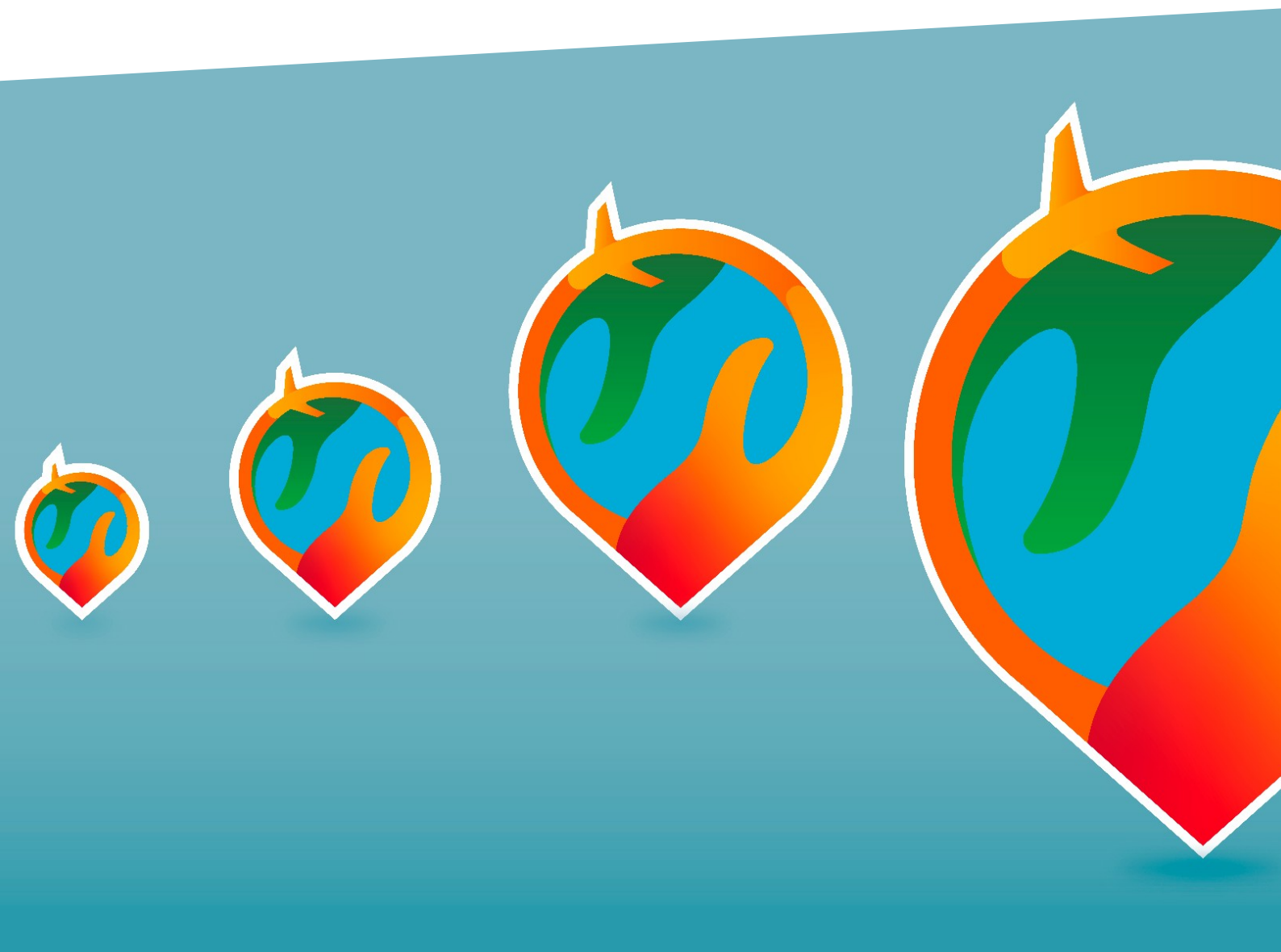


Tourism Recovery and Resilience Dialogue

Executive summary of event 3 on January 13, 2021
on turning future headwinds into opportunities

by Tourism for Sustainable Development
A Global Initiative for Public and Private Sector Executives



