

MODULE 4

Links between the Tourism Sector and the SDGs



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Tourism & the SDGs

Module 4 embarks on an insightful journey, exploring the symbiotic relationship between the Tourism Sector and the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

You will learn how tourism can significantly contribute to economic growth, the promotion of environmental sustainability and cultural preservation among other topics.

The module equips educators and learners in the THL sectors with the knowledge and tools necessary for fostering a more sustainable and equitable future.

01 Poverty Alleviation & Inclusive Development

02 Decent Work & Economic Growth

03 Environmental Sustainability

04 Cultural Preservation and Promotion

05 Development & Access to Basic Services

06 Education, Awareness & Sustainable Practices

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What are the SDGs?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global collection of 17 interlinked goals designed to be a *"blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all"* by 2030.

Set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, these goals cover a broad range of social, economic, and environmental development issues.

The SDGs are intended to be achieved by all countries, and they aim to address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.



Why Women Leadership matters!!

According to [UNIDO](#) Women entrepreneurs are active agents of change to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and investing in women entrepreneurs is smart for achieving social and environmental objectives. To successfully counter the climate crisis, we need to fully tap into all human potential – including that of women.

[Studies](#) further suggest that women entrepreneurs show higher levels of social and environmental orientation than their male counterparts. [UNIDO research](#) suggests that women entrepreneurs are more inclined to set up and expand their businesses in green industries than in conventional industries



Strengthening women entrepreneurs is a human right, and an economic and environmental imperative

- UNIDO





01

Poverty
Alleviation &
Inclusive
Development
(SDG 1 & 10)



Tourism's Role in Poverty Alleviation – SDG 1

1 NO POVERTY



Job Creation:



THL sectors are significant employers, especially in developing regions, and for women & young people, who are typically more vulnerable to poverty, thereby reducing poverty and supporting more inclusive economic growth.

Income Generator:

Tourism boosts and empowers local economies by generating income through services and products offered to tourists, thus contributing to poverty alleviation.

Community Development:



Profits and taxes generated from THL businesses often fund community projects and infrastructure, improving living conditions and reducing poverty at a local level.



Tourism's Role in Reduced Inequalities – SDG 10



Diverse Employment Opportunities:

The THL sectors provide job opportunities for all, including marginalised and underrepresented groups (women, migrants & youth), promoting workforce diversity and equality



Skill Development and Training:

These sectors often offer training programs that help in skill development for individuals who may not have access to formal education, aiding in reducing inequalities



Income Redistribution:

Revenue/taxes generated from tourism can be redistributed to poorer communities, contributing to a more equitable income distribution



Accessibility for All:

The THL sectors are increasingly focusing on accessible tourism, ensuring that travel & leisure facilities are accessible to those with disabilities, thus promoting inclusivity



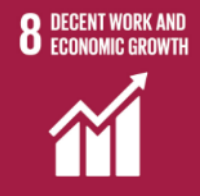


02

Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8)



Tourism's Role in Decent Work & Economic Growth – SDG 8



Job Creation: The THL sectors are significant job creators, both **directly** within the industry and **indirectly** through supply chains and stimulated activities in related areas.

Decent Employment Opportunities: These sectors offer a variety of employment opportunities, **including entry-level, part-time, and seasonal jobs**, which are crucial for young people, students, and others entering the workforce.

