



# Policy Statement - Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

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We, the Ministers and other Representatives of OECD Members, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Lithuania, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), United Nations Environment, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), met on 2-3 October 2017 on the occasion of the OECD High Level Meeting on Tourism, under the Chairmanship of Greece.

The purpose of the meeting was to mark the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Tourism Committee and support the future policy agenda of OECD Member and Partners, drawing attention to the major advances made in the implementation of effective tourism policies and programmes, and facilitating open discussions about long term objectives for sustainable and inclusive tourism growth and development.

### **Tourism, an engine for economic, sustainable and inclusive growth**

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world economy and the economic achievements of tourism are significant. Tourism plays a key role in global economic activity, job creation, export revenue and domestic value added, and directly contributes on average in the OECD area 4.1% of GDP, 5.9% of employment and 21.3% of service exports.

Despite the obvious opportunities presented by the expected growth trajectory, tourism faces a range of challenges, in particular: (i) the complexity of tourism policy development due to its cross-cutting, multi-level, and fragmented nature, and competing policy priorities and budgetary constraints; (ii) the impact of external factors on tourism, including macro-economic conditions, exchange rates, safety and security, and natural disasters; (iii) the global shift to a resource-efficient economy; and iv) the continued transformation of tourism services linked with emerging technologies and digitalisation of the economy.

Tourism, when built upon broad stakeholder engagement and sustainable development principles, can contribute to more inclusive growth through the provision of employment and economic development opportunities in both urban and rural areas, and promote social integration. Tourism can also raise awareness of cultural and environmental values, and help finance the protection and management of protected areas, and the preservation of biological diversity. In recognition of tourism's potential to advance the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2017 was declared International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

### **Fostering a whole-of-government policy approach**

Moving towards coherent and comprehensive approaches to tourism policy making, will help countries to reframe tourism growth to better spread the benefits, address inequalities and improve the resilience of economies. Long-term strategies and policies focused on promoting quality employment and job creation, skills development, entrepreneurship, innovation, effective investment, and integrated regional development, are integral to achieving sustainable and inclusive tourism growth – growth that takes into account current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, and addresses the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Governments should 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 to: i) provide consumers with access to high quality, reliable and safe tourism experiences; ii) increase productivity in the tourism sector, and particularly among SMEs; iii) protect, manage and enhance

natural and cultural resources; iv) improve competitiveness; and, v) promote inclusive growth and development within and across countries.

We agree that for whole-of-government policy responses to be effective, they should, as appropriate:

- Take into account that tourism is not simply the preserve of central governments, but encompasses all levels of government, where different mandates and levels of autonomy apply in different countries;
- Have the support and leadership of policy makers, and adopt a medium- to long-term focus;
- Clearly identify the roles, functions, and interactions of key public and private sector stakeholders and bring them together in an effective manner;
- Recognise the value of strong dialogue between government, industry, and civil society (including social partners and academic institutions) in the development, implementation and monitoring phases;
- Fully consider the trade-offs and complementarities with related policy areas, including transport, environment, culture, security, education, agriculture, new technologies, digital transformation, and wider economic policy;
- Identify win-win solutions that deliver stability for industry and promote economic growth, quality jobs, and prosperity for countries and regions;
- Promote environmentally sustainable growth and support country efforts to meet national and international commitments;
- Encourage tourism development and the creation of added value based on identified comparative advantages, diverse high quality tourism offerings, and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources;
- Use tourism as an engine for inclusive growth, to create quality jobs, business and regional development opportunities, mitigate the negative impacts on local communities, and better spread the benefits to all people and territories.

We note that in-depth analyses of megatrends may better enable policy makers to bring currently unforeseen and emerging issues onto the strategic policy agenda, develop potential scenarios and policy responses, and better assist public and private actors to capitalise on opportunities and challenges as they arise.

We agree that in order to develop a forward-looking agenda for the tourism sector, governments at all levels would benefit from developing, as appropriate, comprehensive long-term plans. This provides the consistency and certainty the tourism industry requires, and creates a framework for sustainable and inclusive growth.

We should strive to, when appropriate, mobilise investment, to stimulate growth and maximise the environmental, economic and social returns generated by tourism. Attracting tourism investment is a highly competitive process in many countries, given tourism's potential to contribute to economic development and need for quality infrastructure, combined with constrained public budgets and a shortage of investment capital.

We agree that the nature of investment, the infrastructure it creates and the tourism flows it supports create economic, environmental and social opportunities and challenges. Active policies and programs can serve to increase the quality and effectiveness of investment in tourism, in order to generate value,

enhance attractiveness and competitiveness, support SMEs and local development, and manage growing demand in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

We welcome the OECD work currently underway promoting a whole-of-government approach to tourism, analysing the policy implications of megatrends for tourism and examining effective policy approaches to enhance the quality and sustainability of tourism investment.

### **Policy areas for consideration for future work by the Tourism Committee**

We encourage the Tourism Committee, when planning its future work programme according to OECD rules and procedures, to consider the following areas:

- Develop a better understanding of tourism's contribution to well-being and inclusive growth, and provide governments with coherent policy advice on how to deliver a fairer distribution of benefits to society as a whole.
- Continue to work with governments and other international organisations to identify and share effective approaches to delivering integrated policy responses that promote sustainable and inclusive tourism growth.
- Enhance dialogue with the private sector, to better incorporate the essential perspective of industry in the development and implementation of tourism policy.
- Support the development of innovative tourism policies that contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- Contribute to the development of policies and programs to spread the benefits of tourism to regions and local communities.
- Work with governments to provide an environment to encourage the creation and growth of small-scale tourism businesses, stimulate innovative product development, generate quality employment, support local communities, and integrate SMEs into global value chains.
- Work with governments and other relevant international organisations to further improve the quality and accessibility of tourism statistics, strengthen the evidence base, enhance policy and programme evaluation methodologies, and more effectively demonstrate the economic value of tourism to decision makers, in a timely and robust manner.

We call on the OECD to continue to provide us with strong evidence, innovative analysis and advice to assist us in our efforts to develop tourism policies and programs that are evidence-based and people-centred, and address challenges as they emerge.

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