Fachhochschule Graubünden
University of Applied Sciences



Global Compact
Network
Switzerland & Liechtenstein



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Executive Summary

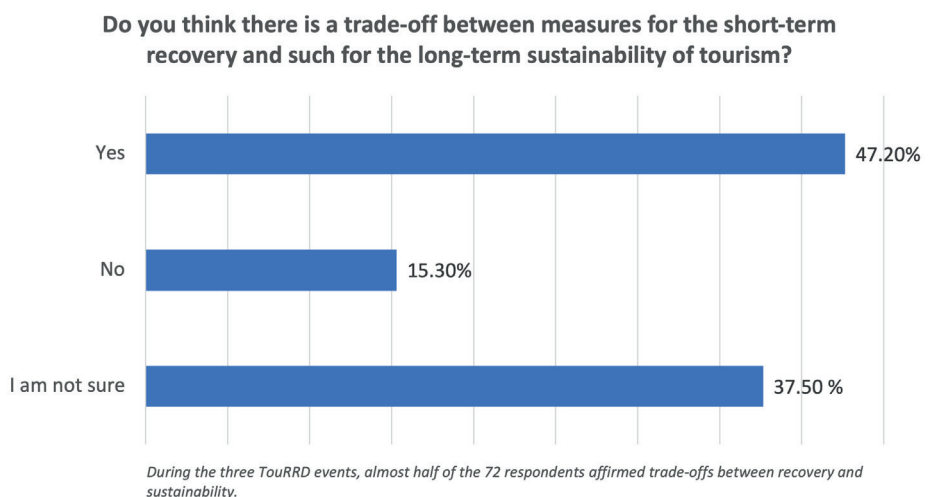
The third event of the Tourism Recovery and Resilience Dialogue on January 13, 2021, was dedicated to the challenge of turning headwinds related to ecology into opportunities for tourism. The protagonists of this event were Ms. Rosi Amerena (Coordinator of the collaborative strategy “México 2030: land of future tourism”), Mr. Arvind Bundhun (Director of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority), Mr. César González Madrugá (General Director of Sustainable Tourism Planning, Mexican Ministry of Tourism), Mr. Manfred Häupl (Owner and Executive Director of Hauser Exkursionen), Mr. Paul Jones (Chief Executive Officer of The Lux Collective), and Ms. Martina von Münchhausen (Senior Programme Manager for Sustainable Tourism at the World Wide Fund for Nature, Germany).

This executive summary provides three kinds of information and insights:

1. conclusions and hypotheses derived from the live discussion between the protagonists and the audience;
2. results from the survey conducted with the audience;
3. key statements from the individual interviews with four of the six protagonists.

During the event, 34 tourism executives participated in a survey which contained specific questions on ecological challenges and general questions on measures for a resilient and sustainable recovery. One important result was that only according to a small minority (12%) there is no trade-off between measures for a short-term recovery and measures for the long-term sustainability of tourism. This is in line with the overall result of the surveys conducted at all three TouRRD events (see graph 1) and reflects the dilemma many public and private sector executives perceive in the endeavour to survive in the short run without neglecting their destination’s or company’s long-term future. In this sense, this survey result both qualifies the protagonists’ optimism to succeed in this endeavour and sustains the need for exchanging ideas and experiences about how to do so.

Graph 1



Conclusions and hypotheses from the live discussion

COVID-19 can be used as a catalyst for a sustainable transformation of tourism

The case of Mexico was presented by Rosi Amerena (“México 2030”) and César González (Ministry of Tourism) as example how the COVID-19 context has favoured sustainability initiatives (see also p. 6). They are characterised by

- a collaborative approach with a focus on the inclusion of local/indigenous people into public-private partnerships;
- a focus on the domestic market (especially the big urban areas);
- offers for a bio-cultural tourism (stressing the interdependence of cultural & natural heritage);
- multidimensional aims, of which the reduction of tourism’s ecological footprint is but one (others being economic recovery, social inclusion, bio-cultural education, public health and sustainable agriculture).

Generally speaking, cooperation and communication have to be strengthened both vertically – along the whole service chain, among different stakeholders and between political levels –, as well as horizontally, e.g. within business networks and through umbrella organisations. [The Swiss SDG Tourism Dialogue](#) can serve as an example.

