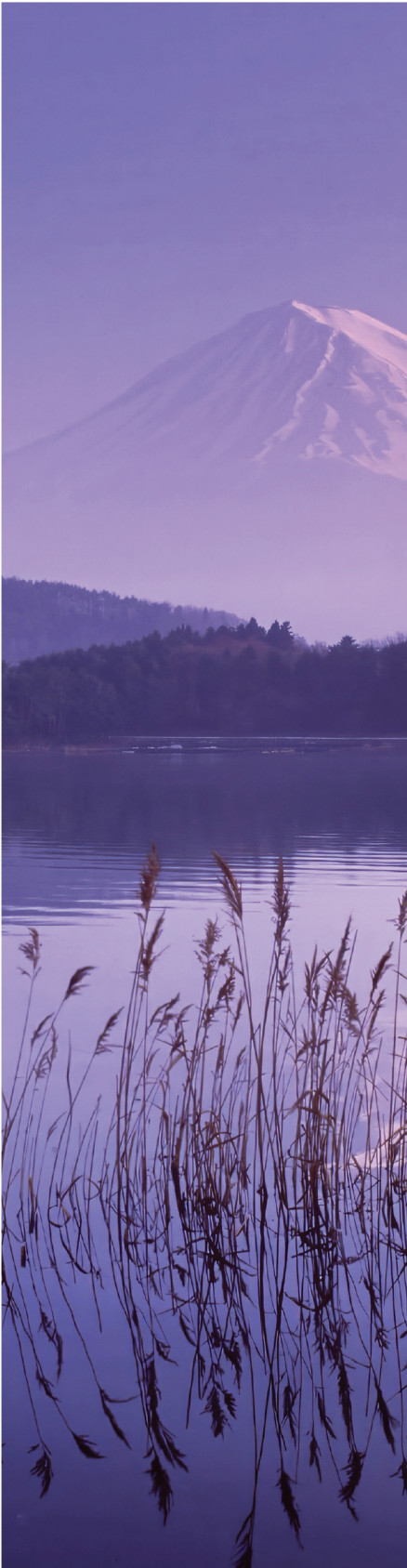


**ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY  
IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY**



# **Sustainable Tourism**

**Entrepreneurial Cases  
and Narratives**

**VOLUME 3**

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Edited by

**Manpreet Arora  
Anukrati Sharma  
Che-Jen Su**

# **Sustainable Tourism**

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

**Series Editor: Dr Anukrati Sharma**

*Associate Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, University of Kota, India; Director, Skill Development Centre, University of Kota, India*

The *Entrepreneurship and Technology in Tourism and Hospitality* (ETTH) series explores the dynamic intersection of entrepreneurship and technological advancements within the highly competitive tourism and hospitality sectors. This innovative series delves into a variety of pressing topics, highlighting how the relentless evolution of technology and artificial intelligence shapes entrepreneurial opportunities and drives the creation of new business ventures. Each volume in the series aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges and trends impacting these industries, making it a vital resource for understanding the future of tourism and hospitality.

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# **Sustainable Tourism: Entrepreneurial Cases and Narratives (Volume 3)**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

With profound love and gratitude, we dedicate this book to

**Our parents,**

Who taught us the values of perseverance, humility, and integrity – your unwavering support and sacrifices have been our greatest inspiration.

**To God,**

Whose divine grace has guided us through every challenge and triumph – we are forever grateful for the strength, wisdom, and purpose instilled in our journey.

**And to our families,**

Whose patience, encouragement, and unconditional love have been the foundation upon which we have built our dreams.

You are our constant source of strength and joy.

This work is a tribute to your presence in our lives.

– *The Editors*  
*Dr Manpreet Arora, Dr Anukrati Sharma,*  
*and Dr Che-Jen Su*

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# Foreword

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a critical focus in the contemporary global economy, balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. As the world navigates an era of heightened ecological awareness and responsible consumerism, the role of entrepreneurial ventures in promoting sustainability within the tourism sector has gained increasing significance. This volume, *Sustainable Tourism: Entrepreneurial Cases and Narratives (Volume 3)*, serves as a vital contribution to the ongoing discourse, offering a rich tapestry of case studies from diverse geographical contexts, including Indonesia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Slovakia, and India.

