structure through which the different bodies and stakeholder relate to improve decision making and policy development. The plan focuses on capacity building, service quality, and technological and organizational innovation, among other key drivers, which are integrated in all objectives to favor sustainability in tourism, especially with regards to the environment and cultural heritage. The plan promotes an integrated and participative governance and encourages stakeholders to make choices with a view to sustainability. Ultimately, the plan aims to revitalize Italy’s tourism industry, once again placing the country in a leading position in the market and strengthening sustainable social and economic development. It focuses on four major areas: 1) territory and heritage, 2) competitiveness and employment, 3) putting the tourist at the center, and 4) integration and interoperability. The


strategic principles of sustainability, innovation, and accessibility are integrated in all those four themes.\textsuperscript{302}

Italy’s vision and mission for the following six years is established in its Tourism Strategic Plan 2017-2022, a result of collaboration between public and private sector operators, such as the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activities and Tourism, the regional authorities, other central government administrations and territorial entities, and stakeholders. It aims to consolidate the position of leadership on the international tourism market. It emphasizes a new collaborative model between all stakeholders to coordinate all strategies and develop policies, as well as monitor the performance of these. It is an integrative approach to bringing together the different authorities and stakeholders to create a participatory governance and thus overcome the fragmentation in the industry, and emphasizes sustainability as a key element for the successful implementation of the plan.\textsuperscript{303}

**Funding**

The Italian national budget for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activities and Tourism in 2018 was €2.4 billion. Tourism also receives support from the Culture and Innovation 2014-20 Program financed by the European Union Structural Funds with a budget of €490 million. A Tourism Investment Fund was created in 2014. It is controlled by the government and managed by the National Investment Bank and has a ceiling of €250 million. The fund operates as a bridge between public assets in need of development and the private real estate market.\textsuperscript{304}

Each regional government has a department specific to the promotion and management of destinations. The general structure of the DMO includes administration, promotion, and management of different segments (art and culture tourism, nature tourism, sun and beach, etc.), and normally a team in charge of sustainable projects and policies. The funding of these departments within the regional or local DMO depend very much on regional government budgets and administration. The nationwide strategy is a broad one and regions are free to develop specific sustainable projects for their locations and fund them as they see suitable. The case of Sardinia is interesting. It set up Visit South Sardinia as a DMO and adopted European programs and standards for sustainable tourism.

The Interreg MED program is a community of 13 European countries from the northern shore of the Mediterranean that came together to promote sustainable growth. One of the program’s areas is tourism. Its policies on sustainable tourism main aim is to enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area. It is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Italy has been allocated €9.5 million. These funds are destined to support projects like the underwater archeological park in Baia, a phytodepuration plant in Marina di Ragusa, Sicily, the development of ecotourism packages in protected areas, and the implementation of the green beach sustainable model in three different beaches.\textsuperscript{305}


Additional funding is provided in the form of taxes. A tax is in place for overnight visitors that brings around €30 million per year. A new tax may be introduced in Venice in 2019 which will charge tourists on cruise ships between €2.50 and €5 per day and may increase to €10 during the peak summer season. This was included in Italy’s 2019 budget.306

Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainability

Impact analysis are carried out by universities, international organizations, and statistics agencies. Universities and agencies carry out studies and integrate data which are then presented to the relevant bodies to elaborate plans according to the trends observed and the derived forecast. ENIT Monitoring is the national agency’s tool to survey and observe the tourism sector nationwide, collecting information on sales done by tourism operators. It gathers and processes data to provide indicators on domestic and international tourism, and trends. It also carries out qualitative research through interviewing major foreign tour operators regarding type and duration of trips, chosen products and most requested regions and locations.307

Regions have their own agencies to monitor tourism in their areas. For example, the Liguria region established a Tourism Observatory in 2006 which is responsible for measuring the impact of tourism through statistical analyses, interviews, and special studies on specific market segments.308 In the region of Sardinia, the municipality of Cagliari established a DMO which, in 2013, adopted the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria and indicators program. A group of researchers from the universities of Milano-Bicocca and Cagliari carried out a study that analyzed European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) to assess the impact of sustainability strategies implemented by DMO “Visit Southern Sardinia” in the period 2013-2016. These indicators are a product of the European Union (EU) Sustainable Development Strategy, which was formulated with the objectives of promoting economic prosperity, social equity, cohesion, and environmental protection. However, the complexity of the toolkit, containing 27 core indicators and 40 optional indicators, and the structure required to gather data and process it, make it difficult to implement the system in many destinations. Stakeholder familiarity with the toolkit is also an issue.309

Lessons Learned

The growth in the number of tourists is traditionally viewed as an indicator of success of a certain policy. However, the increase of the number of visitors to a destination should not always be assumed to be positive in itself, since many other factors have to be taken into consideration, including the quality of the tourist experience and the visitor expenditure. Tourism can definitely boost economic and social conditions of a destination and improve quality of life for some of the residents. However, it can also cause environmental stresses. If tourism is not managed and suitable policies not implemented, the negative effects can exceed the advantages, and the environmental, economic, and social structure of historic centers and visited areas can be worsened.

308 From interview with Regione Liguria Tourism Project Manager.
What can be learned from this case study is that destinations must plan to avoid over tourism before a crisis situation actually occurs. New destinations need to equally focus on sustainable growth, which managing and improving services.

Although Italy has taken steps forward in this direction, a better coordination is still needed between national and regional authorities for the effective implementation of policies and promotion, and to avoid the duplicate efforts. Better communication channels have to be established between the private and public sector to develop sustainable policies in the interest of all stakeholders.

Regions and municipalities should take further steps towards measuring tourists’ impact on the environment by using quantity as well as quality indicators. Studies on ecological footprint, for example, provide a framework for assessment of civil and industry capacity for tourism growth. They can be the basis on which to set environmental impact protection goals in the destination regarding future tourism. This helps gather quantified information that can be processed and provide the host community with a valuable tool to help making decisions regarding tourism activities in the area, such as whether or not to change or manage an offer or restrict the number of visitors in an area.\textsuperscript{310}

2.2.3. Jordan

Background

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is strategically located at a crossroad between Asia, Africa, and Europe, bordering with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Israel, and Palestine, and with a short strip of about 25 kilometers of coast on the Red Sea: The Gulf of Aqaba is not only a strategic point as a port but also a popular tourist destination. Although relatively young as an independent state, Jordan has a long history, with archeological sites from some of the world's oldest civilizations, most famously the ancient Nabataean city of Petra, carved in stone more than 2000 years ago, one of the seven wonders of the world and one of the most spectacular attractions in the Middle East. But Jordan has more to offer to the traveler. Its resources include: The Dead Sea that has historically attracted people for its therapeutic properties, the breathtakingly beautiful desert valley Wadi Rum, the Roman ruins of Jerash, and the capital Amman which offers a unique blend of old and new, being a modern city with new buildings, hotels, restaurants, and a great offer of shopping sites, coexisting with ancient monuments and archaeological sites.

A country known for its rich historical heritage, Jordan's touristic resources go well beyond it. The product offering in Jordan is quite diverse. It includes adventure and nature tourism for active travelers who enjoy hiking, camping, quad driving or hot air ballooning in the natural parks and deserts or scuba diving in the Red Sea. It also offers cultural and religious tourism, MICE and wellness and medical tourism, a subsector contemplated in the medical Jordan Economic Growth Plan 2018-2022. For the last two decades, tourism has been one of the pillars of the country's economy. In the last six years, however, it fell quite considerably, following the 2008 worldwide economic recession and the Arab spring with the ensuing ongoing conflict in the neighboring country of Syria. However, the sector seems to be recovering with a total of 4,565,158 visitors in 2017, which is a 7.8% increase over the year 2016.

Table 8: Jordan - Tourism Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International tourist arrivals</th>
<th>3,761,072</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International tourism inbound receipts</td>
<td>US $4,064.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average receipts per arrival</td>
<td>US $1,080.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism % of GDP</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Tourism employment</td>
<td>71,882 jobs (4.5% of total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017

Jordan was ranked 75th in the World Economic Forum 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, two places up since 2015. It is highlighted in the same report that Jordan

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is making remarkable progress in ICT readiness and managed to maintain a high level of security, ranking 38th globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally. The prioritization of the tourism industry by government is also recorded in the fact that it is ranked 22nd globally.

Sustainable Destination Management

Destination Governance

Tourism was not a particularly important sector in Jordan before the 1990s, since the flow of visitors was rather low due to the conflicts in the area. After Oslo’s Peace Treaty between Palestine and Israel, tourism began to grow notably, gaining importance and contributing significantly to the GDP. The main body responsible for tourism is the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The tourism department was first established in 1953. The organization responsible for the promotion of Jordan as a competitive tourist destination in the international market is the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB). The JTB was founded in 1998 as an independent body formed by partners from the public and private sectors in an attempt to boost product and strategy development through collaboration between the two sectors. Its Board of Directors is made up of 13 members and is headed by the Minister of Tourism as Chairman. The Board includes nine members from the private sector who represent hotels, tour operators, national airlines, and tourism transport companies. Its strategies aim to promote the country’s tourism product and market Jordan as an attractive and varied destination, offering cultural, natural, religious, adventurous, leisure, and MICE activities and attractions. JTB has eleven offices in Europe and North America through which it executes its marketing strategies. These include participation in trade fairs, trade workshops, trade and consumer road shows, familiarization trips, press trips, brochure and multimedia production, and media relations. It aims to position Jordan as a destination of choice and to achieve organizational excellence to maximize the impact of tourism on the national economy.

Figure 17: Jordan - Tourism Bodies

Source: OECD

Besides the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board, there are other local public entities responsible for the management of specific areas and sites such as the Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority (PDTRA), the Petra Archaeological Park (PAP), the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), and the Jordan Valley Authority.322

Sustainability Strategies

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, with the support of USAID, in a private-public collaboration, published the National Tourism Strategy 2011-2015. It builds upon the significant achievements made since the launch of the original strategy (2004-2010) in establishing Jordan as an attractive and reputable destination since the overall tourism receipts growth was 257%.323 This Strategy is led by the public sector, in partnership with the public sector. It identifies challenges facing the industry and proposes to improve competitiveness and sustainability to maximize economic, social, and cultural impacts. It is based on four pillars: 1) Marketing & Promotion, 2) Product Development, 3) Labor Market Development, and 4) Enabling Environment.324 Sustainability is integrated as a key element in each of the four pillars for the successful implementation of the plan, i.e. to maximize the contribution tourism can make to economic and social development in Jordan and, by the same token, contribute to business success and protect natural and cultural assets.