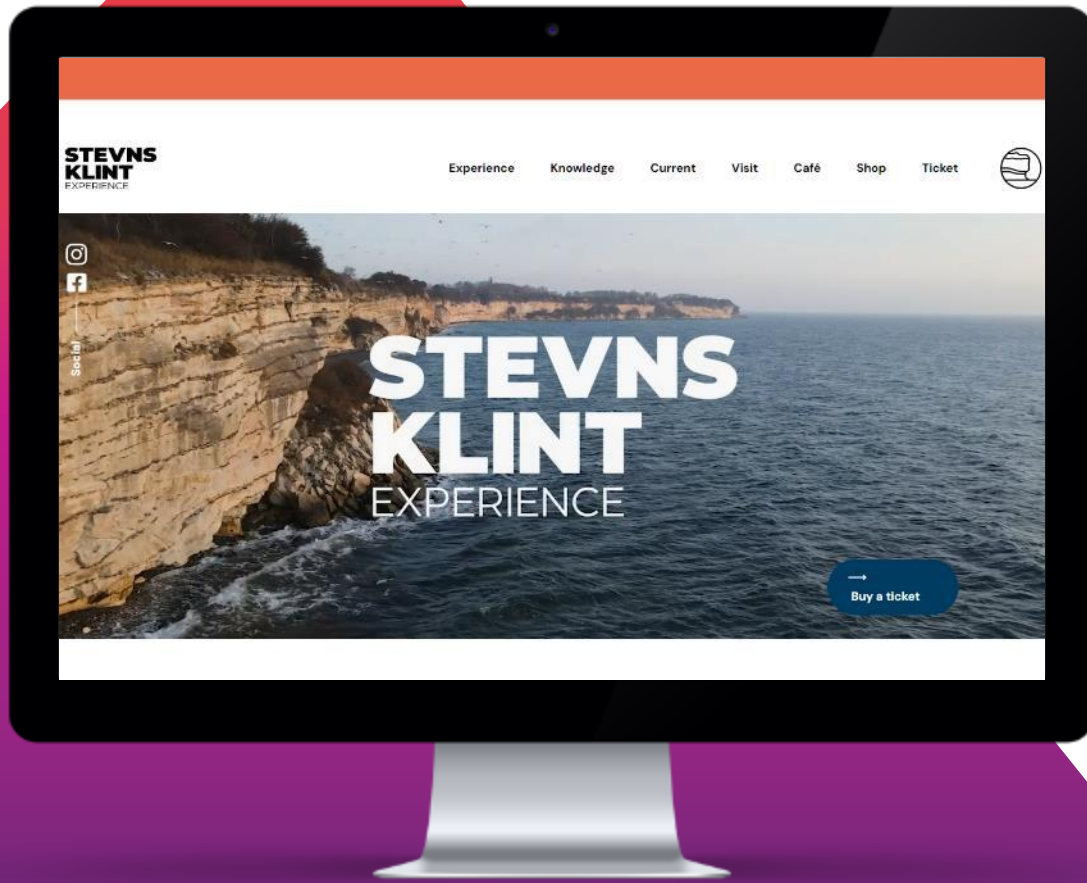
Economic Diversification: Tourism helps vary the economy, especially in regions reliant on a limited number of profitable activities, thus contributing to economic resilience and growth.

Local Economic Development: By attracting tourists, the THL sectors stimulate local economies, boosting sales and profits for local businesses like restaurants, craft shops, and tour operators. International tourism also generates foreign exchange, contributing to national income and economic growth.



Be Inspired

An example of an initiative developed to tackle the SDGs including SDG 8 was [STEVNS Klint](#). Situated just south of Copenhagen in **Denmark** it became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014. To generate sustainable societal, economic, and environmental development, a partner programme was created for all companies, associations, organisations, artists, etc. who wish to support sustainable development within the framework of UNESCO World Heritage...this led to **Job creation** and significant economic growth for the region.



[Stevns Klint Experience | UNESCO Verdensarv](#)





03

Environmental Sustainability

(SDG 13, 14 & 15)



Tourism's Role in Climate Action – SDG 13

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Carbon Footprint Reduction:

These sectors are increasingly focusing on reducing their carbon footprint through sustainable practices, like using renewable energy sources, implementing energy-efficient operations and encouraging the use of sustainable transport options for tourists.

Sustainable Tourism Practices:

Promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable tourism practices helps in conserving natural habitats, reducing environmental impact, and educating or raising awareness about climate change.