Edited by esteemed scholars *Dr Manpreet Arora*, *Dr Anukrati Sharma*, and *Dr Che-Jen Su*, this collection provides a deep dive into real-world applications of sustainable tourism principles. The featured case studies encapsulate the entrepreneurial spirit driving sustainability across different cultural and economic landscapes, offering insights into innovative business models, community-driven initiatives, and policy frameworks that foster responsible tourism.

By examining how sustainability intersects with entrepreneurship in varied socio-economic and environmental settings, this volume not only highlights best practices but also presents challenges and lessons learned. It is a valuable resource for academics, policymakers, business leaders, and students seeking to understand the evolving dynamics of sustainable tourism.

As we strive towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to responsible consumption, economic growth, and environmental conservation, the insights from this volume serve as a guiding beacon. The narratives within these pages underscore the transformative power of entrepreneurship in shaping a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry.

With great enthusiasm, I commend this outstanding work to readers worldwide. May it inspire further research, dialogue, and action in sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship.

Professor Sat Prakash Bansal  
Vice Chancellor  
Central University of Himachal Pradesh  
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# Preface

As a highly dynamic and influential sector globally, tourism has significant potential to aid in sustainable development. The equilibrium among economic development, environmental conservation, and cultural integrity is tenuous. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) necessitate immediately adopting innovative, responsible, and inclusive tourism practices. This book, *Sustainable Tourism: Entrepreneurial Cases and Narratives (Volume 3)*, addresses that demand.

This volume compiles a diverse array of entrepreneurial narratives, case studies, and grassroots accounts from various geographical, cultural, corporate, and ecological settings. These narratives and cases transcend conventional business achievement – they emphasize resilience, ingenuity, community engagement, and the genuine pursuit of sustainability. Each chapter illustrates the unconventional paths, strategies integrating sustainability, and zeal of sustainable entrepreneurship into the essence of their enterprises. The book serves as an interface between theory and practice. It examines frameworks and principles of sustainable tourism while providing insights into practical applications, encountered challenges, and implemented strategies. This compilation highlights the diversity and innovation that propel sustainable tourism today, digital platforms that facilitate cultural immersion, indigenous entrepreneurship, and circular economy models in tourism. It also has a touch of corporate efforts and strategies to become leaders in the industry by focussing on community involvement for achieving their long-term visions and goals. This book will be a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and students of management, commerce, business, tourism, and entrepreneurship. It can offer fresh insights for qualitative researchers by getting a taste of different qualitative techniques adopted by the researchers in their chapters. More importantly, we aspire to inspire current and future entrepreneurs to create travel experiences that are meaningful, regenerative, and socially responsible.

In today's landscape, case studies hold a central and increasingly valued role. They provide a nuanced, in-depth understanding of the phenomena by anchoring theoretical frameworks in the real-world context. Particularly in the field of sustainable tourism, where the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic factors can intersect in diverse ways, the case studies can offer invaluable insights that cannot be captured through generalized surveys or purely quantitative data alone. Thus, case studies allow the researchers to explore entrepreneurial journeys, community dynamics, stakeholder interactions, and sustainability challenges from a

very grounded perspective. They identify what works, what does not, and why. It sheds light on the context-specific variables that influence the outcomes. This depth of understanding is especially critical in sustainability research, where local realities, lived experiences, and adaptive strategies often diverge significantly from top-down policy approaches. Moreover, in an era marked by rapid change, climate urgency, and technological disruption, case studies provide a living archive of innovation and resilience. They helped bridge the gap between academic theory and practical application, making research more relatable, impactful, and actionable. Detailing empirical documentation, the case studies foster a deep appreciation for ethical entrepreneurship and other replicable models for others to learn from. As such, including entrepreneurial cases and narratives in this volume is not merely illustrative; it is integral to advancing meaningful, grounded, and social-orientation research in sustainable tourism.

Chapter 1 of the book identifies common and important challenges through a detailed analysis of case studies from Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Indonesia. This chapter underlines the need for integrated and context-specific strategies that posture sustainable tourism. It also highlights that community-based tourism and regenerative practices are the ways to distribute economic benefits more equitably, which can enhance Environmental Conservation and empower local communities. The chapter synthesizes the theoretical insights and empirical data, which gives actionable recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and academicians for the furtherance of sustainable tourism practices that are positively contributing to the socio-economic and environmental fabric of the Global South.

