



# UNWTO CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Hyderabad, India, 12 April 2013

## Technical Note

### Background

Tourism, as the world's largest global industry, offers great opportunities for contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Tourism represents 5% of the direct global GDP, one in every 12 jobs worldwide; it is the main export for a third of developing countries. A billion international tourists have crossed borders at the end of 2012 and by 2030 this number is expected to reach 1.8 billion.

At the [United Nations Sustainable Development conference \(Rio+20\)](#) in June 2012, Travel and Tourism was recognized as an industry that can make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental), that creates sustainable employment, and that generates significant trade opportunities. As the [Rio+20 outcome document](#) states, this can be achieved by “supporting sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity building that promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, flora, biodiversity and ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities by supporting their local economies and the human and natural environment as a whole.”

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), since its foundation has been championing tourism as a way of generating development opportunities for millions in advanced and emerging economies, is committed to providing its Members with the tools and know-how they need to develop their tourism sectors in a competitive and sustainable manner.

UNWTO has a long record on publishing guidelines on sustainable tourism. One of the most important reference works is the UNWTO's publication, *Indicators of Sustainable Tourism Development for Tourism Destinations- A Guidebook (2004)*, which covers the identification of issues for destinations and companies and provides a toolbox from which those responsible for managing destinations (national, regional and local) as well as attractions, sites and businesses can select appropriate tools to monitor, identify and address issues affecting the sustainable development of the sector. . More than 60 authors from 20 countries contributed to this publication under the leadership of UNWTO to produce the most detailed practical guidance available on sustainable tourism development. Recognizing that if poorly managed, tourism can cause degradation to both the environments and cultures of destinations, the resulting UNWTO report provides detailed guidance on how to maintain and sustain the natural and cultural assets, as well as the services and attractions which form the basis of the tourism sector.

Apart from the efforts headed by UNWTO, the Global Sustainable Tourism Committee (GSTC) has been advocating sustainable travel and tourism by fostering the increased knowledge, understanding, adoption and demand for sustainable tourism practices through large and small enterprise operations and to endorsing the principles of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria ([the Criteria](#)) are a set of global guiding principles. They represent the minimum requirements necessary for any travel and tourism business to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation. The Criteria can be adapted and expanded to the specific conditions of each region of the world and each industry sector, as the key issues for sustainability will have different emphasis under differing conditions.

## Objectives

The **UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development** aims to showcase UNWTO's management approach to economic, social and environmental sustainability in tourism and the range of indicators which can be used to support these aims. The conference will also focus on the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for hotel and tour operators and destinations and discuss current developments. A range of prominent national case studies from UNWTO Asia Pacific Member States will set the scene for the discussion on how sustainable growth through tourism can be sustained best.

## Methodology

The Conference will begin with opening remarks from the Ministry of Tourism of India, the World Tourism Organization and Andhra Pradesh province. PATA, as one of the most important players when it comes to travel and tourism in the region as well as an unwavering promoter of sustainable tourism development, will also deliver remarks in the opening.

This will be followed by the keynote session in the morning. The session will give a global overview on sustainable tourism development with particular reference to the UNWTO Indicators for Sustainable Tourism Development, a regional overview of sustainable practices for tourism, and an introduction of India's adoption of GSTC and its application.

The afternoon sessions will focus on country, industry and media perspectives towards sustainable tourism and the best practices the different stakeholders advocate. The discussion in the sessions will cover the following topics:

- What do you see as the main challenges of tourism sustainability in your country/sector?
- What is your country/sector's approach on sustainable tourism?
- Which approaches and indicators have you used and which do you consider to be most effective in promoting sustainable tourism and why? What do you see as the biggest challenges and what would be your suggestions for overcoming them?
- What assistance can NTAs offer your country/sector in its efforts to manage tourism to ensure that it is sustainable?

These sessions will be interspersed with intervals of questions and answers, thus giving participants the opportunity to enter into discussions on issues that are of special interest or concern to them.

Following the technical sessions, the Conference will conclude with a summary and recommendations by UNWTO's expert in responsible tourism management.