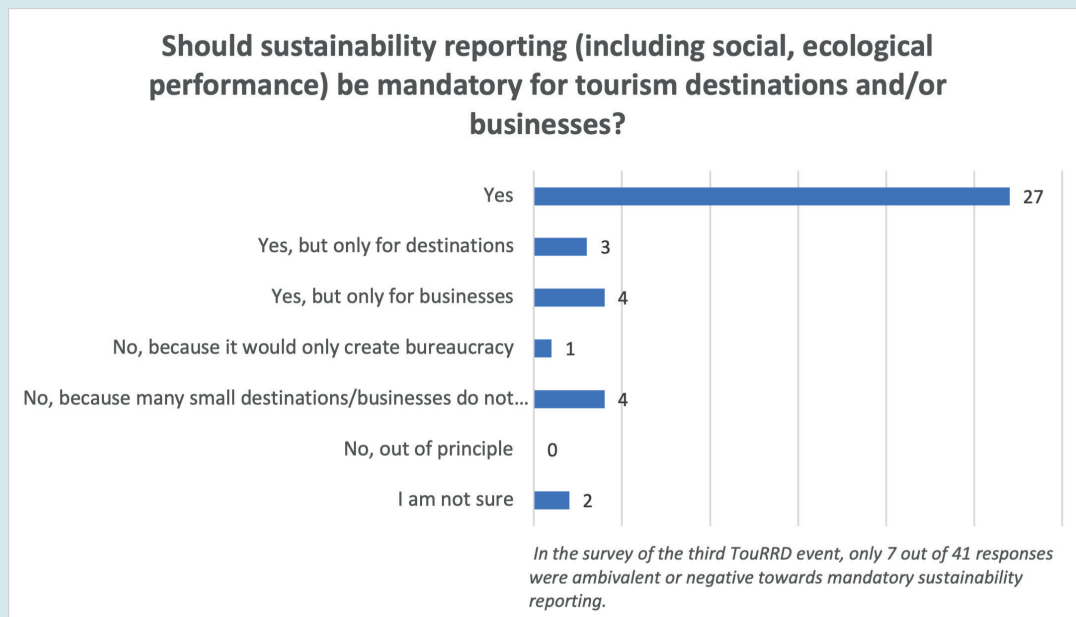
Manfred Häupl (Hauser Exkursionen) and Paul Jones (The Lux Collective) considered that COVID-19 has further fostered customer preferences which had been developing already before the pandemic and which favour sustainable tourism. Examples are the preferences for local/regional products (calling for a circular economy) and for destinations and businesses that convey a comprehensive sense of “care” towards people and the planet, and customers’ concomitant readiness to inform themselves (calling for more transparency).



Sustainability reporting is key and should be made mandatory

When asked whether reporting on destinations' and businesses' ecological and social performance should be mandatory, an overwhelming majority of the audience said yes. Only 17% were not sure or against it (see graph 2). Most panellists were surprised by this clear result and welcomed it. Martina von Münchhausen (WWF Germany) emphasised that both businesses and destinations still have a long way to go, but that especially among the latter there was a lack of awareness and willingness to report. In fact, she thinks that such reports would actually deter guests from visiting certain destinations due to their poor ecological and social performance.