In Chapter 2, the authors highlight that environmental sustainability is pushing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) into the tourism sector, especially in emerging economies like Indonesia, to adopt sustainable practices. It explores how enviropreneurship, which integrates environmental priorities with entrepreneurship, can enhance green innovation and Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM). It highlights that adopting enviropreneurship improves performance, operational efficiency, cost reduction, and competitiveness. However, challenges like limited access to technology and resources remain, suggesting the need for government support to strengthen sustainability efforts in tourism SMEs.

Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been an increasing focus on the resilience and sustainability of SMEs in tourism-dependent economies as they endeavoured to maintain business continuity in the post-pandemic landscape.

Chapter 3 highlights that a necessity emerged to reevaluate the development of products and services in small island developing states (SIDS) to enhance the management of these unprecedented events. Entities like the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) acknowledge the necessity for a novel trajectory in tourism and the imperative to reconstruct more effectively. This chapter delineates the characteristics and challenges of SMEs in SIDS, showcasing three case studies from Antigua that have progressed despite the adversities posed by the pandemic and climate change. It illustrates how these entities have employed sustainability principles

and innovation as catalysts to transform the social and natural environments in small island developing states.

Chapter 4 aims to explore and evaluate the impact of the circular economy model on the implementation of a zero-waste approach in hotel kitchens in Türkiye. Utilizing a qualitative research design and scenario analysis, the study draws on an in-depth review of relevant literature. Based on the insights gained, the researchers developed four scenarios. The findings suggest that the circular economy model offers an innovative framework for resource management, promoting efficiency and minimizing waste. By emphasizing the reuse and recycling of materials throughout their lifecycle, the model aligns closely with the principles of zero-waste, contributing to reduced environmental impact.

Chapter 5 highlights that the evolving landscape of tourism is increasingly shifting from tangible experiences to intangible ones, underscoring the growing significance of cultural and adventure tourism. Despite this shift, academic inquiry into the critical challenges surrounding tourism entrepreneurship and sustainable development – particularly within the realms of cultural and adventure tourism – remains limited. This chapter offers a critical analysis of the socio-cultural dynamics influencing entrepreneurial development in both developing and developed countries. Additionally, it examines the social and environmental impacts of cultural and adventure tourism, with a focus on sustainability challenges in fostering tourism-based entrepreneurship.

Chapter 6 examines the Sargaalaya Arts and Crafts Village in Iringal, Kerala, as an exemplary model of sustainable tourism entrepreneurship that seamlessly integrates cultural heritage with economic development. By curating authentic and immersive experiences, Sargaalaya empowers local artisans through community participation, skill development, and the cultivation of social capital – while simultaneously preserving intangible cultural traditions. The research highlights the critical role of government support, robust infrastructure, and innovative entrepreneurial strategies in transforming traditional crafts into commercially viable products, particularly within the souvenir market. Emphasizing the delicate balance between heritage conservation and market integration, the study underscores the significance of ‘experience-scapes’ in nurturing sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystems. Drawing on informant interviews and thematic analysis of visitor reviews, the study identifies practical tools and strategies for aligning cultural landscapes with responsible tourism, offering a replicable framework for similar global initiatives.

The primary aim of Chapter 7 is to explore various dimensions of the concept of competitiveness, with a particular focus on identifying and analysing key factors influencing tourism competitiveness. This analysis is grounded in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index and several prominent models developed by scholars and practitioners. Austria and Switzerland, consistently ranked among the most competitive destinations, serve as case studies to examine effective competitive strategies in tourism. The chapter draws on secondary research, including best practices and a content analysis of existing literature, to evaluate and interpret the core elements of competitiveness models.

Chapter 8 explores how independent hotels in Shenzhen, China, leverage sustainable business models and entrepreneurial resilience to drive long-term success. By embracing eco-friendly operations, minimizing waste, and fostering community engagement, these hotels not only align with sustainability goals but also enhance their competitive positioning. The chapter further delves into the role of data-driven decision-making, revenue diversification, and strategic partnerships in building adaptive capacity and resilience amidst shifting market dynamics. Drawing on detailed case studies, the research provides valuable insights for hotel entrepreneurs, demonstrating how a strong commitment to sustainability and resilience can foster both stability and growth in an increasingly competitive hospitality landscape.