The fourth pillar of the National Tourism Strategy 2011-2015, ‘Enabling Environment’, is focused on creating a legal framework which is more conducive to growth and boosts competitiveness by developing policies and regulations, in collaboration with the private sector, to support business in the industry. The high score achieved in the 2017 Competitiveness Index in the business environment section (4.8 of 7) suggests the country has been successful in this

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regard. The activities proposed in the strategy include benchmarking activities to improve performance, promoting eco-friendly practices within the industry, and increasing awareness amongst key stakeholders of the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism development in Jordan. To achieve this last point, certain activities have been proposed, including the introduction of a Community Awareness Program which aims to build awareness of the importance of tourism, and a program to educate the local community to respect and protect archeological resources.\(^\text{325}\)

The National Tourism Strategy addresses the labor market development as its third pillar as a key element to boost competitiveness and create an environment of world-class service in all areas across the sector. This is proposed through a series of actions including positioning the industry as an attractive career and employment choice for young people, by enhancing tourism education at universities and colleges, in collaboration with employers in the industry.\(^\text{326}\)

The National Tourism Strategy recognizes the importance of being an eco-friendly destination for the market, since environmental awareness among travelers is on the rise and poor practices can deter visitors, while best practices can attract tourist flow. It therefore proposes the necessity to reduce carbon emissions of transport and increase energy efficiency, reduce water consumption, and reduce and better manage waste.\(^\text{327}\)

The Ministry of Environment partnered up with some of the main governing bodies at the national and regional level in tourism, including MoTA and PDTRA, to collaborate in project assessment and policy development to protect the environment.\(^\text{328}\)

USAID has contributed through various projects financially and logistically in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Department of Antiquities, the Jordan Tourism Board, and the private sector to identify challenges, develop strategies, establish research centers, and provide expertise and train personnel. The USAID Jordan Tourism Development Project II 2008-2013, for example, worked with public entities, private stakeholders, local communities, and foreign donors in order to enhance Jordan’s competitiveness as a tourism destination in the international market by implementing activities across the sector's entire spectrum. These activities ranged from supporting policy formulation at a national level, enabling the legal environment by improving regulations, promoting the country as a destination of choice, managing and enhancing cultural sites, developing tourism trails, and introducing programs to achieve higher levels of education, training, awareness, marketing, and conservation of natural and historical resources.\(^\text{329}\)

In 2015, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and building on the achievements of previous tourism development projects, USAID launched a five-year project worth $36 million: Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project (BEST). The BEST project seeks to transform Jordan into an internationally competitive destination. Through close


\(^{328}\) The Ministry of Environment Strategic Plan 2017-2019, page 47.

collaboration with governmental, non-governmental, and private sector stakeholders, the project aims to strengthen the country's tourism industry by enhancing its facilities and services, improving the management and marketing of tourism sites, boosting marketing efforts and encouraging tourism of secondary sites. The project also addresses the need to increase the number of women and youth employed in the tourism sector, where there is a high demand for skilled, trained, and competitive personnel. The BEST project's activities are: 1) creating a business enabling environment, 2) tourism asset development, 3) destination marketing, 4) industry development and destination excellence, and 5) managing the Tourism Partnership Fund, which offers grants in various areas of the tourism sector, including asset development, destination marketing, and creating public-private partnerships.

The Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development in Jordan (BITS) Project is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for Jordan Tourism Strategy 2015-2019 and was developed by the UNDP in collaboration with MoTA and other public entities with the aim of positioning the consideration of biodiversity as absolutely fundamental from the start. The project has three levels of intervention: 1) at a national level, to develop a regulatory framework to reduce the impact of tourism on biodiversity, 2) at a regional level, to promote awareness and sensitivity of the value of biodiversity as a tourism asset and attraction, and to monitor and manage the impact of tourism development inside and outside protected areas, and 3) at the Protected Area (PA) level, to enhance site capacity and management effectiveness in order to preserve protected biodiversity and benefit from nature-based tourism and ecotourism. Through this Project, UNDP also supported MoTA in forming its Green Tourism Unit, which regulates and enhances the adoption of environmental good practices in the tourism sector in Jordan.

Private social enterprises, such as Experience Baraka, focus specifically on strengthening the local community through developing the destination and building tourism micro-businesses. With the view that development and tourism go hand-in-hand, Experience Baraka developed a model where viable business should have a positive impact on the communities. They provide investment, build capacity and support to establish operative, viable and competitive businesses in destinations where local communities have not seen the benefit of tourism. In the example of Um Qais, an important historical and archeological site, tourists would bus in and spend an average of two hours and leave. Baraka Experience helped to set up some businesses run by locals and contributed to enhancing other businesses to achieve a localized supply chain. The number of tourists has remained the same, at around 2000, but the average time spent went from two hours to two days, which meant a 300% growth for the local economy. This has been hugely impactful since many families are not able to make an income.

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335 From interview with founder and CEO of Experience Baraka.
Another project aimed at enhancing the economic impact on the host communities is the “Meaningful Travel Map of Jordan,” launched by the Jordan Tourism Board and the American non-profit organization Tourism Cares, in collaboration with social enterprises. It offers twelve meaningful travel experiences in different towns to provide quality cultural experiences for tourists while ensuring that the underprivileged local population benefit from it.\textsuperscript{336}

**Stakeholder Engagement**

During the 1980s, Jordan followed a conservative economic policy by keeping the most vital sectors under direct state control and largely excluding private stakeholder representatives from taking part in the strategic development process. By the 1990s, the government began to change its strategy and started to include the private sector in economic plans and strategies.\textsuperscript{337} In 1998, the Jordan Tourism Board was established in this context since a number of its members represent the private sector, including airlines, hotel associations, tourist and travel agencies, tourism transport companies, restaurants, traders, and guides associations.\textsuperscript{338}

Through this public-private interaction, the private sector aims to raise awareness among policy makers about the economic benefits of the tourism industry to influence the generation of a legislative framework which favors investment and growth. This creates a collaborative environment where awareness is raised about the importance and dependence of sustainable practices in the industry and is reflected in the strategies and regulations established.

**Funding**

Both domestic and foreign sources are used to fund tourism sustainability activities. In terms of domestic funding, both the government and the tourism industry have committed funds to tourism sustainability activities. As for foreign funding, both bilateral and international organizations have contributed funding to sustainability initiatives in Jordan. In 2013, USAID launched an 18-month project, the Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project (2013-2015), with the aim of continuing to improve Jordan’s competitiveness in the international marketplace as a tourism destination in order to boost the country’s economy, create employment, and engage women and youth. The objectives of this project included strengthening the country’s tourism facilities and services, improving the management and promotion of tourism sites, boosting marketing efforts and encouraging tourism of secondary sites. It also aimed at increasing the employment of women and youth in the tourism sector. The outcome of this project included supporting regulatory reform, diversification and enhancement of tourism products, improvement of tourism education at universities, the development of small to medium sized enterprises in the hospitality sector, such as camps, restaurants, and hotels, and providing grants and funding technical assistance that foster public-private partnerships and support job creation.\textsuperscript{339}


The Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development (BITS) in Jordan project runs from January 2014 to December 2018 and it has been financed by the UNDP and Global Environment Facility, with a budget of $3.5 million. This project, which encompasses strategies and activities, aims to bring the protection of biodiversity to the forefront in national planning and development projects, especially in areas affected by the travel industry or potentially developed into attractions.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainability**

Various indicators are consulted to monitor the sector’s growth, trends and performance, including numbers of international arrivals, the income generated, tourism’s contribution to employment, the number and size of locations that provide services and facilities (e.g., the number of rooms and beds in tourism accommodation establishments, the number of entertainment centers, souvenir shops, and restaurants), and the numbers of visitors to some of main sites.

In the framework of the UNDP Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development project, certain indicators were developed to assess target achievement. Some of them are the following, evaluated in a mid-term review:

- The consideration of biodiversity in planning and policy development in tourism by government, planning authorities, and the private stakeholders, which shows a 50% achievement. Excellent progress in the development of the Jordan “Tourism and Biodiversity” Information Management System at MoTA, and the initiation of a strategic environmental assessment for the tourism sector in Jordan, etc.
- Percentage allocation for biodiversity conservation in tourism development proposals, which shows that 30% of new proposals for tourism development consider biodiversity explicitly, whereas prior to the project, only energy and water featured in environmental considerations.
- Hectares of landscape where impacts on biodiversity are avoided, mitigated or offset has raised to 209,900 hectares, whereas before there was no planning for the protection outside Protected Areas.
- Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores already achieved target score in the three protected areas of Dibbi, Wadi Rum, and Petra.

**Lessons Learned**

Jordan has taken some steps towards environmental protection and enhancing community involvement, but it needs develop more detailed regulations and policies to maintain growth and long-term sustainability.

Although the private sector is involved in strategy development and influences decision making at a national level, its involvement at local and regional levels is rather limited and could be improved.

Financial and technical assistance from bilateral donors and international bodies can be instrumental in sustainable destination management. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project focuses on improving Jordan's competitiveness in the international marketplace as a tourism destination. With assistance from the UNDP, in the context of the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development project, specific indicators were developed to assess sustainability.
2.2.4. Palestine

Background

Palestine is a sacred land for the three monotheistic religions as well as home to some of the oldest archeological sites in the world. It has a unique cultural and historical heritage. It is a land where many of the prophets walked and has been a pilgrimage center for centuries. Through the ages, many civilizations have come and gone in the land of Palestine. As a religious center and a geographically-strategic area, it is a land that has been coveted and whose history is full of wars and conflicts, conquests and defeats, sieges and surrenders, and the consequent rule of many different people, including King David, the Neo-Assyrians, the Neo-Babylonians, the Persians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Fatimids, the Crusaders, and the Ottomans, among others. It continues to be the case in our present time, since the loss of Al Quds to the British in 1917 and the eventual creation of the Jewish state of Israel and the partition of the land between Muslims and Jews. In the 1967 Six Day War, Israel invaded Palestinian territories, including East Al Quds, and the city has since been under Israeli occupation, currently surrounded by checkpoints and encircled by the segregation wall.344

It is clear that political and security conditions directly affect the flow of visitors to a destination and that stability and peace would guarantee a more prosperous tourism industry in Palestine.345 This is illustrated by the fact that the sector grew significantly after the 1967 war until 1993 and dropped drastically after the Second Intifada broke out in 2000, and only began to recover after 2005.346 Despite the turmoil and constant eruption of conflicts, Al Quds continues to receive large numbers of visitors yearly, both international and from Palestine and Israel. In 2016, the number of guests in hotels alone was 1,322,700, of whom 60% were foreign.347 That number rose to 1,653,900 in 2017, the highest the city has ever recorded.348 In 2015, a total of 2,173,200 tourists visited Al Quds.349 The number rose to 2,233,000 foreign tourists who visited Al Quds, 60% of whom were Christians, 20% Jewish, and only 3% Muslim.350

Al Quds’ most important touristic resources are its holy sites, such as Al Aqsa Compound in the Old City with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sculpture, the Tomb of the Virgin Mary, and many synagogues.

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Tourism has a significant impact on Palestine’s economy, contributing to 14% of Palestine’s GDP. But it is important to highlight that approximately 50% of Palestine’s tourism revenues come from domestic tourism, mostly Palestinians living in Israeli territory who visit relatives. The largest share of inbound international tourism is religious, and globally the most important one is Christian pilgrimage.

Since the illegal annexation of East Al Quds by the Israeli government, the situation of Al-Quds is even more dire, since MoTA is not allowed to operate in the city and there is a lack of institutional support, and absence of a national umbrella institution capable of supporting the private sector and coordinating a strategy conducive to sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the Israeli land-planning and zoning system makes it extremely difficult for Palestinians to obtain permits to build or expand hotels and souvenirs shops in the Muslim quarters.

East Al Quds merchants and souvenirs shops are also under a lot of pressure due to high taxes and the fact that the majority of foreign tourists visit the city through Jewish tourist agencies and with Israeli guides. These provide a disreputable and unsafe image of the Old City among tourists and encourage them to shop in West Al Quds businesses which curbs the economic growth of tourism for the local community. They are also subject to disproportionate land taxes imposed on them which have led to shutting down their factories or threatening their businesses, putting them in a disadvantageous position and creating a financial pressure which makes it unprofitable to manufacture their own products and keep their shops open. This reality is shown in a study conducted in the early 1990s, which concluded that the decline in the traditional crafts could have been avoided if the Israeli government had provided an economic, social and legal framework that protected the craftsmen, which would also have helped preserve a characteristic element of the city’s unique cultural heritage.