Green Infrastructure:

The development of green infrastructure, such as eco-friendly hotels and resorts, contributes to climate change mitigation by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.



Tourism's Role in Life Below Water– SDG 14



Marine Conservation Awareness: Marine tourism activities, can increase awareness and appreciation for marine biodiversity, encouraging conservation efforts. For example; fostering practices like responsible diving and snorkeling, or collaborating with research initiatives help protect marine ecosystems and conserve aquatic life.

Supporting Marine Protected Areas: Tourism can generate revenue that supports the maintenance and management of marine protected areas, crucial for preserving ocean health and biodiversity.

Reducing Marine Pollution: Efforts by these sectors to reduce pollution, (minimising plastic use/proper waste management) contribute to the health of life below water.

Supporting Sustainable Fisheries: Through sustainable sourcing of seafood and supporting local, sustainable fisheries, the THL sectors can play a role in promoting ocean-friendly practices.



Be Inspired ...

In the [We Lead Good Practice Compendium](#) one of our case studies; is Rannveig Grétarsdóttir and her Whale watching business. The natural resources they are utilising in their business are the ocean and the whales, and for the business to succeed and have a long future, they must do everything in their power to protect it. Rannveig has emphasised implementing various measures and taking part in research projects to do just that.



Brief Introduction

Rannveig is the CEO of Elding in Reykjavik, Iceland. Elding is a family-owned whale watching company that started in the year 2000 and was one of the very first whale watching companies in the capital. Rannveig also sits on the board of the Icelandic Travel Industry Association.

Why tourism?

Rannveig's mother has always been very interested in travelling and tourism. She was the main person to introduce Rannveig to the sector and encourage her to make a career within the tourism sector. It was her parents' idea to buy a boat back in the year 2000 and start a whale-watching company. Initially, Rannveig only worked part-time for the family business but enjoyed it so much that she soon decided to change career paths completely from accounting to tourism. What she especially likes about tourism is how it connects people; you meet so many different people and get to create experiences for them.

When she took the decision to fully commit to a career in tourism, she enrolled in an MBA education and used the degree to create a business strategy for what kind of business they

wanted to build within tourism. Because from the beginning they saw that by engaging with nature tourism, it was imperative to include principles of nature conservation and sustainability. Rannveig graduated in 2004 and has been working full time in tourism ever since. Early on Rannveig also realised the potential tourism has to be a platform for educating people about Iceland, its nature and how best to protect it. Their customers are onboard their boats for up to three hours and it puts them in a unique position to teach the customers about how they can take better care of the ocean and about animal welfare. Rannveig got assistance in creating teaching material for the guides on the best way to educate and engage tourists who come onboard their boats.



Tourism's Role in Life on Land – SDG 15



Conservation of Ecosystems:

Tourism, when managed sustainably, can contribute to the protection and restoration of natural habitats and terrestrial ecosystems. It can also create awareness among tourists and local communities.



Sustainable Land Use:

These sectors can promote sustainable land use practices, helping to combat desertification, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity



Biodiversity Preservation:

Ecotourism and nature-based tourism can play a crucial role in preserving biodiversity by generating revenue for conservation and enhancing public awareness and support for wildlife protection



Promotion of Agro-Tourism:

Agro-tourism supports sustainable agriculture practices and rural development, contributing to the preservation of land and natural resources



Support for Protected Areas:

Tourism can provide financial support for the management of national parks and other protected areas through entrance fees etc.





04

Cultural Preservation and Promotion (SDG 11 & 16)



The Importance of Cultural Preservation & Promotion

Cultural preservation & promotion are essential for respecting our past, enriching our present, and ensuring a diverse and informed future. They are often intertwined with THL Sectors.



A city that is not good for its citizens is not good for tourists.