Chapter 9 underscores the urgent need to adopt and implement Responsible Tourism practices, especially in densely populated countries like India, where tourism places significant pressure on natural resources, infrastructure, and cultural heritage. High population density exacerbates environmental challenges such as pollution, waste management issues, and overcrowding. Responsible Tourism offers a sustainable pathway to address these concerns by promoting eco-friendly practices, encouraging active community participation, and safeguarding cultural heritage. This approach not only mitigates environmental degradation but also ensures a more equitable distribution of tourism's economic and social benefits, reducing the strain on ecosystems and empowering local communities. To further explore the importance of Responsible Tourism and the complexities of implementing sustainable practices, the chapter features an in-depth interview with Mr Jayesh Paranjape, Founder of Western Routes.

Chapter 10 is a narrative case study that investigates the intricate landscape of sustainable hiring practices within the burgeoning IT sector in one of India's emerging tourist destinations, focussing specifically on an IT startup situated in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. Through a series of in-depth interviews and meticulous exploration, this study sheds light on the unique challenges and innovative strategies adopted by these startups in navigating the IT talent landscape in Dharamshala. A central finding of this investigation highlights the prevalent talent scarcity in this part of the country, posing a significant hurdle for organizations aiming to establish and sustain their operations in such areas.

In Chapter 11, the merger between Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines highlights a pivotal shift in the tourism and aviation sectors, with broad implications for sustainability and entrepreneurship. This corporate case underscores that by challenging the dominance of major US carriers, their strategic move enhances competition and expands market access, particularly across Pacific routes. The acquisition leverages Hawaiian Airlines' cultural and tourism-focussed brand, creating opportunities for more efficient operations, route optimization, and sustainable tourism development.

This case highlights how entrepreneurial strategies like mergers can disrupt traditional market hierarchies, foster inclusive growth, and support tourism-dependent economies such as Hawaii's. Drawing on secondary data and content analysis, the study illustrates how such collaborations can balance

profitability with sustainability, offering a model for future airline-tied tourism innovations.

Rural tourism fosters socio-economic development by promoting rural life, art, culture, and heritage while offering tourists an authentic and immersive experience. It supports local economies through income generation, employment, and investment, often blending tourism with the promotion of handicrafts and handlooms. Chapter 12 explores rural tourism's role in building an inclusive society, focussing on how it empowers local artisans and weavers – particularly through handloom tourism. Using the Charaka Cooperative Society, an all-women initiative, as a case study, it highlights how rural tourism enhances innovation, sustains traditional crafts, and creates unique tourist experiences. The chapter also proposes new approaches to weaving and marketing handloom products as part of a broader tourism strategy.

Chapter 13 is a corporate case that analyses Honeywell International Inc.'s 2024 acquisition of the Global Access Solutions (GAS) division from Carrier Global Corporation, aimed at strengthening Honeywell's position in the security and building automation sector. Drawing on secondary sources, including government reports, company documents, and industry analyses, the study explores the acquisition's rationale, execution, synergies, and integration challenges.

The analysis highlights Honeywell's commitment to sustainability, particularly in advancing energy-efficient and smart building technologies. With operations spanning aerospace, materials, and automation, Honeywell leverages such acquisitions to enhance innovation and meet global demands for environmentally responsible infrastructure.

Key synergies identified include expanded market access, improved technological capabilities, and greater competitiveness. The study also notes integration challenges, emphasizing the need to align new assets with Honeywell's sustainability goals. Overall, the case illustrates Honeywell's strategic use of acquisitions to drive sustainable growth and adapt to evolving market and environmental priorities.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all contributors who have shared their stories and expertise, and to the communities whose efforts continue to redefine the future of tourism – one sustainable step at a time.

In conclusion, *Sustainable Tourism: Entrepreneurial Cases and Narratives (Volume 3)* is more than a compilation of case studies – it is a testament to the transformative power of tourism when guided by values of responsibility, resilience, and inclusivity. The chapters collectively underscore that sustainability is not a static goal but an evolving process shaped by place, people, innovation, and adaptability. Whether it is a small island entrepreneur pivoting after a natural disaster, an artisan village preserving its cultural soul, or a corporate merger redefining eco-commitment in aviation, each case reflects the urgency and potential of reimagining tourism for the better. As readers journey through the diverse geographies, strategies, and lived realities showcased in this volume, they are invited not only to learn but to act – to adopt, adapt, and advocate for practices that align economic vitality with ecological stewardship and social well-being.

We hope that this book sparks dialogue, informs policy, and most importantly, inspires practitioners, educators, researchers, and students alike to become active participants in shaping a sustainable tourism future that is grounded, inclusive, and forward-looking.