Sustainable Destination Management

Destination Governance

The Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) is the authority responsible for all issues related to tourism in Palestine, including regulations and the development and implementation of the Palestinian government's national strategy for tourism. However, laws pertaining tourism applied today were established in 1965, and do not specify the responsibilities of institutions, organizations, and other stakeholders in the sector. Current laws and regulations do not consider environmental aspects, protection of touristic and archeological sites, nor do they include programs to protect the community. This lack of

regulation fosters purely capitalistic unsustainable mass tourism from which the community does not benefit, and the cultural and historical identity and heritage of the destination can be jeopardized.\textsuperscript{358}

The city of Al Quds has been under Israeli administration since the 1967 War, which restricted the presence of any official Palestinian body in the city. This presents an obvious obstacle for Palestinian destination management and promotion as well as the development of strategies and projects with private stakeholders.\textsuperscript{359} The Israeli authorities control the flow of international tourists, from visa issuing to entering the country and accessing the city,\textsuperscript{360} significantly limiting the implementation of any coordinated action by the Palestinian stakeholders.\textsuperscript{361} There are restrictions on movement and access, which impede or make it difficult to manage tourism flow and develop themed routes.\textsuperscript{362} The continuous illegal settlements and destruction of Palestinian historical and religious sites, and the displacement and separation of Palestinian people, contribute to a move towards eradicating Palestinian identity and social cohesion. Another important factor considered in many studies and used by Israeli government as a tool to undermine a strong Palestinian society is the fact that the majority of guides in Al Quds are Israeli, who relay historical information clearly tainted with a Zionist narrative.\textsuperscript{363}

The fragmented situation of the tourism sector is a challenge for sustainable tourism. Dr. Rami Isaac identified the key players in sustainable tourism planning and management in Al-Quds as the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine (MoTA), the Arab Hotel Association (AHA), the Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association (HLITOA), the Arab Restaurant Association, Arab Tourist Guides Union (ATGU), the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, souvenir shop owners, artisans, artists, craftspeople, and residents. He considers that these stakeholders should collaborate to develop an integrative plan towards sustainable tourism, part of which should be expanding tourism beyond pilgrimage and visiting the Old City.\textsuperscript{364}

Palestine’s tourism laws fail to efficiently regulate the sector since basic elements such as the relationship between private-public players, the protection of sites, and the responsibilities of stakeholders, are unregulated.

\textsuperscript{364} SESRIC Report (n.d.). Report of the workshop on “exploring tourism potential of al quds al sherif city”.

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There are, however, some Palestinian Networks for Tourism that have taken initiatives to promote the growth and sustainability of Palestinian tourism. These are:

**HILTOA**: Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association. It was established in 2005 to support incoming tour operators, to develop the industry sustainably and increase the number of tourists handled by its 43 members.

- **Arab Hotel Association** established in Al Quds in 1962 and currently has 56 members representing Palestinian hotels throughout the Holy Land.
- **Jerusalem Tourism Cluster**
- **TAJ Cluster**
- **Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism**: PIRT is a network of institutions, both public and private, as well as NGOs, with the joint objective of promoting and working for responsible tourism in the Holy Land. Through this initiative, the members aim to boost the development of a conscious and aware tourism offering which benefits the travellers and the local communities. Some of its efforts focus on analyzing the industry in the Palestinian lands and occupied territories and identifying clear obstacles for the growth and sustainability of tourism which directly stem from the occupation and the restrictions imposed.
- **Palestinian Society of Tourist and Travel Agents**: PSTTA was established in 2008 and represents the private sector of travel and tourist agents. It aims to protect and advance the interests of all travel and tourist agencies in Palestine and promote integrity and competence in the sector. It also works towards increasing tourism awareness among local communities.
- **Network for Experimental Palestinian Tourism Organization**: NEPTO represents a group of independent non-profit organizations to advocate for responsible tourism which supports Palestinians and protects their heritage and the environment. It also works towards portraying a positive image of Palestine and supports growth and competitiveness in the sector.
- **Alternative Tourism Group**: ATG seeks to implement a tourism model which changes the narrative and focuses on the local community in order to achieve more sustainable tourism.

**Sustainability strategies**

In the context of a lack of regulation from a central government and the occupation, sustainable activities are promoted by private stakeholders and humanitarian enterprises, independently in their own capacity and jointly through the Code of Conduct for Tourism in the Holy Land, launched in 2008 by the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism (PIRT). This Code of Conduct contains guidelines for the development of a just tourism which benefits everyone involved. The document is the result of an effort in which representatives from the public, private, and non-governmental sectors of the Palestinian tourism industry intervened. Some PIRT partners are Holy Land Trust, Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies, Alternative Tourism Group, Network for Christian Organizations in Bethlehem, Joint Advocacy Initiative, Jerusalem Inter-Church Center, and Bethlehem University. The Code of Conduct reflects the partners’ common wish for more participation in tourism and for a fair distribution of the benefits it generates. It provides guidelines for visitors and hosts to ensure that the tourism experience is based on environmentally-friendly and responsible practices, protection of the natural

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resources and culture, direct contact with Palestinian citizens, fair wages, fair distribution of income amongst product manufacturers, providers, sellers and intermediaries, among other recommendations. It also encourages hotels, guest houses and restaurants to introduce environmentally-friendly principles to their operation.366

The United Nations Development Fund signed an agreement with Al-Quds University in 2013 with the objective of protecting and preserving the Palestinian cultural heritage in Al Quds’ Old City. The program is to fund and support the refurbishment and protection of the Old City and to improve conditions of its residents by renovating residence buildings and enhancing tourism services. It aims to achieve this through rehabilitation and revitalization of important buildings and complexes like Hammam al-Ayn and Hammam al-Shifa, al-Madrasa al-Kilanîyya and related housing units, among others. The program will also help to enhance capacity building and training in the fields of conservation, rehabilitation, and management of historic buildings and sites, and will create employment opportunities in these fields for young professionals.367

Other initiatives by organizations such as the Alternative Tourism Group, the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, and Eyewitness Palestine, very much focus on protecting Palestinian identity and culture, and promoting responsible and politically-aware tourism to provide a different narrative and bring social and economic justice to the occupied territories.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Collaboration among private stakeholders is key for the sustainability of tourism in Al Quds. The Jerusalem Tourism Cluster is a platform that brings together stakeholders and organizations directly or indirectly related to the tourism industry, including the commercial, cultural, religious, technological, and educational sectors, in order to create a successful and profitable scenario and enhance competitiveness through economic growth. It also advocates for protection and illustrates Palestinians’ distinctive identity in Al Quds. One of the Cluster’s objectives is to develop the concept of community-based tourism in Al Quds. This type of tourism emphasizes the need for the sector’s activities to clearly and positively impact and benefit the local community, particularly women - to include them through different institutions and programs into the management and decision-making processes of the sector in Al Quds. It attempts to defend and protect Al Quds’ Palestinian character and clearly ascribe the city’s tourism product to it. It focuses on capacity building and empowering local communities, with an emphasis on supporting women and integrating them into the tourism value chain.368

**Funding**

As mentioned, there is a lack of coordinated planning in the industry and sustainability is not regulated, so public funding is minimal. Foreign funding from international organizations has been used to support sustainable tourism activities in many instances. An example of this is the UNDP collaboration with Al Quds University to preserve Palestinian cultural heritage. The UNDP, in 2013, launched the aforementioned project of $2.4 million to help protect the

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Palestinian cultural heritage in the old city of Al Quds and to improve socio-economic conditions of its citizens through quality housing and tourism services.\textsuperscript{369} UNDP has also partnered with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities by signing a $34 million program aimed at rehabilitating public infrastructure specifically for culture and tourism. The program places special emphasis on East Al Quds and will contribute to develop site museums, water springs, and cultural landscape, among others.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Sustainability**

Most of Al Quds’ religious, historical, and cultural attractions are run by Israeli institutions. The standard indicators used, such as the number of domestic and international visitors, average expenditure, overnight stays, job creation, and contribution to GDP, are calculated through university and research and statistics centers that gather data from industry sources such as hotels and tour operators. However, Palestinian reports, including ‘Palestine in Figures 2017’ by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics include indicators for the West Bank but not the city of Al Quds. Facts and figures regarding the Old City are hard to calculate due to the monopoly of the Israeli government. The information available is from Israeli institutions such as the Jerusalem Institution for Policy Research.

**Lessons Learned**

The political and social circumstances of a destination condition it and directly affect its growth. The ongoing conflict in Palestine is the main obstacle to the industry and so decision makers should keep political factors in mind and consider them a priority in order to successfully develop tourism in Palestine. For tourism to be sustainable, restrictions have to be lifted to allow free traffic of tourists in and out of Al Quds.

The improvement of human resources through guide training programs, education, and language teaching has to be established in order to preserve Palestine’s historical, cultural, social, and religious heritage in the city of Al Quds and to protect it.

Palestinian institutions should develop clear strategies to drive and support Palestinians to engage in tourism development and protect their historical, archeological, and cultural sites. A culture of tourism should also be promoted, raising awareness amongst the local communities about the importance and potential impact of the industry in the international sphere regarding Palestine’s image, and to welcome international and domestic visitors to Al Quds and encourage growth.

3. OIC Member States vs. Global Best Practices Comparative Analysis

3.1. Sustainable Destination Management Parameters

In this chapter, global best practices across the core components of sustainable destination management are compared to select OIC member states in several key areas; regulatory environment, stakeholder engagement, sustainable tourism strategies, financing, and monitoring of sustainable destination development. Against each of these areas, we examine select best practice non-OIC countries, and provide examples for comparison from select OIC countries building upon the case studies presented earlier. While these case studies may not be a complete reflection of the norm, their distribution in terms of sustainable tourism practices and geography allows important conclusions to be drawn.

Figure 18: Sustainable Destination Management Parameters

![Sustainable Destination Management Parameters Diagram]

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

3.2. Parameter 1: Supportive Regulatory Environment

As mentioned earlier, DMOs are responsible for implementing sustainability policies and strategies in many areas as well as engaging, coordinating with and supporting stakeholders in the area of sustainable tourism. However, in most countries, a number of other government bodies, including government environmental agencies in many instances, are involved in developing sustainable tourism strategies. While various public, private, and non-governmental organizations are typically involved in sustainable destination development, the development and enforcement of sustainable tourism policies and regulations remain essentially a governmental responsibility. Governments have used a number of policy instruments to promote the adoption of sustainable practices in the tourism industry, including regulations setting specific sustainability targets such as maximum carrying capacities, land use planning regulations, environment impact assessment requirements, and environmental taxes and incentives.

In leading non-OIC countries, as the following table shows, several public, private and non-governmental entities cooperate in the area of sustainable tourism, each with a distinct well-defined
role. In many best practice countries, to ensure coordination between the various bodies, special umbrella organizations are established with key stakeholders from the tourism sector. In Denmark, the Danish National Tourism Forum has a chairman from the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs with members from Visit Denmark, Danish regions, the tourism industry, and tourism researchers.\textsuperscript{370}

In OIC countries, mainly government and, in some instances, non-governmental organizations, are involved in promoting sustainable tourism practices, however, the OIC countries case studies indicate an absence of umbrella organizations facilitating coordination as in the case of best practices countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Regulatory Environment – Select Leading Non-OIC Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Responsible Entities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denmark\textsuperscript{372}</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand\textsuperscript{373}</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{370} For more information, please refer to Denmark’s case study.

\textsuperscript{371} The scores are on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is defined as “very lax, among the worst in the world” and 7 is defined as “among the world’s most stringent”.