Source



Maintaining Cultural Diversity

Identity & Heritage

Inspiration & Creativity

Educational Value

Tourism & Economic Benefits

Social Cohesion & Unity

Tourism's Role in Sustainable Cities & Communities– SDG 11



Urban Revitalisation: These sectors can drive the renewal of urban areas, turning neglected or underused spaces into vibrant tourism and leisure spots.

Infrastructure Development: The growth of the THL sectors often leads to improved infrastructure, including transportation, accommodations, and recreational facilities, benefiting both tourists and residents.

Promotion of Local Crafts and Traditions: By showcasing local crafts and traditions, tourism can help in keeping these important cultural elements alive within communities. This is also awareness building and gives opportunity for community engagement.

Smart City Initiatives: Integration of the THL sectors with smart city initiatives, like digital tourism tools, can enhance the tourist experience while promoting sustainable urban development.



Tourism's Role in Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions– SDG 16



Promoting Peace through Cultural Exchange:

The THL sectors facilitate interactions & understanding among people from diverse backgrounds, promoting peace & reducing conflict through cultural exchange & mutual respect



Economic Stability as a Basis for Peace:

By generating employment and economic growth, the THL sectors can contribute to the stability of regions, which is a fundamental component of peace.



Support for Governance & Law:

Tourism often necessitates and supports effective governance and strong institutions, including legal frameworks for business operations, property rights, and labour laws



Community Engagement & Empowerment:

The THL sectors can empower local communities, giving them a voice in tourism development and ensuring that it benefits all stakeholders, thereby promoting social justice.





05

Infrastructure Development & Access to Basic Services

(SDG 9 & 11)



Tourism's Role in Infrastructure Development – SDG 9



Investment in Rural and Remote Areas: Tourism often leads to infrastructure development and investment in rural and remote areas, promoting balanced regional development.

Digitalisation and Connectivity: Implementing digital solutions for reservations, guest services, and virtual tourism experiences necessitates good regional networks and connectivity (and technological advancement) within communities.

Infrastructure Development: The growth of the THL sectors often drives the development of infrastructure further, such as transportation systems, accommodations, and recreational facilities this benefits locals as well as tourists.

Sustainable Infrastructure: There's a growing emphasis on creating sustainable and eco-friendly infrastructure within the THL sectors, aligning with green building practices and sustainable urban planning.



How THL sectors can help in providing access to basic services

The tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors, play an influential role in infrastructure and community development and consequently are **pivotal in enhancing access to basic services**. (SDG 9 & SDG 11)

The advancement and access are achieved by **fostering economic growth, encouraging sustainable and inclusive infrastructure development, and improving urban planning and public facilities**...making basic services more accessible to both tourists and locals. For example, development in tourism often necessitates improved energy and water supply systems, directly benefiting local communities in accessing these basic amenities.





06

Education,
Awareness, and
Sustainable
Practices
(SDG 4, 12 & 17)



Tourism's role in Quality Education – SDG 4

These links highlight the role of the THL sectors in promoting quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, which are crucial for personal and professional development.

1

These sectors promote awareness about cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and sustainable practices, contributing to a broader educational agenda.

Awareness and Environmental Education

2

The growth of the THL sectors creates demand for a workforce with a higher level of education, encouraging individuals to pursue further education and training.

Job Opportunities for Educated Workforce

3

Tourism and hospitality provide platforms for lifelong learning, allowing individuals to continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge.

Lifelong Learning Opportunities

4

Pairing junior employees (especially underrepresented groups) with senior leaders can aid in career progression and personal development.

Mentorship and Development Programs

5

Partnerships with Schools and colleges lead to Educational tourism programmes, such as student exchange & study tours, facilitating learning and cultural exchange.

Educational Tourism Programs

Tourism's Role in Responsible Consumption & Production – SDG12



Sustainable Resource Management:

These sectors can focus on the efficient use of resources, including **water, energy, and materials**, aiming for sustainable management and minimising waste.