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## Chapter 1

# Sustainable Tourism Development in the Global South: Challenges and Opportunities

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### Abstract

The challenges posed by sustainable tourism in the Global South present complex issues, although highly endowed with enormous potential for development on one hand and being ravaged by challenges of all kinds on the other, which dent its sustainable development process. Simultaneously, countries of the Global South experience particular challenges with structural inequalities entrenched, environmental degradation accentuated, governance concerns, and, above all, impacts due to globalization. This chapter identifies both common and bespoke challenges through a detailed analysis of case studies from Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Indonesia, and underlines the need for integrated and context-specific strategies that foster sustainable tourism. It calls for community-based tourism (CBT) and regenerative practices as ways to redistribute economic benefits more equitably, enhance environmental conservation, and empower local communities. This chapter, through the synthesis of theoretical insights and empirical data, gives actionable recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and academics for the furtherance of sustainable tourism practices that positively contribute to the socio-economic and environmental fabric of the Global South.

*Keywords:* Tourism; tourism development; sustainable tourism; Global South; tourism challenges; tourism opportunities

## Introduction

Tourism is widely recognized as a significant driver of economic growth, creating employment opportunities (Arora & Dhiman, 2024) and serving as an effective platform for promoting cultural awareness in various regions (Netto, 2009). It encompasses more than just travelling for business or leisure; it includes the entire experience, from modes of transportation and accommodation to visits to tourist sites and the exploration of local cuisines (Abram & Waldren, 2001; Getz, 2008). To ensure a more sustainable future, sustainable tourism plays a crucial role in creating lasting impacts by promoting responsible management of tourist destinations while fostering economic growth and socio-economic development. This chapter examines a general overview of sustainable tourism and the current state of tourism in the Global South, with a focus on the challenges associated with implementing sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, it explores the opportunities available to address these challenges, using the tourism industry in the Global South as a case study.

## Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism encompasses not only the environmental effects of tourism but also its economic and social impacts (Arora & Sharma, 2024; Janusz & Bajdor, 2013). This concept calls for all stakeholders in the tourism sector to act responsibly, focussing on minimizing tourism's negative impacts rather than solely emphasizing its benefits. The ultimate aim is to establish ethical and sustainable practices across social, environmental, and economic dimensions, regardless of the type of tourism involved (Streimikiene et al., 2021). Aligned with the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), sustainable tourism contributes to several SDGs. However, this chapter will focus on six specific goals:

### I. SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:

Tourism significantly contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries. For example, the industry generated \$9.9 trillion globally in 2024 (Statista, 2024c) and has played a vital role in reducing unemployment by creating 27 million jobs worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2023). Sustainable tourism ensures that its economic benefits do not come at the expense of stakeholders' well-being. This can be achieved through the implementation of ethical practices, such as providing fair wages, fostering diversity and inclusivity, and improving employees' working conditions.

### II. SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities:

Sustainable tourism aligns with SDG 11 by enhancing the quality of infrastructure at tourist sites, ensuring that local residents are not adversely impacted by tourism activities while simultaneously improving the comfort and convenience for visitors. Additionally, the preservation of historical landmarks and cultural sites plays a vital role in safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations (Khizar et al., 2023).

### III. SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production:

Sustainable tourism incorporates the principles of SDG 12 by promoting the efficient use and management of resources within the hospitality sector. This includes prioritizing the consumption of locally sourced products, minimizing waste generation at tourist sites, and ensuring proper waste disposal to reduce pollution (Dolnicar, 2023).

### IV. SDG 13 – Climate Action:

Aligned with SDG 13, sustainable tourism focusses on reducing air pollution from tourism-related transportation and infrastructure. Efforts include adopting environmentally friendly practices such as utilizing biodegradable fuels and renewable energy sources to encourage low-carbon emission options (Dwyer, 2022). These initiatives aim to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism and promote sustainability in the sector.

### V. SDG 14 – Life Below Water:

Coastal and maritime tourism are directly connected to SDG 14. Achieving sustainable tourism in this context involves reducing water pollution and preventing the over-exploitation of aquatic ecosystems (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2022). This approach fosters the conservation of marine biodiversity and promotes responsible interactions with marine environments, ensuring long-term sustainability.

### VI. SDG 15 – Life on Land:

Sustainable tourism contributes to SDG 15 by prioritizing the preservation of wildlife, historical landmarks, forests, and terrestrial ecosystems. Beyond discouraging harmful practices, sustainable tourism actively promotes positive measures such as reforestation and the conservation of biodiversity, particularly in the context of eco-tourism. These efforts help maintain the ecological balance and protect life on land (Dwyer, 2022).