\textsuperscript{372} For more information, please refer to Denmark’s case study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Responsible Entities</th>
<th>National Plan Sustainability Focus</th>
<th>Sustainability Legislation Examples</th>
<th>Stringency &amp; Enforcement of environmental regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency &amp; Conservation Authority, Tourism Industry Association, Sustainable Business Council</td>
<td>natural resources including land use</td>
<td>The Act on the Assessment of Environmental Impacts sets guidelines for projects’ environmental impact assessments</td>
<td>Stringency Score: 6 Enforcement Score: 5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Germany**


Promotion of climate-friendly vacations, mobility and accommodation

Furthermore, based on the analysis of the stringency and enforcement of environmental regulations scores from the World Economic Forum’s 2017 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, OIC seem to be lagging behind best practice countries in both areas. The scores are on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is defined as “very lax, among the worst in the world” and 7 is defined as “among the world's most stringent.” Scores for best practice countries were above 5.5 in both categories, while the average score for the 33 OIC countries covered in the report was 3.5 in both categories. The highest performing OIC country was the United Arab Emirates with a score of 5.5 in both categories, while the lowest performing country was Yemen with a score of 1.7 on stringency of regulations and 1.8 on enforcement of regulations.

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### Table 10: Regulatory Environment – Select OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Main Responsible Entities</th>
<th>National Plan Sustainability Focus</th>
<th>Sustainability Legislation Examples</th>
<th>Stringency &amp; Enforcement of environmental regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan Tourism Board, The Natural Resources Authority</td>
<td>Environmental and archaeological protection</td>
<td>The Handcraft, Traditional, and Common Manufacturing, and Trading Bylaw provides guidelines for the protection of the Jordanian traditional and cultural heritage</td>
<td>Stringency Score: 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enforcement Score: 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Tourism Board</td>
<td>Sustainable use of natural resources and protection of wildlife, historical and cultural heritage</td>
<td>The Uganda Wildlife Bill provides guidelines for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife</td>
<td>Stringency Score: 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enforcement Score: 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment and Energy, Environmental Protection Agency,</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; preservation of the environment and coping with climate change</td>
<td>The “Regulation on the Protection and Conservation of Environment in the Tourism Industry” sets requirements for distance between developments and</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Supplementary notes:

376 All information in this table based on case study feedback unless otherwise mentioned.

377 The scores are on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is defined as "very lax, among the worst in the world" and 7 is defined as "among the world’s most stringent".
### Main Responsible Entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entities</th>
<th>National Plan Sustainability Focus</th>
<th>Sustainability Legislation Examples</th>
<th>Stringency &amp; Enforcement of environmental regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Maldives Association of Tourism, Maldives Tourism Promotion Board</td>
<td>coastal/vegetation lines, sewage and wastewater treatment, constructions percentage of island area, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oman</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Tourism, Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT), Ministry of Heritage &amp; Culture, Ministry of Environment &amp; Climate, Ministry of Manpower, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran),</td>
<td>Improving local community quality of life, protection of culture &amp; heritage, and preservation of natural resources</td>
<td>The New Executive Regulations of the Tourism Law by way of Ministerial Decision 39/2016 categorizes castles and forts as ‘Archaeological Sites,’ and makes them under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism.</td>
<td>Stringency Score: 5 Enforcement Score: 5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

### 3.3. Parameter 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Support

Formulating comprehensive long-term sustainable destination development plans requires cooperation and coordination among various public, private, and non-governmental entities as well as with local communities. The internalization of sustainability values and practices and the creation of a tourism culture invested in sustainability issues need the continuous and active encouragement of stakeholder engagement as well as support for capacity building. Being open to stakeholder ideas gathered through the various communication channels, from formal or informal meetings to surveys and other means and creating platforms to ensure continuous communication are essential for ensuring the support of stakeholders and their implementation of sustainable tourism strategies and practices.³⁷⁹

Effective stakeholder coordination can be facilitated through the existence of formal forums or organizations which combines membership from various public and private stakeholders. The success of adoption of sustainability practices is on the consultation and engagement of the various stakeholders in planning and implementation and on the provision of support for implementation of sustainable tourism strategies. The leading non-OIC country examples show a high level of formal engagement with industry stakeholders, with well-established formal organizations that allows for collaboration and coordination between the different stakeholders. Engagement and support initiatives also illustrate the commitment of the leading non-OIC countries to promoting sustainable tourism and encouraging the various tourism stakeholders to adopt sustainable tourism practices.

Table 11: Stakeholder Engagement - Select Leading Non-OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal organizations</th>
<th>Consultation Initiatives</th>
<th>Support Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>Danish National Tourism Forum has a chairman from the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs with members from Visit Denmark, Danish regions, the tourism industry, and tourism researchers</td>
<td>Danish National Tourism Forum receives continuous feedback and advice from the Danish Tourism Advisory Board, which has members from a wide range of stakeholders with different tourism interests</td>
<td>Within the framework of its Smart Tourism Strategy, Visit Denmark provided support to digitalize Danish tourism’s value-chains to increase the coordination and co-operation within the Danish tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
<td>The Standing Committee for the Promotion of Tourism in Italy is composed of private and public entities</td>
<td>During 2016, the national tourism industry and all its public and private stakeholders collaborated through a series of conferences and meetings to develop a new National Strategic Plan for Tourism for the period 2017-2022</td>
<td>In 2014, a tax credit system was announced by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage to support the restoration and upgrading of tourism structures to create more efficient and sustainable buildings as well as a 30% tax credit to support digitalization of tourism activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

OIC countries, based on the examples shown in the following table, may have some forms of formal structure that aligns the broader tourism industry with sustainability efforts, but falls short on the process of ongoing engagement and consultation – which in the strongest example presented, notably Denmark, is systematic and well supported through formal organizational structures.

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380 All information in this table based on case study feedback unless otherwise mentioned.
### Table 12: Stakeholder Engagement - Select OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal organizations</th>
<th>Consultation Initiatives</th>
<th>Support Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jordan</strong></td>
<td>The Jordan Tourism Board has members from the public sector and the tourism industry including airlines, hotel associations, tourist and travel agencies</td>
<td>With the collaboration of private tourism industry players, regulations were developed to boost tourism competitiveness and promote eco-friendly practices within the industry</td>
<td>Initiatives were undertaken to increase awareness amongst key stakeholders of the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism development in Jordan, such as the Community Awareness Program aiming to build awareness in the local community of the importance of protecting archeological resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uganda</strong></td>
<td>The Regional Tourism Clusters consists of public and private sector stakeholders. However, they do not hold regular meetings</td>
<td>Uganda Wildlife Authority conducts an annual stakeholders’ forum to disseminate information and encourage cooperation between various stakeholders. It also holds community meetings to increase awareness of the need for conservation in Protected Areas</td>
<td>Uganda Wildlife Authority implemented a revenue sharing scheme whereby 20% of entry fees to national parks is paid to local governments neighboring protected areas to support conservation and development projects and offset conservation costs incurred by neighboring communities. Revenue sharing funds is used to implement various community projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maldives</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>The Tourism Master Plan was developed through consultations with public and private sector stakeholders through meetings and stakeholder workshops.</td>
<td>Initiatives were undertaken to increase awareness of waste management issues, with funding and incentives provided to resorts to manage waste disposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oman</strong></td>
<td>The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Tourism (IMCT), consisting of top-level members from various ministries, is set to coordinate with government and industry bodies.</td>
<td>Omran consulted with stakeholders, including farmers, NGOs, hospitality industry, and local bodies in developing its programs.</td>
<td>Omran’s Zaree program provided skills training to women to help them get employment opportunities or start a business in the tourism sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DinarStandard Analysis*

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381 All components of table based on case study feedback unless otherwise mentioned.
3.4. Parameter 3: Effective Sustainable Tourism Strategies

As illustrated in the following diagram, destinations use various sustainability strategies to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism. These include strategies for increasing awareness of sustainability issues at the destination level, the protection of natural and cultural heritage assets, management of environmental impacts (e.g., use of non-renewable resources, pollution reduction and waste management), planning of future tourism development and activities, managing demand and seasonality effects, and ensuring community well-being and tourist satisfaction.

![Sustainable Tourism Strategies Diagram]

As the following table shows, the leading non-OIC country examples have robust and comprehensive initiatives with well-defined goals covering the various sustainable tourism strategies. New Zealand presents the strongest example in terms of protecting natural and cultural heritage through designating them as world heritage sites, with 28 Natural World Heritage Sites, and 120 Cultural World Heritage Sites. Both Denmark and Italy have community wellbeing elements incorporated into eco-certification, which are endorsed by destination management organizations, of hospitality establishments at their destination. In all examples, tourism sector players are encouraged through the use of incentives to adopt more sustainable practices.

Source: Dinar Standard Analysis
### Table 13: Sustainability Strategies - Select Leading Non-OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Increasing Awareness          | New Zealand | - Publishing guides for local communities to increase awareness of the need for protecting and restoring ecosystems,  
                                |           | - Publishing several “Sustainability Best Practice Guides” to promote sustainability practices among tourism businesses.                                                                                     |
|                               | Denmark   | The government has supported NGO activities in their activities to raise awareness about waste disposal at beaches and natural sites and to promote responsible choices among tourists. |
| Protection of Natural and     | New Zealand | - Designation of 28 Natural World Heritage Sites, and 120 Cultural World Heritage Sites,  
                                | Cultural Heritage382 |           | - Several regulations concerned with the protection of cultural heritage assets, including the Heritage Historic Places Act of 1993 and the National War Memorial Act of 1992 |
|                               | Denmark   | - Designation of 2 Natural World Heritage Sites, and 3 Cultural World Heritage Sites,  
                                |           |           | - The Baltic Sea Tourism Center, funded through the EU, is tasked with the protection of coastline, parks and other natural and cultural resources, and developing long-term, sustainable tourism strategies. |
|                               | Italy     | - Designation of 4 Natural World Heritage Sites, and 47 Cultural World Heritage Sites,  
                                |           |           | - An initiative, supported by the Ministry, focuses on the promotion of projects which offer a touristic product in which “tourists do not leave a footprint, rather they help towards sustainability”. |
| Managing Demand and Seasonality| Sweden    | In 2012, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth provided financial support to over 40 regional and local organizations to develop sustainable tourism through various initiatives aiming at extending the tourist season using tactics such as focusing on attracting tourists from various markets targeting their different holiday schedules.383 |
|                               | Italy     | The Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows into areas that are not recognized as tourist destinations with the objective of decongesting saturated areas and improving competitiveness by widening the product offer and establishing a more sustainable model. |
| Managing Environmental        | New Zealand | Several funds are dedicated to the promotion of sustainability practices and the conservation of the environment, including the |
| Impacts                       |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

382 Designation information based on data from UNESCO World Heritage Website.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Waste Levy and Waste Minimization Fund&quot; which supports initiatives to improve resource efficiency and recycle waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Green Key, endorsed by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, promotes environment-friendly practices in tourism businesses. The Green Key award is a leading standard of excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation within the tourism industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Copenhagen has also a comprehensive strategy and aims to become the first capital to be carbon-neutral by 2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
<td>- An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Tourism and the Italian electricity and gas distributor ENEL to promote, develop and improve electric infrastructure for sustainable touristic mobility, including charging stations throughout the major destinations, villages and roads. This will improve the offer quality and reduce noise and air pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- A tax credit system was introduced in 2015 for the renovation of tourism accommodation establishments, with particular focus on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. The tax credit covers between 30% and 65% of the cost and from 2018 also concerns the renewal of the structures most closely related to green tourism such as campsites and agritourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Community</td>
<td><strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
<td>Qualmark, New Zealand’s official tourism quality assurance system supported by the Government, includes elements to ensure local community wellbeing such as the provision of support to local community by sponsoring community events or community groups and charities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>The Green Key certification, endorsed by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, criteria include elements to ensure local community wellbeing such as the consumption of local products, the support of local businesses, decent employment, social responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
<td>The Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows to decongest saturated areas and thus reduce impact on local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Tourist</td>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
<td>Four-year initiative was launched in 2012 to improve hospitality services quality and destination’s quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>The LOCALHOOD program, initiated by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, aims to rejuvenate the tourism experience by introducing new products and creating an emotional connection to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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114
As the following table shows, while OIC country examples have launched initiatives covering all sustainability strategy areas, many of these initiatives are still emergent or in the process of development. Jordan seems to have the strongest initiatives in various areas due to the support of bilateral and international donors.