Promoting Local and Sustainable Products:

Fostering the use of local & sustainable products in tourism activities, which supports local economies and reduces environmental impact.

Waste Reduction and Recycling:

Implementing waste reduction and recycling initiatives in tourism facilities and operations to minimise environmental footprint.

Sustainable Food Practices:

Promoting sustainable food consumption by sourcing locally produced, organic food, and reducing food waste in cafes, restaurants and hotels.

Eco-friendly Accommodations:

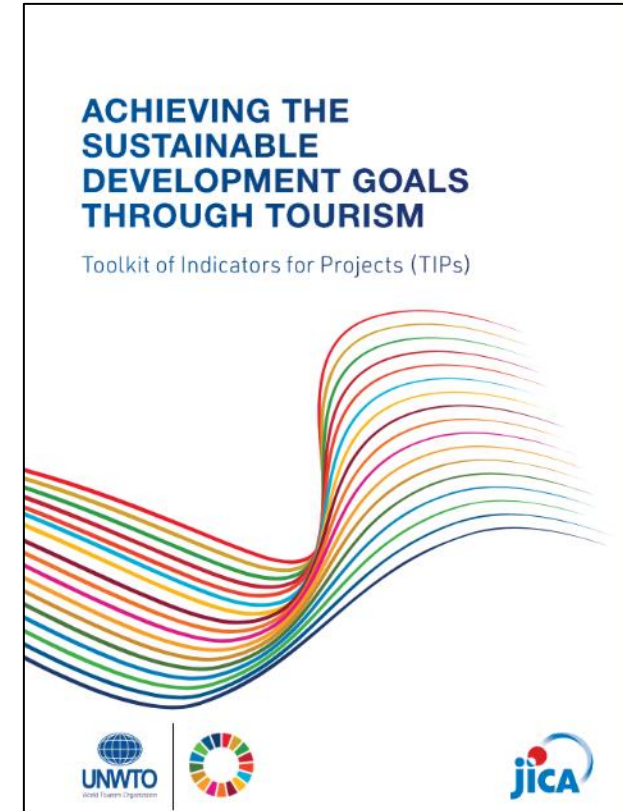
Developing eco-friendly accommodations that adhere to sustainable practices in their construction, operation, and maintenance.



Tourism's Role in SDG Partnerships – SDG 17

Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism, hospitality, and leisure sectors can strengthen public-private-community partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional, and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing are at the core of achieving the 2030 Agenda. Tourism development contributes to all goals, not just for those involved in tourism, as the development of the sector can mandate a wider range of effects through diverse partnerships.

To Learn more, click here



[Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Tourism – Toolkit of Indicators for Projects \(TIPs\) \(e-unwto.org\)](https://e-unwto.org)



A Brief Summary...

As we conclude Module 4, it's clear that the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure (THL) sectors hold a vital role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The intricate linkages between these sectors and the SDGs illuminate the potential for tourism and hospitality to be **powerful drivers for global sustainable development**.

The THL sectors are not just a cornerstone of global economic growth but also a catalyst for social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. As we harness these sectors' potential, we move closer to realising the ambitious objectives of the SDGs, paving the way for a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous future for all.



A scenic view of a forested mountain range. The foreground shows rocky terrain with green shrubs. The middle ground is a dense forest of evergreen trees. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. A white rectangular box is overlaid in the center, containing a quote in dark blue text.

**“EDUCATION IS OUR PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE,
FOR TOMORROW BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE
WHO PREPARE FOR IT TODAY.”**

Malcolm X

Time to Reflect...

Should we be talking about
Regenerative tourism and NOT
Sustainable Tourism???

Watch the TED Talk and read the article and
reflect on which is better for the future of the
3 Ps...People – Planet - Profit

- [Regenerative Tourism vs Sustainable Tourism? \(thetourismcolab.com.au\)](https://thetourismcolab.com.au)
- [Developing sustainable tourism practices among local businesses | The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark](#)



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