## **Global South and Tourism**

The case study focusses on tourism in the Global South, a term used to broadly classify countries across Africa, Oceania, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The rationale for selecting this case study is to contribute to the growing body of literature on tourism in the Global South and identify opportunities through which countries in this category are seen to have more value, thereby providing a wider lens as opposed to being marginalized, possessing limited economic influence (Misalucha, 2015). Contrary to this perception, countries in the Global South host a wealth of tourist attractions, many of which are globally recognized. For instance, Africa is often associated with ideal destinations for adventure tourism due to its diverse landscapes, wildlife, and cultural heritage.

Additionally, tourism activities in these regions have contributed significantly to job creation, thereby reducing unemployment levels and improving livelihoods. Moreover, a notable portion of the global GDP is generated from tourism activities in the Global South. According to [Statista \(2024a\)](#), in 2022 and 2023, the travel and tourism industry in Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a spike in patronage as a desired tourist destination, thereby contributing over \$700 billion to the GDP in that region. Post-COVID-19, the travel and tourism industry in Africa has recovered up to 96% of international tourist visits to the region in comparison to pre-COVID-19 statistics, and a revenue of 83% was recovered in revenue post-pandemic ([Statista, 2024b](#); [UN Tourism, 2024](#)). Therefore, Africa and the Caribbean are among the top 4 regions that have recovered post-pandemic with regard to international visits to their tourist sites.

While these positive outcomes highlight the potential of tourism in these regions, it is important to acknowledge the challenges associated with sustainable tourism. These challenges include environmental degradation, inadequate infrastructure, and unequal distribution of tourism-related benefits ([Hosseini et al., 2021](#)). As such, this chapter seeks to explore these challenges and identify opportunities to foster sustainability and ethical practices within the tourism sector in the Global South. Doing so aims to provide actionable insights for enhancing tourism's contributions to socio-economic and environmental well-being in these regions.

Some tourist sites across the Global South are listed below; these sites cut across various types of tourism, including cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. In Africa, notable tourist sites include Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya, and Table Mountain in South Africa. The Taj Mahal in India is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Asia, as are Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Ha Long Bay in Vietnam. The Great Barrier Reef in Australia and Bora Bora in French Polynesia are great tourist sites in Oceania. The Machu Picchu in Peru and the Iguazu Falls in Argentina/Brazil are listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Latin America and the Caribbean ([UNESCO, 2024](#)).

## **Theoretical Underpinning**

The sustainable tourism development (STD) theory has been selected to underpin this chapter. Sustainable tourism theory focusses on achieving a balance in the management of natural resources and the environment, the tourists and locals within tourism destinations ([Sharpley, 2020](#)), this theory is closely linked to the SDGs discussed above. To achieve this, tourism should include sustainable practices to contribute to a lasting outcome economically, environmentally, and socio-culturally ([Arora et al., 2023](#)). Specifically, the funds realized from tourism activities should be used in managing and developing local communities and creating more jobs to attain economic sustainability. Environmental sustainability promotes the safeguarding of natural resources and biodiversity from vandalization and degradation. Sustainability in a sociocultural context

implies respecting and protecting cultures, traditions, and historical landmarks (Khan et al., 2021).

## **Challenges of Achieving Sustainable Tourism in the Global South**

Sustainable tourism has been promoted as a means of harmonizing economic growth with environmental conservation and social equity, especially in the Global South. This idea aligns with the United Nations' SDGs, particularly SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). However, despite its promise, the practical implementation of sustainable tourism in the Global South is riddled with challenges. These regions face specific barriers, such as entrenched inequalities, fragile institutional capacities, and the external pressures of globalization. This chapter critically examines these challenges, drawing insights from academic literature and empirical studies.

### **Structural Inequalities and Economic Disparities**

A key obstacle to achieving sustainable tourism in the Global South is the persistence of structural inequalities. Tourism is often seen as a significant economic driver, especially in low-income nations, contributing to GDP and employment. Nevertheless, the benefits of tourism frequently accrue to urban elites and multinational corporations, with minimal trickle-down to marginalized communities (Walia, 2021). This inequitable distribution worsens existing socio-economic inequalities and undermines the fundamental principles of sustainability. For instance, cities like Lagos and Abuja in Nigeria attract significant tourist interest due to their economic and political significance. Yet rural and marginalized areas, such as Bauchi and Ekiti states, home to attractions like Yankari Game Reserve and Ikogosi Warm Springs, gain little from tourism. Investments are often concentrated in urban hubs, leaving rural regions underdeveloped and isolated from broader economic benefits (Ofem et al., 2024).