**Table 14: Sustainability Strategies - Select OIC Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Awareness</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>The Petra National Trust launched an awareness program for public school students ages 7-18 and teachers to create awareness of the value of culture and heritage to the daily lives of local communities, instill pride among youth in their heritage and build a new generation of cultural leaders among local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>The Uganda Wildlife Authority holds community awareness meetings to increase awareness of the importance of conservation in different regions specifically those neighboring protected areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Initiatives were undertaken to increase awareness of tourism industry stakeholders of the importance of waste management issues for sustainable tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Omran conducts employee energy awareness programs to highlight the importance of energy saving for sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage(^{385})</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Designation of 1 Natural World Heritage Sites and 5 Cultural World Heritage Sites, the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development in Jordan (BITS) Project, in collaboration with the UNDP, seeks to ensure that the consideration of biodiversity is a fundamental part of everyday planning and development for tourism in Jordan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Designation of 2 Natural World Heritage Sites and 1 Cultural World Heritage Sites, the Uganda Wildlife Authority monitors biodiversity in national parks and sustainable management of wildlife resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>1 site under consideration for designation as a Natural World Heritage Site, Initiatives to regulate waste disposal areas and encourage environmental conservation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{385}\) Designation information based on data from UNESCO World Heritage website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Destination</td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Designation of 5 Cultural World Heritage Sites, the New Executive Regulations of the Tourism Law by way of Ministerial Decision 39/2016 categorizes and protects castles and forts as ‘Archaeological Sites,’ by putting them under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Seasonality</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>The Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to boost marketing efforts and encourage tourism at secondary sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Uganda Tourism Board has focused on organizing regional signature events to attract domestic tourists during low seasons. These events include a world tourism day event, wildlife marathons and cycling, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>The government is encouraging product and activity diversification as a tool to attract tourists with various interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>The expansion of international and domestic flight options to different cities in Oman and the proposed rail network aim to increase traffic to destinations outside of the capital city. During the low season, domestic tourism is promoted through discounted hotel stays, holiday packages, and the sale of day passes to the country’s most coveted resorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Impacts</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>With support from the UNDP, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiques established a Green Tourism Unit, which regulates and enhances the adoption of good environmental practices in the tourism sector in Jordan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>The Uganda Wildlife Authority has plans to monitor tourism development and its impacts, especially in terms of waste management by requiring environmental impact studies and monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures. National park authorities work with local government officials to enforce Environmental Impact Assessments compliance. They monitor compliance with EIA mitigation measures with the assistance of the Planning and EIA Unit of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Specific regulations are in place setting requirements for future developments in terms of distance between developments and coastal/vegetation lines, sewage and wastewater treatment, constructions percentage of island area, etc. Initiative to achieve carbon neutrality for the country by 2020 by reducing electricity emissions by 80-90% through the use of solar panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Omran’s construction projects are designed to meet the criteria for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certification by the United States Green Building Council. Periodic sustainability reports are written in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3.1 guidelines for sustainable reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Community Wellbeing</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>The Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to increase the employment of women and youth working in the tourism sector,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Area</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Uganda Wildlife Authority has implemented a revenue sharing scheme whereby 20% of entry fees to national parks is paid to local governments authorities neighboring protected areas to support the implementation of various community projects, including building schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>The government introduced the guesthouse concept to both diversify product offerings and to benefit local communities. Only Maldivians were allowed to invest in guesthouses in certain areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>There are required percentages of employment for Omani nationals in various sectors. Omran’s Intajee program assists farmers in strengthening their market presence and positioning them as suppliers for major tourism developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>The Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to improve Jordan's tourism facilities and services to ensure tourist satisfaction and improve the country's competitiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Tourist</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Visitor exit surveys are conducted annually to establish the level of tourist satisfaction with their experience and enable the Uganda Tourism Board to monitor destination performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Visitor exit surveys are conducted to establish the level of tourist satisfaction. Dedication of a hotline for tourist complaints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>In the context of Omran’s Zaree program Omani women welcome tourists arriving at the Khasab Port in Musandam and adorn female tourists with traditional dress and henna providing them with a unique cultural experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

### 3.5. Parameter 4: Access to Funding

As discussed earlier in chapter 1, funding sources for sustainable tourism can be classified as of domestic or foreign origin. Domestic public sources include national and local governmental bodies and public financial institutions while domestic private sources include private financial institutions and domestic conservation organizations whose funding comes from private sources such as individuals, companies or foundations. Foreign sources of funding include bilateral, regional and international financial institutions and development organizations.
Both public and private domestic sources are used to fund sustainable tourism initiatives in OIC and leading non-OIC countries. However, it is worth noting that the ability of the private sector to finance sustainability initiatives is hindered in many OIC countries by the shortage of resources of tourism businesses and their inability to get loans due to either absence of collateral or scarcity of financial instruments to support sustainability initiatives. In terms of foreign funding, both OIC and Non-OIC countries have received international funding, however, while many OIC countries have received bilateral funding, leading non-OIC countries mainly received funding from regional organizations.

Table 15: Access to Funding – Select Leading Non-OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic sources</th>
<th>Foreign sources</th>
<th>Project Funding Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>The European Regional Development Fund provided funding for the &quot;Baltic Sea Tourism Center - Sustainable development structures for active tourism&quot; setting up an organization in the Baltic Region (covering Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Germany, and Lithuania) tasked with the protection of coastline, parks and other natural and cultural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>International</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>International</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>The UNWTO New Zealand's first Tourism Monitoring Observatory as part of its International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories to monitor the Economic, Environmental and Social impact of Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>International</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All information provided is based on case study findings unless otherwise mentioned.

UNWTO Website.
### Table 16: Access to Funding – Select OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Domestic sources</th>
<th>Foreign sources</th>
<th>Project Funding Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>The Tourism Adaptation Project is funded by both the UNDP and Maldives government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>The World Bank has funded the development of sustainable tourism plans for four districts in Western Uganda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>The Petra National Trust, targeting the protection and preservation of the archaeology, culture and nature of Petra, is funded by the Ministry of finance and various tourism industry players as well as bilateral donors and international organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>International</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omran’s Intajee project assists farmers in strengthening their market presence and positioning them as suppliers for major tourism developments through provision of greenhouses as well as training and crop selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DinarStandard Analysis*

### 3.6. Parameter 5: Monitoring Destination Sustainability

The use of indicators is essential for monitoring destination sustainability; it provides destinations with early warning signals as well as the means to measure pressures on the system such as water shortages, those that measure the biodiversity and socio-economic impact such deforestation. Indicators are also essential for measuring the impact of sustainable destination management interventions. Sustainable tourism indicators cover economic, socio-cultural, and environmental tourism impacts as well as sustainable destination management performance. The table below presents select sustainable tourism indicators from the UNWTO's Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations, the European Tourism Indicator System, and the Sustainable Tourism Index.

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388 All information provided is based on case study findings unless otherwise mentioned.
As the following table shows, leading best practices non-OIC countries have formal procedures in place for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability. The indicators used by these countries are internationally recognized and comprehensive; they cover economic, socio-cultural, and environmental tourism impacts.

Table 17: Monitoring Destination Sustainability – Select Leading Non-OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Tools</th>
<th>Areas measured by indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Sustainability monitoring using the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sustainability monitoring using the European Tourism Indicator System, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Indicators, and the German Sustainability Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Sustainability monitoring using the UNWTO’s Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations and the National Environmental Standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

The UNWTO’s Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations, the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Sustainable Tourism Index, and the EU’s European Tourism Indicator System.

All information provided is based on case study findings unless otherwise mentioned.


OIC countries, based on the examples shown in the following table, are currently focused on measuring the economic impacts of tourism and to some extent are measuring environmental impacts, however, they seem to lack formal procedures for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability. However, this seems to be changing in some destinations in light of the various initiatives and efforts that are being supported by both bilateral donors and international organizations.

Table 18: Monitoring Destination Sustainability – Select OIC Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Tools</th>
<th>Areas measured by indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jordan</strong></td>
<td>Economic impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the process of developing monitoring and evaluation tools and reporting system with the support of the UNDP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uganda</strong></td>
<td>Economic and Environmental impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring through the use of economic indicators as well as biodiversity indicators at national parks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maldives</strong></td>
<td>Economic impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the process of developing monitoring and evaluation tools and reporting system with the support of the UNWTO.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oman</strong></td>
<td>Economic, social and cultural, and environmental impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the process of developing a national tourism sustainability certification program that will integrate environmental and social/cultural sustainability in new and existing tourism projects, as well as a specialized Oman Observatory for Sustainable Tourism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

All information provided is based on case study findings unless otherwise mentioned.
4. Policy Recommendations for the OIC Member States

Prelude

There are two key issues in producing policy recommendations as an outcome of this report: (a) whether tourism – and at what scale – can ever be defined, in any meaningful way, as being ‘sustainable’ and, if so, (b) what does this imply by way of policy formulation for destinations, and for the OIC at large.

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the world economy generating more than US$ 7.5 trillion a year and supporting an estimated 1 in 10 jobs across the global economy. In recent years, tourism has accounted for the largest movement of people across the globe. But this comes at a cost: with an estimated 1.5 billion people travelling the world every year their consumption of natural resources, especially energy and water, is placing severe demands on the resources of many countries, particularly less rich countries experiencing a rise in activity as tourists seek ever-more exotic destinations.

In effect, the point will soon be reached – if it hasn’t been already – when every person in the world that can be a tourist, is a tourist. All this is having a major impact on what has been termed ‘the tourism ecology’. From this viewpoint, tourists and tourism facilitates are acting as organisms that interact with one another and the physical environment, creating a dynamic and complex system. Tourists and tourism facilitates are thus essential parts of the environment, not an addition to it: they are players, not spectators. This view suggests that any new event in the ecosystem will have an impact on the rest of the system, thus changing the state of equilibrium. Equilibrium – as in nature – is reached through ecological adaptation ... in this case either through a change (adaptation) in the tourism product, the physical environment, the market, or all three ... or a new equilibrium may not be reached, leading eventually to the extinction of the system and its replacement by another. The adoption of this perspective has profound implications for sustainable tourism across-the-board, including in the countries of the OIC.

A large part of the annual growth in tourism projected to, say, 2030 is expected to come from the fast-growing (and huge) economies of China and India, thus creating a very different tourism ecology to that which exists now, and which is currently fuelled by the established western economies of, predominantly, the EU, the USA, Japan, Australia and Canada. Recognising and adapting to this is the key challenge for tourism providers, managers and policy-makers in the coming years. How they respond will determine the well-being of much of the world’s cultural and natural heritage resources which stimulate and underpin most of tourism demand. Hence, because of its relative size and the global impact it makes, policies related to tourism’s sustainable future are essential for the well-being of the planet and the ecosystems that it supports. This is nothing less than a global concern, and it must be treated as such.