The concept of revenue leakage further underscores this disparity. In many Global South countries, a substantial proportion of tourism income is repatriated to foreign entities involved in the supply chain, such as airlines, hotel groups, and tour operators. Gössling and Hall (2019) estimate that in certain destinations, only 10–20% of total tourism revenues remain within the local economy. This economic dependency perpetuates neocolonial patterns, relegating Global South nations to roles as providers of cheap labour and raw materials, while the Global North benefits financially.

Additionally, tourism frequently marginalizes Indigenous populations, whose cultural heritage is commodified without fair involvement in decision-making processes. Cultural resources are often appropriated for external stakeholders' benefit, as seen in Southeast Asia, where Indigenous traditions are marketed to attract international tourists (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021). A similar dynamic is observed in Nigeria, where cultural events such as the Argungu Fishing Festival

in Kebbi State are heavily marketed but lack effective revenue-sharing mechanisms for local communities (Ijasan & Izobo, 2012). Such cases demonstrate how tourism often perpetuates exploitation instead of fostering empowerment.

## **Environmental Degradation and Resource Management**

Environmental sustainability is a fundamental aspect of sustainable tourism, yet the Global South faces significant challenges in this area. Many tourism-dependent regions are ecologically fragile, including biodiversity hotspots, coastal zones, and protected areas. The rapid expansion of tourism often places unsustainable pressure on these ecosystems, leading to environmental degradation.

Over-tourism presents a critical issue in iconic locations such as the Galápagos Islands and Kenya's Maasai Mara. Unregulated tourism activities have resulted in habitat destruction, biodiversity loss, and the introduction of invasive species in the Galápagos (Epler Wood et al., 2019). Similarly, in the Maasai Mara, an over-concentration of tourist lodges has disrupted traditional land use, exacerbating human-wildlife conflicts. These pressures frequently exceed the local environment's carrying capacity, jeopardizing the long-term viability of tourism. A parallel is seen in Nigeria's Yankari Game Reserve, once a prominent wildlife sanctuary but now facing environmental degradation due to unregulated tourism, deforestation, and inadequate conservation funding (Amalu et al., 2021). Such challenges mirror broader trends across the Global South, where weak institutional frameworks struggle to balance tourism growth with environmental protection.

Climate change intensifies these difficulties. Coastal destinations, such as the Maldives, face existential threats from rising sea levels, while sub-Saharan Africa contends with desertification and shifting rainfall patterns that impact eco-tourism sites (Scott & Gössling, 2022). In Nigeria's Niger Delta, flooding and erosion pose increasing risks to tourism infrastructure and local livelihoods (Nkwunonwo, 2016). Addressing these vulnerabilities demands substantial investment in adaptation strategies, yet many Global South nations lack the financial capacity to make such investments. More so, weak regulatory frameworks intensify environmental challenges. In some cases, tourism developments directly encroach on protected areas. For instance, deforestation in the Amazon, driven by infrastructure for eco-tourism, reflects a global tendency to prioritize economic over environmental concerns (Sharpley, 2020). Such systemic failures underscore the need for robust governance mechanisms to enforce sustainability standards and mitigate environmental risks.

## **Governance and Policy Limitations**

Governance is a crucial factor in determining the success of sustainable tourism, but in the Global South, policy frameworks are often fragmented, inconsistent, or poorly enforced. The absence of cohesive strategies to incorporate sustainability principles into tourism planning reflects the broader institutional challenges faced by many developing countries. One issue is the emphasis on short-term

economic gains over long-term sustainability. Governments in the Global South often adopt pro-growth policies that encourage mass tourism without fully considering its environmental and social impacts (Sharpley, 2020). For instance, Kenya's national strategies prioritize revenue generation through safari tourism but neglect the ecological consequences of over-tourism in game reserves.