Over the years a huge amount of time, effort, research grants, conferences and meetings of world leaders have been focused on the idea, and the ideal, of promoting sustainable tourism projects and programmes. There is no doubt that tourism, when built upon principles of sustainable development, can – in theory at least – help facilitate inclusive growth, provide opportunities for

local economic development, reduce the often-felt divide between rural and urban areas and promote social integration. It can also help to raise awareness of cultural and environmental issues, part-finance the protection and management of protected areas and contribute to the preservation of biological diversity. As such, its potential to advance UNESCO’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been widely recognised, which includes UN Resolution A/RES/70/193 that designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. 397

Despite the many and obvious opportunities presented by this continually-growing sector, tourism faces a number of challenges stemming from the fact that it is a multi-level, highly fragmented activity often with competing policy objectives at both national and international levels. Moreover, it is subject to overarching factors over which it has, in and of itself, little or no control – climate change, marine plastic pollution, macro-economic conditions (fluctuating exchange rates, the cost of fuel, particularly oil), ever-changing global politics and tourists’ own perception of risk and personal safety. Added to this, tourism services are themselves evolving rapidly, particularly in response to the digitisation of the world economy, the application of advanced technologies and the development of specialised sectors such as eco-tourism, slow tourism and adventure tourism. Collectively, these factors underscore the complexity of the ‘tourism ecology’ and the need for thoughtful policies designed to orient and guide this sector towards a more sustainable future.

As a result, policies formulated to advance the future well-being of a place (or destination), its people and its ecology must be capable of withstanding rapidly-changing pressures. Because of this, sustainable tourism policies must necessarily be high-level and stand distinct from the strategies (national and international) which evolve from them to effect change on the ground.

In 2013, in recognition of the negative impacts that tourism, particularly packaged tourism, was having on some parts of the world, the UN’s World Tourism Organisation (WTO) responded with a campaign to ‘let travellers know how they can best benefit the people and places they visit’. The campaign had four hooks: (a) buy local, (b) respect local culture, (c) save energy and (d) protect heritage. Whilst laudable in themselves, they are open to question: (a) buying local depends on who’s doing the buying … the airline, the tour operator, the hotel chain?; (b) is respecting local culture the same as indigenous culture?; (c) getting to a destination uses a lot of energy (most of it non-renewable) as does the use of digital technologies when at the destination; (d) just being in a place may help to destroy it … infrastructure developments, visitor centres, the place’s sheer attractiveness can eventually lead to its demise.

Hence, it is not sufficient to produce policies for the sustainable use of resources in, say, a noted tourist area (a World Heritage Site, for example) whilst simultaneously engaging in the exploitation of non-renewable resources in another. Global agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (adopted on 12 December 2015) must be implemented through all-sector activity, tourism included, and at the highest levels.

Thus, whilst recognising that policies aimed at promoting sustainable tourism are just one part of any government’s responsibility to effectively and efficiently manage change, there is no doubt that – in theory at least – adopting and promoting comprehensive policies towards sustainable tourism management should, and indeed must, form a central plank of all sustainable destination management strategies in the OIC Member Countries.

government policy. By so doing, such an approach can help to reframe tourism growth to better spread the benefits, address inequalities and improve the resilience of economies. Long-term policies focused on promoting quality employment and job creation, skills development, entrepreneurship, innovation, effective investment, and integrated regional development, are central to achieving sustainable and inclusive tourism growth – growth that considers current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, and addresses the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Governments should thus strive to further develop integrated and coherent tourism policy responses that reflect the circumstances of individual countries and local communities, in pursuit of shared goals including providing customers with high quality, reliable and safe tourism experiences, increasing productivity and competitiveness (especially in SMEs), and protecting, managing and enhancing both physical and cultural landscapes.

To deliver these policies requires cross-sector support from the various enterprises involved in the promotion and delivery of tourism services, including the public sector (state, regional and local), private companies, the not-for-profit sector, educational and research institutions, and community initiatives. Identifying and coordinating the roles of such organisations must be a central policy concern if competing or counter-productive initiatives are to be avoided. This implies that sustainability issues need to be handled at the highest level within government, promoted at every opportunity and maintained over the long-term.

A compounding issue here is the way in which such policies are developed, by whom and for what purpose. Such issues relate to the role of the democratic process in developing whole-country economies and hence long-term sustainability in those economies. Whilst no demonstrable causal link between democracy and economic growth (measured by, for example, GDP) has been found, there is significant historical evidence that there is a relationship between sustained economic well-being and the democratic process. However, the issue is complicated because other factors are also at play such as political stability, the capacity of government to govern in a peaceful way, the ease-of-transition from one government to the next, and the role that religion plays in determining socio-scientific and cultural priorities and policies.

Of central importance here is the fact that policies for sustainable tourism need to operate over long periods of time. In fact, a sustainable economy is one that operates in perpetuity. Hence, political stability – whether through democratic or other means – is essential if the strategies those policies generate can be nurtured and allowed to bear fruit.

Hence, issues such as rapid social change, political instability or unrest, the recognition of the needs of minorities and the unfettered pursuit of dogma can all derail the best-intentioned policies and the best political initiatives. Having policies for sustainable tourism is just one aspect of having policies for a sustainable country that people want to be part of, contribute to and are willing to sustain.
When UNESCO’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development actually reaches 2030 the world will be a very different place. By some estimates (such as those of the UN World’s Tourism Organisation) the following may, just may, apply:\(^3^9^8^):\(^3^9^9^\)

- The majority of products will have become services – why own a car when you can hire one on demand?
- There will be a global price on carbon – fossil fuels are on the way out and unless alternatives are found - international travel (such as by long-haul flights) may well be reduced
- The fully-interactive digital world will be real – why go to Angkor Wat when you can experience it at home via AI?
- Whilst the dominance of the USA will be over, particularly economically, there will be a comeback of the notion of the nation-state: this could have profound implications for international treaties and global remedies to global problems, particularly as global online companies (especially those providing information and connectivity in real-time) will be even more dominant
- Two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities; they will then go on to create a world population in excess of 11 billion by 2100; nearly two-thirds of whom will live in poverty
- Africa will see a rise in population by over 100%; Europe’s will decline by 5%
- By 2050 Nigeria’s population will be larger than the USA’s
- By 2024 India will have the largest population in the world, outstripping that of China
- Arctic ice could be a memory; Antarctic ice merely a shadow
- Much of coastal Florida could be underwater, followed by many of the world’s great cities by 2100.

These are just some of the mega-challenges faced by the world as it tries to grapple with sustainability, and these changes will, in combination – if even half of them become real – have a major, irreparably long-lasting effect on the world, its people, their activities and their well-being. Of course, the world’s natural ecology will adapt and prosper as it has done for the last 4.2 billion years\(^3^9^9^): where there were once beaches there will be mangroves; close-to-sea freshwater lakes will become estuaries; deserts will re-green; species will become extinct, others will take their place.

The down-side is that since much of the world’s cultural history is to be found in cities vulnerable to sea-level rise (London, New York, Rome, Shanghai, Tokyo, Venice, Alexandria) as well as, for example some that are not (such as Miami) much of this will be lost irretrievably. The majority of the world’s greatest ancient cities, places, monuments and landscapes will be no more. In addition, many of the world’s most significant natural landscapes are also at risk (such as the Dead Sea as well as the glaciers that are the namesake of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park\(^4^0^0^)). The loss of such places will seriously impact the tourism sector, and the economies that currently depend upon them.

From this perspective, each OIC country striving to put in place sustainable tourism policies must get behind and support every international effort (whatever the perceived immediate

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political cost) in supporting action to safeguard the climate and – by so-doing – help to protect the very assets it hopes to use to attract tourists for sustainable economic purposes in the future. Now is not the time to be nationalistic or short-sighted. Issues such as transport (particularly by air), constant internet use, in-country movement and security need, of course, to be acknowledged, challenged and responded to, but these will always remain subservient to the global challenge.

Many of the policies relating to sustainability expressed by various OIC countries cover three main areas: inclusivity, opportunity and equality. In some OIC countries, at least one of these, sometimes all three, are potentially problematic. In order to create a truly sustainable future for tourism, all resources need to be engaged: men, women, the young, the old, the disabled, on equal terms – that is essentially what the sustainable agenda offers and what it means, and all countries need to embrace it in full.

Many countries all over the world pay lip-service to these issues. Women earn less for the same job in the UK and the USA as do men, access to the vast majority of archaeological sites is almost impossible in a wheelchair ... the list goes on.

The OIC countries can, through their avowed and published commitments to sustainable tourism initiatives take a principled world lead in all this. Sustainable tourism means sustainable people: equal access, equal rights, equal job prospects, equal political representation: this is the underpinning framework for a sustainable future, of which tourism is certainly a major part.

Some OIC countries may see this is a challenge. But as it is an underpinning aspect of sustainable tourism it will require change. Or not. Some countries may decide that the risks of engaging the whole population in sustainable tourism initiatives may be a step too far. In this case other social priorities will prevail.

**Policies and Strategies**

In the policy recommendations framework below, the sustainable destination management parameters introduced in Chapter 3 serve as the overarching parameters that govern the recommended strategies. Each of the six sustainable tourism strategies (increasing awareness, protection of natural and cultural heritage, etc), which were introduced in Chapter 1 are mapped against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the UNWTO’s Sustainable Tourism Goals.
The recommendations provided below for OIC member countries address both the overall sustainable destination management parameters as well as the sustainable tourism strategies. They also address recommendations at (a) the destination level, and (b) national level, and (c) regional/international level.

One consideration in implementing the recommendations is where countries fall within the following matrix that considers a country's dependence on tourism and its sustainability risk. The country examples provided within the matrix are based on considering the percentage of travel and tourism's contribution to the country's GDP, along with the percentage of government expenditure on travel and tourism, to determine the country's level of dependence on tourism. Countries' sustainability risk is determined based on their score on the stringency of environmental regulations along with their score on enforcement of those regulations. The scores and percentages are obtained from the World Economic Forum’s Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017. For example, in Gambia, travel and tourism contributes 8.4% to GDP and government expenditure on travel and tourism, represents almost 10% of government budget. Compare this to Pakistan, where travel and tourism contributes a mere 2.8% to GDP, and expenditure on travel and tourism represents 2% of the budget. In terms of sustainability risks, an example of a country with low risk is the UAE, which scored 5.5 on the stringency of environmental regulations, and 5.5 on enforcement of environmental regulation. Compare this to Yemen, which scored 1.7 on stringency of environmental regulations and 1.8 on enforcement of those regulations.

Source: DinarStandard Analysis
In the detailed policy recommendations charts to follow the quadrant most relevant to the recommendations provided is highlighted.

**Figure 23: Country Segmentation Chart**

- **High**
  - Highly dependent on tourism – low sustainability risk
  - E.g. UAE, Jordan, Gambia
  - E.g. Maldives, Lebanon, Egypt

- **Low**
  - Low dependence on tourism – low sustainability risk
  - E.g. Azerbaijan, Senegal, Oman
  - E.g. Kuwait, Pakistan, Yemen

**Source:** WEF Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 and DinarStandard Analysis

**Figure 24: Policy Recommendations Related to Each of the Sustainable Destination Management Parameters**

1. **Supportive Regulatory Environment**
   - Governments to establish and enforce policies that promote the adoption of sustainable tourism practices
   - Governments to impose sanctions and incentives conducive to sustainable tourism practices

2. **Stakeholder Engagement**
   - Establish an umbrella organization that encompasses government sectors, DMOs, tourism businesses to streamline sustainable tourism efforts
   - Form strategic alliances with airlines and other entities

3. **Effective Tourism Sustainability Strategies**
   - Apply for international funding for sustainable tourism projects
   - Establish regional organizations to support sustainable tourism efforts and provide funding
   - Facilitate green finance
   - Encourage private sector financing and investment in sustainable tourism

4. **Access to Financing Tools**
   - Monitor Performance
   - Translate and implement Agenda 2030 in a sustainable tourism context
   - Align science, policy, and capital in pursuit of sustainable tourism
   - Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for sustainability
   - Establish an OIC-level sustainable tourism monitoring system
   - DMOs to play a role in monitoring performance

**Source:** DinarStandard Analysis
Policy recommendations related to each of the sustainable destination management parameters:

1. **Supportive Regulatory Environment – National level**

   **Governments need to establish and enforce policies that promote the adoption of sustainable tourism practices:** These regulations should cover land use and zoning regulation, maximum carrying capacities, environmental protection, employee rights, tourists’ health and safety, the protection of local communities, the use of non-renewable resources and equal access.

   **Governments to impose sanctions and incentives conducive to sustainable tourism practices:** Sanctions should be imposed for non-compliance, and incentives (for example, tax cuts for use of renewable energy, energy efficient hotels, etc.) should be offered for compliance.

   For example, in New Zealand, the Resource Management Act sets national environmental standards for regulating the management of natural resources including land use. In Germany, the Act on the Assessment of Environmental Impacts sets guidelines for assessing the environmental impact of projects. Whereas in Jordan, the Handcraft, Traditional, and Common Manufacturing, and Trading Bylaw provides guidelines for the protection of the Jordanian traditional and cultural heritage. In Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Bill provides guidelines for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife.

2. **Stakeholder Engagement – Destination/national level**

   **Establish an umbrella organization that encompasses government sectors, DMOs, and tourism businesses to streamline sustainable tourism efforts:** Stakeholders need to be formally engaged through an umbrella organization that encourages membership from public and private stakeholders. The organization should seek to consult and engage stakeholders in various stages of planning and implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives, as well as encourage collaboration among stakeholders.

   For example, the Danish National Tourism Forum has a chairman from the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs and members from Visit Denmark, Danish regions, the tourism industry, as well as tourism researchers. In Italy, the Standing Committee for the Promotion of Tourism, collaborated through a series of conferences and meetings to develop a new National Strategic Plan for Tourism for the period 2017-2022.

   As highlighted in Chapter 3, while the OIC countries featured in this report have organizations that align the broader tourism industry with sustainability efforts, they fall short in the process of ongoing engagement and consultation.

   **Member Countries should consider forming strategic alliances with entities such as airlines:** Some aspects of tourism sustainability are outside the control of governments. Air travel for example results in devastating environmental impact, and there are steps that airlines that take to reduce its negative impact. Air New Zealand for example invested in new models of fuel-efficient aircrafts and is using biofuel for ground transportation in a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 15%. The airline also established the Air
New Zealand Environment Trust (ANZET), in partnership with other organizations, to support projects related to the conservation of biodiversity. Air New Zealand also sponsors projects related to environmental education, to help children understand the importance of protecting the cultural heritage of their region.  

3. Effective Tourism Sustainability Strategies

Strategies are discussed in detail in the next few pages, in the section pertaining to policy recommendations related to sustainable tourism strategies, and include: (1) Increasing awareness, (2) Protection of natural and cultural heritage, (3) Managing demand and seasonality, (4) Managing environmental impacts, (5) Ensuring community well-being, (6) Ensuring tourist satisfaction.


Apply for international funding for sustainable tourism projects: Several international organizations offer funding for projects related to sustainability and it would be wise to apply for funding for relevant projects.

In the Maldives, the Tourism Adaptation Project is funded by both the UNDP and Maldives government. In Uganda, the World Bank has funded the development of sustainable tourism plans for four districts in Western Uganda. While in Jordan, the Petra National Trust, which is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the archaeology, culture and nature of Petra, is funded by the Ministry of finance and various tourism industry players as well as bilateral donors and international organizations.

Establish regional organizations to support sustainable tourism efforts and provide funding: The European Commission, for example, provides funding to projects related to sustainable tourism. Similarly, a regional or OIC-wide organization can be dedicated to providing funding to support tourism sustainability projects in member countries.

An example of a regional organization from Europe that financed a regional sustainability project, is the European Regional Development Fund which provided funding to set up an organization in the Baltic Region (covering Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Germany, and Lithuania) tasked with the protection of the coastline, parks and other natural and cultural resources.

Facilitate Green Finance: Green finance refers to a range of innovative financial instruments that encourage green investments. This encourages more private sector capital to flow to sustainable projects than to non-sustainable projects. For example, Brazil requires that banks consider environmental and social risks when making loans. Examples of instruments include a green credit line that provides loans for conservation and emission reduction projects, green bonds, and crowdfunding.

For example, in France, green bonds were used by the French National Railway Company in 2017 to fund its sustainability strategies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the
consumption of natural resources. In Mexico, green bonds were used to finance the construction of the New Mexico City Airport. In Morocco, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in coordination with the state electricity organization of Morocco provided subsidized loans to support the use of solar water heating in hotels. In many OIC countries, lack of financing options hinders the private sector from developing sustainability initiatives. Having access to green finance will facilitate the development of sustainable tourism projects.

**Governments to encourage private sector financing and investment in sustainable tourism projects:** Governments can encourage the private sector to invest in sustainable projects through subsidies, green loans and by providing insurance for green assets.

5. **Monitoring Destination Sustainability – Destination/national/regional level**

**Monitor Current Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Perhaps the most important factor for achieving sustainable outcomes at the destination level is robust and independent monitoring of current practices on site. Since destinations will vary considerably, it is important that monitoring protocols are developed in context-specific and locally meaningful ways. This does not mean that 'anything goes' in terms of monitoring protocols, but it does acknowledge that destinations across OIC member states are dealing with a wide range of sustainable tourism challenges.

For example, the case study analysis clearly indicates that the primary threat facing the Maldives is sea-level rise due to climate change. While Uganda will also be affected by climate change, the impacts will differ from those faced by the Maldives. Thus, and obviously, destinations in the Maldives and Uganda will need monitoring protocols that reflect their specific contexts.

In recent years, significant advances in the IT sector, coupled with the application of Business Intelligence to tourism destinations, has yielded real-time, big data decision support tools for destination managers. Such tools represent the next generation in destination performance monitoring across a range of indicators. Such tools have been built on a number of the indicator protocols referenced earlier in this report.

The leading winter alpine destination of Åre (Sweden) developed and pilot tested one such platform that initially focused on the customer experience. The platform was then commercialised and is now available for purchase by destinations on the open, global market. It is anticipated that such platforms will soon integrate sustainable tourism dimensions. Destination managers will need to become proficient in the use of such tools and link them to a range of decision making that includes sourcing, infrastructure and experience offers.

Regardless of which monitoring tool is used, every case study presented in this report employed a form of monitoring to assess and understand its current performance in terms

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of sustainable tourism. Monitoring forms the backbone of informed decision making when it comes to sustainable tourism and destination development.

**Translate and Implement Agenda 2030 in a Sustainable Tourism Context:** This is self-evident and one of the roles that the country-wide advisory and monitory body, proposed above to monitor performance, can be given real meaning.

**Align Science, Policy and Capital in Pursuit of Sustainable Tourism:** Sustainable tourism policies need to work at all levels across society, including those of academics, entrepreneurs and social policy planers. Creating and sustaining formal ways in which these sectors can work collaboratively is an important first step which can be made through, for example, the establishment of country-wide advisory and monitoring bodies whose primary purpose is to assess and provide advice on all whole-of-government activity as it relates to tourism, with the objective of qualifying policy decisions to assist short-term, sustainable goals supported by thorough and on-going scientific research activities.

**Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sustainability:** The OIC should take the lead in creating and producing a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sustainability for quick and easy use by its Members so that cross-country comparison can be made. The full range of such indicators may be relevant to some countries, with only a few for others. This is no matter since the aim is to assimilate valid and reliable data from as broad a cross-section of Members as possible.

**Establish an OIC-level sustainable tourism monitoring system:** Every member country needs to determine its position regarding its overall tourism climate based on where it sits in destination life cycle models, what its tourism resources are and what its total tourism budget it. This involves an on-going process of acquiring valid and reliable data across these sectors in ways that, ideally, lead to cross-country comparisons.

Hence, one policy activity for the OIC should be aimed at creating standard, generic models that each member country can complete. These should then be completed on an annual basis with all relevant data stored centrally by the OIC as a formal service to its members. In this way, trends can be analyzed, countries can inspect their position relative to others and can make decisions for future action based on comparisons with others perhaps further along the life cycle from which long-term sustainability can be inferred.

Every member country needs to formally assess (perhaps rank) its natural and cultural resources to a model produced by the OIC for use for its members. This will enable cross-country comparisons to be made as well as instigating a continual (annual) process of resource monitoring and re-grading. In this way each country can see quickly where remedial action is needed to protect vulnerable areas and where additional resources are required to uplift poor areas.

The OIC can assist this policy area creating standard, generic models that each member country can complete. All relevant data can be stored centrally by the OIC as a formal service to its members. In this way, trends can be analysed, countries can inspect their position relative to others and can make decisions for future action based on comparisons
with others. In addition, a similar process should apply to all non-tangible assets and activities such as festivals, events and special programmes.

This last could be achieved by the OIC members agreeing a model of quality standards, applicable at varying scales and complexity as the occasion demands, by which annual data can be collected as per the above. Water usage per visitor day would be a useful indicator, particularly in countries that are traditionally, or that are now, water-poor.

The above recommendations require joint working and the sharing of information and data. No doubt some countries will be wary of this, whilst others may well engage more freely.

If the OIC is to truly benefit its members, then as many as possible need to be involved to improve the quality of the information and hence the decisions that can be based on it.

**DMOs to play a role in monitoring performance**: Many countries have DMOs as public-private partnerships with a Board including the relevant stakeholders and is responsible for destination branding and promotion. The DMO roles should be widened to encompass a sustainability monitoring role, which is separate from its marketing role. They should also monitor quality standards in terms of sustainable service delivery. DMOs should be assigned sustainability-related indicators, to which they are held accountable.

**Figure 25: Policy Recommendations Related to Each of the Sustainable Tourism Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable Tourism Strategies</th>
<th>Policy Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increasing Awareness</td>
<td>- Conduct local media campaigns to increase local community as well as tourist awareness of tourism sustainability issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage | - Seek to list natural and historical heritage sites on UNESCO’S World Heritage List  
- Assign adequate resources to sustainable development efforts  
- Issue regulation to protect cultural and natural heritage assets  
- Establish multilateral organizations charged with the protection of shared natural or cultural heritage sites  
- Protect biodiversity |
| 3. Managing Demand and Seasonality | - Develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices |
| 4. Managing Environmental Impacts | - Embrace the Paris Climate Agreement |
| 5. Ensuring Community Well-being | - Build capacity at the community level  
- Create a culture of sustainable entrepreneurship |
| 6. Ensuring Tourist Satisfaction | - Take measures to ensure tourist satisfaction, by providing innovative products services, ensuring a quality experience, and monitoring tourist satisfaction |

*Source: DinarStandard Analysis*
Policy recommendations related to each of the sustainable tourism strategies:

1. **Increasing Awareness – Destination/national level**

   **Conduct local media campaigns:** Increase local community as well as tourist awareness of tourism sustainability issues through a series of integrated media campaigns utilizing a combination of media channels, including social media, print media, and outdoor advertising, tailored to your targeted segments.

   For example, South Africa’s DMO launched a campaign to raise awareness about Cape town’s water crisis and encourage Cape Town citizens to change their behaviors with regards to water consumption.\(^{406}\) New Zealand on the other hand has published several guides for local communities to increase their awareness of the need for protecting and restoring the country’s ecosystems. It has also published several sustainability best practice guides to promote sustainability practices among tourism businesses.

   In addition to media campaigns, an effective way to increase the awareness of tourists about sustainability, is to train tour guides in sustainable tourism practices. This can be done through training programs and industry seminars.