Similarly, cultural events like the Abuja Carnival have been criticized in Nigeria for misalignment with sustainable tourism practices (Eme et al., 2014). Corruption further undermines governance efforts. Transparency International (2020) highlights high levels of corruption in many Global South nations, which can result in the misallocation of resources and weakened regulatory enforcement. For example, funds designated for sustainable tourism initiatives are often diverted, leading to poorly executed projects or neglected infrastructure (Bianchi, 2018). Efforts by international development agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to bridge governance gaps are not without challenges. Many initiatives adopt a top-down approach, prioritizing donor objectives over local needs. This can result in projects that lack cultural relevance or fail to secure local support, reducing their effectiveness and sustainability (Fletcher et al., 2020).

More so, in Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area, home to unique wildlife and Maasai cultural heritage, conservation and tourism projects have brought international acclaim but also faced criticism for marginalizing local Maasai communities. Conservation policies, often designed by external actors, have restricted traditional grazing practices, creating tensions between communities and authorities (Alderete, 2020). Similar to Nigeria's Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, this example reveals the importance of integrating local voices into decision-making processes to ensure that tourism initiatives are both equitable and culturally sensitive (Lijun & Ahmed, 2024).

## **Globalization and Market Dependencies**

Globalization has deepened the integration of Global South countries into the global tourism economy, but this interconnectedness also exposes them to vulnerabilities. Many nations are heavily dependent on international tourism, leaving them susceptible to external shocks such as economic recessions, political instability, or pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly highlighted this dependency. Travel restrictions led to a collapse in tourism revenues for many Global South countries. In the Caribbean, where tourism accounts for over 30% of GDP, economies contracted severely during the pandemic (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2021). Similarly, Thailand's tourism sector, reliant on international visitors, saw revenue decline by over 80%, with millions of jobs lost in related industries (World Bank, 2021). This crisis revealed the risks of over-reliance on international markets, prompting countries to explore diversification strategies, including promoting domestic and regional tourism to mitigate future shocks.

Globalization also encourages the dominance of Western cultural norms in shaping tourism experiences. This often leads to the commodification and

homogenization of local cultures, eroding their authenticity and intrinsic value (Sokka et al., 2021). For instance, in Southeast Asia and Bali, traditional dances and ceremonies have been altered to meet Western tourists' expectations, diluting their cultural significance. CBT models that empower local actors and prioritize cultural preservation are essential to counter these trends. Successful examples include community-led conservation in South Africa's Kruger National Park and initiatives in Peru's Sacred Valley, where local populations manage homestays and craft markets. Despite equitable benefit distribution and environmental management challenges, these models highlight the potential for aligning tourism with local interests (Mitchell & Eagles, 2020).

## **Analysis and Recommendation for Future STD**

Tourism in the Global South encompasses regions characterized by rich biodiversity, unique cultural heritage, and potential for socio-economic transformation. Regardless of these opportunities, the sector faces persistent challenges. A critical analysis of selected case studies – Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Indonesia – reveals several trends, barriers, and lessons for STD. Each case offers unique insights into Policy and Governance, Community Engagement, Ecological Preservation, Economic Impact, and Technological Innovation.

### ***Nigeria: Fragmented Governance, Underdeveloped Tourism Potential***

Nigeria's tourism sector faces significant challenges, primarily due to fragmented governance and ineffective policies (Oloidi, 2019). The lack of a coherent national tourism strategy means that various regions operate under different regulations, leading to inconsistent standards and poor management of tourism attractions (Saner et al., 2015). For example, the Yankari Game Reserve, one of Nigeria's premier wildlife parks, suffers from inadequate infrastructure, outdated facilities, and insufficient protection for wildlife (Ijeomah & Odunlami, 2013), which undermines its potential as a sustainable tourist destination. Even with the National Tourism Development Master Plan (NTDMP) updated in 2006, Nigeria still lacks cohesion and regional implementation (Ojo et al., 2024). This disjointed policy landscape hinders the development of the sector, and without a cohesive framework, the tourism industry cannot reach its full potential (Adebayo, 2018; Oloidi, 2019). More so, community engagement in Nigeria's tourism is minimal, with local populations often excluded from the decision-making processes (Ojo et al., 2024). For instance, in places like the Obudu Cattle Ranch, local communities receive limited benefits from the tourism activities centred around the area (Amalu et al., 2012). While there is potential for tourism to uplift these communities, the lack of stakeholder involvement results in missed opportunities for revenue sharing and empowerment (Ojo et al., 2024).

Furthermore, with the heightened potential of the tourism sector in Nigeria, it contributes approximately 3.9% to the GDP as of 2022, highlighting untapped opportunities in the industry (Statista, 2022). For instance, destinations like