   An NGO in Kenya that focuses on promoting sustainable tourism practices, offers a mentorship program for university students, to educate future tourism policymakers and industry players on the impact of tourism and how to implement sustainable practices. Another program run by the NGO provides training and coaching to professionals working in tourism. These individuals are motivated to implement sustainable tourism practices in their businesses in order to have a competitive edge, as tourists are increasingly enquiring about businesses’ sustainability practices.\(^{407}\)

   In Italy, in collaboration with regional and autonomous administrations, the Ministry launched the Cammini d’Italia atlas and website, in order to offer travelers and tourists a real intermodal infrastructure of green roads where they can choose the travel Italy on foot, by bike, on horseback or with other forms of sustainable mobility.

   In Jordan, the Petra National Trust launched an awareness program for public school students ages 7-18 and teachers to create awareness of the value of culture and heritage to the daily lives of local communities, instill pride among youth in their heritage and build a new generation of cultural leaders among local communities.

   In Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority holds community awareness meetings to increase awareness of the importance of conservation in different regions specifically those neighboring protected areas to raise the awareness as well as motivate the private sector to implement sustainable tourism practices, communicate benefits to them in terms of competitiveness, customer retention and operational efficiencies.

2. **Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage – Destination/national/regional level**

   **Seek to list natural and historical heritage sites on UNESCO’S World Heritage List:** This will enlist the support of UNESCO in safeguarding the sites through technical

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\(^{407}\) Interview with Founder of Sustainable Travel and Tourism Agenda in Kenya.
assistance, and professional training, in addition to providing emergency assistance in case of immediate danger. Italy for example has four designated natural World Heritage sites, and 47 cultural World Heritage sites. Jordan has one designated natural World Heritage site and five cultural World Heritage sites. In general, the OIC countries have much lower numbers of listed natural and historical World Heritage sites. With 15 listed historic World Heritage sites, Turkey has the highest number of historic World Heritage sites listed among the OIC countries. Compare this to Germany, which has 38 World Heritage cultural sites, and Mexico, which has 28.

**Assign adequate resources to sustainable development efforts.** Protected areas can further develop alternative revenue streams from entry fees (a portion of entry fees for cultural heritage sites can be allocated to its protection), and private sector funding.

In Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service, which manages a number of national parks, uses revenue generated from visitors to the park to finance its biodiversity and conservation activities. An example of this is the Lake Nakuru where concession fees from the lease of two lodges and entrance fees from visitors provide financing for conservation activities.

**Issue regulation to protect cultural and natural heritage assets:** For example, New Zealand has several regulations in place to protect cultural heritage assets, including the Heritage Historic Places Act of 1993 and the National War Memorial Act of 1992.

**Establish multilateral organizations charged with the protection of shared natural or cultural heritage sites:** For example, the Baltic Sea Tourism Center – Sustainable Development Structures for Active Tourism is a multilateral organization involving Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Sweden, that aims to develop and protect tourism in the Baltic region and is funded by the EU.

**Protect biodiversity:** In New Zealand, the Resource Management Act of 1991, published by the Ministry of Environment, provides guidelines for managing the country’s environment and natural resources and sets out “national environmental standards” in several areas, including biodiversity, the coastal environment and land use planning.

In Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority monitors biodiversity in national parks and sustainable management of wildlife resources. In Jordan, the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Tourism Sector Development in Jordan (BITS) Project, in collaboration with the UNDP, seeks to ensure that the consideration of biodiversity is a fundamental part of everyday planning and development for tourism in Jordan.

3. **Managing Demand and Seasonality – Destination level**

**Develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices:** Sustainable tourism involves difficult choices about how much is too much. Time and again, the case studies in this report highlight how uncontrolled or unmanaged tourism can completely overrun and significantly degrade single destinations, and in some cases, entire cities or countries.

The case study on Italy is instructive, particularly in the specific instances of Venice and Rome. These observations are reinforced by the benchmarking analysis conducted in Chapter 3 (OIC Member States versus Global Best Practices). In virtually every category that deals with governance and regulatory structures, OIC Member States are performing
less well compared to the Global Best Practice examples at a national level. This implies a substantial ‘gap in governance’, whereby destinations are often left to sort things out on their own. In the case of Venice and Barcelona, there is a growing discourse that tourism has gone too far in terms of a wide range of impacts including crowding, the impacts of platform economies such as Airbnb, and the wide range of associated environmental impacts.

To address these issues, destinations need to be proactive in working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop effective carrying capacity policies and practices, which includes monitoring (as described above).

The main point is that destinations need to pay careful attention to questions of carrying capacity. Failure to do so almost always results in what Elizabeth Becker has termed “Overbooked”. This remains one of the primary challenges for sustainable tourism.

A number of approaches have been discussed in previous sections of this report, and the specific approach should be determined by the needs of a particular destination. For example in Sweden, regional and local organizations implemented measures to extend the tourist season, including for example, focusing on attracting tourists from various markets targeting their different holiday schedules. In Italy, The Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows into areas that are not recognized as tourist destinations with the objective of decongesting saturated areas and improving competitiveness by widening the product offer and establishing a more sustainable model.

Uganda Tourism Board has focused on organizing regional signature events to attract domestic tourists during low seasons. These events include a world tourism day event, wildlife marathons and cycling, etc. In Jordan, the Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to boost marketing efforts and encourage tourism at secondary sites.

4. Managing Environmental Impacts – National Level

Embrace the Paris Climate Agreement: It is imperative that governments commit to implementing the Paris Climate Agreement that aims to combat climate change, as well as increase the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

In New Zealand, several funds are dedicated to the promotion of sustainability practices and the conservation of the environment, including the “Waste Levy and Waste Minimization Fund” which supports initiatives to improve resource efficiency and recycle waste.

In Italy, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Tourism and the Italian electricity and gas distributor ENEL to promote, develop and improve electric infrastructure for sustainable touristic mobility, including charging stations throughout the major destinations, villages and roads. This aims to reduce noise and air pollution. In addition, a tax credit system was introduced in 2015 for the renovation of tourism accommodation establishments, with particular focus on energy efficiency and anti-seismic measures. The tax credit covers between 30% and 65% of the cost and from 2018...

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also concerns the renewal of the structures most closely related to green tourism such as campsites and agritourism.

In Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority has plans to monitor tourism development and its impacts, especially in terms of waste management, by requiring environmental impact studies and monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures. National park authorities work with local government officials to enforce Environmental Impact Assessments compliance. They monitor compliance with EIA mitigation measures with the assistance of the Planning and EIA Unit of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

In the Maldives, regulations are in place that set requirements for future developments in terms of distance between developments and coastal/vegetation lines, sewage and wastewater treatment, construction percentage of island area, etc. Furthermore, there is an initiative to achieve carbon neutrality for the country by 2020 by reducing electricity emissions by 80-90% through the use of solar panels.

5. Ensuring Community Wellbeing – Destination/national level

Build Capacity at the Community Level: The case studies of Al-Quds (Palestine) and Copenhagen (Denmark) highlight the importance of capacity building at the community level in order to work towards sustainable tourism in an effective manner.

There is perhaps no city in the world with a more iconic and significant position than Al-Quds/Jerusalem. Despite its obvious potential, there is little capacity at the community level to address sustainability issues in an equitable manner for all the city's residents. This is an outcome of the history of conflict associated with the city and the intentional disenfranchisement of its Palestinian residents. Copenhagen, by contrast, was able to undertake an integrated, community-based tourism development strategy. This strategy emphasized community well-being as much as the ecological and economic components associated with sustainable tourism.

It is precisely this strategy that has enabled Copenhagen to avoid many of the challenges currently experienced by other cities. The residents of Copenhagen were given voice to help shape their future.

There is no specific policy or strategy for capacity building and community engagement that will work at every destination. And even the most experienced community liaisons will fail at times. This work is often the most challenging because of all the different local interests. But it is essential, and a necessary component of any long-term, sustainable tourism initiative. The key here is establishing and nourishing a meaningful relationship between the destination planners/developers and the local community. This could be an advantage to both: local produce can be sold at a premium whilst giving employment to local farmers.

In New Zealand, Qualmark, the country's official tourism quality assurance system supported by the Government, includes elements to ensure local community wellbeing such as the provision of support to the local community by sponsoring community events or community groups and charities. In Denmark, the Green Key certification, endorsed by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, criteria include elements to ensure local community wellbeing such as the consumption of local products, the support of local businesses,
decent employment, and social responsibility. Whereas, in Italy, the Tourism Strategic Plan aims to better distribute visitor flows to decongest saturated areas and thus reduce impact on local communities.

In Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority has implemented a revenue sharing scheme whereby 20% of entry fees to national parks is paid to local government authorities neighboring protected areas to support the implementation of various community projects, including building schools. In the Maldives, the government introduced the guesthouse concept to both diversify product offerings and to benefit local communities. Only Maldivians were allowed to invest in guesthouses in certain areas. Whereas in Jordan, the Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to increase the employment of women and youth working in the tourism sector.

Create a Culture of Sustainable Entrepreneurship: The importance of retaining as much money in the local economy as a result of tourism activity should not be overlooked. As with the above, the key is enlisting and enhancing the support of local enterprises in the delivery of services. The role of local-to-place businesses, and their capacity to change quickly as circumstances alter, will do much to help build capacity, sustain local employment and ensure that benefit remains with those people responsible for the maintenance of the local tourism environment over the long term. Cruise ships come and go; their financial impact needs to be retained in the local economy as far as possible.

One way of attempting to create a culture of sustainable entrepreneurship is the use of taxation to promote businesses that employ, retain and encourage local employment, and that buy local services and goods from sustainable sources. This could be seen to be, in effect, as a government subsidy for responsible behaviour in the sector.

6. Ensuring Tourist Satisfaction – Destination Level

Take measures to ensure tourist satisfaction: Providing innovative products and services, ensuring a quality experience, and continually monitoring tourist satisfaction and taking corrective measures when needed, are some of the ways to ensure tourist satisfaction.

In Denmark, the LOCALHOOD program, initiated by the DMO Wonderful Copenhagen, aims to rejuvenate the tourism experience by introducing new products and creating an emotional connection to the Copenhagen brand through content to ensure higher levels of tourist satisfaction. In Sweden, a four-year initiative was launched in 2012 to improve the quality of hospitality services as well as the overall quality of the destination. 409

In Jordan, the Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, with funding from USAID, seeks to improve Jordan’s tourism facilities and services to ensure tourist satisfaction and improve the country’s competitiveness. In Uganda, visitor exit surveys are conducted annually to establish the level of tourist satisfaction with their experience and enable the Uganda Tourism Board to monitor destination performance. Similarly, in the Maldives, visitor exist surveys are conducted, and a dedicated hotline for tourist complaints is provided.

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Concluding Remarks

Sustainable tourism is fundamentally separate from destination development. Sustainable tourism is a *process* based on a set of interlocking principles ... and one that the world has yet to get right across all spheres, all processes and in all countries... whilst the latter is place-specific. Thus, the former is essentially strategic, the latter tactical.

At one level, producing sustainable tourism policies for the OIC countries is very straightforward. Indeed, the vast majority of countries around the world have them. The key requirement is to affect the means by which these high-level policies can be implemented on the ground. And this requires each country to sign up and do its part.

This also means that such policies need to be embraced not just at the destination and government levels, but internationally. This requires political will and determination. It also demands that the governments involved will be around to implement their policies – hence, stability is key: stability in purpose, in will and in delivery.

In all this the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation can take the lead. No other world organisation is doing so. Embracing – and implementing – sustainable tourism across the OIC would be a first and would set challenges for others to follow.
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