Graph 2

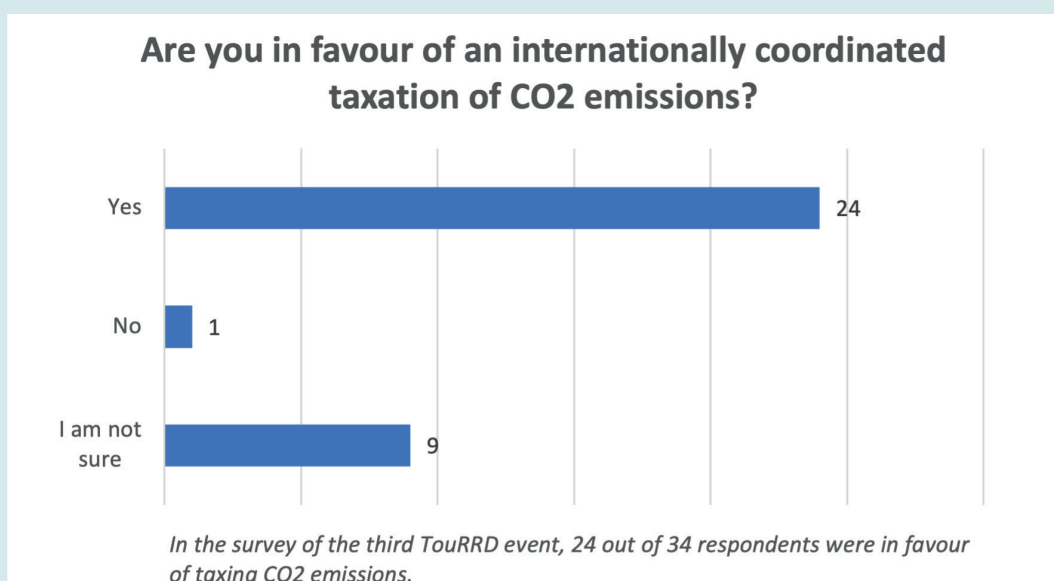


Other panellists agreed that a useful reporting was not just desirable, but also feasible. Most data as well as technical support for smaller businesses and destinations were available. Manfred Häupl stressed that in order to make the reporting relevant to the customer, it should lead to a comprehensive labelling and afterwards certification of tourism actors, in particular of tour operators and destinations. At the moment, this is only common for accommodations.

It takes both the stick and the carrot to make long-haul travel more sustainable

The biggest environmental footprint of tourism is caused by the travel to the destination, especially by air. The awareness of the impact on climate change and of the need for remedy was reflected by the audience's clear vote in favour of an internationally coordinated taxation of CO₂ emissions (graph 3). Burning fossil fuels needs to come at a higher cost.

Graph 3



However, there were both “realistic” and “sceptical” voices among the panellists with regard to taxation. Well aware that its introduction is complex and time consuming, Manfred Häupl advocated for a compulsory CO₂ compensation in the meantime. Moreover, he promoted the idea of making long-haul tour packages (more) sustainable e.g. by including a minimum length of stay in relation to travel distance, carbon off-setting or sustainability contracts within the whole service chain.

Paul Jones and Arvind Bundhun (Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority), representing a destination that vitally depends on long-haul tourism, favoured best practices over CO₂ taxation. They think that customer preferences will increasingly drive destinations into a competition towards (more) sustainability. César González said that he could not say yes or no to a taxation without knowing what would be done with the tax money. Some ideas from the audience were that it should be used for sustainable tourism initiatives or technological innovation for CO₂-neutral transportation.

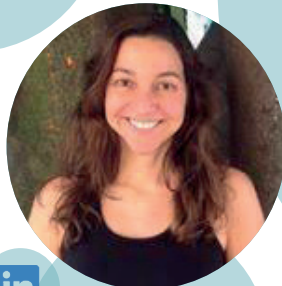
All in all, it is probably fair to say that only with the carrot and the stick long-haul travel will become ecologically (more) sustainable.



Miguel Torruco Marqués
Minister of
Tourism of Mexico



César González Madrugá
General Director of
Sustainable Tourism
Planning



Rosi Amerena
Coordinator,
Sustainable Tourism
Strategy 2030



Name of movement:
“México 2030:
land of future tourism”



Collaborative innovation between
government, business & civil society
(incl. indigenous & local communities)
in the national context, in alliance with
international cooperation



Members:
9 government institutions
7 academic institutions
6 international organisations
56 civil society organisations
18 community-based organisations



Number of projects: 4

Strategy and measures to turn headwinds related to ecology into opportunities

1. The pandemic has its roots in the unsustainable relationship that humans have with nature and its ecosystems. Think systemically and collaborate to detect and anticipate risks in a complex sector that depends on a healthy environment.
2. Integrate other productive sectors such as agriculture, handcrafts, forestry and fisheries. The pandemic's impact on local producers and the environmental effects of imported products have penetrated public awareness. Therefore, both locals and tourists now prefer to buy local products, according to the Deloitte Consumer Dashboard of November 2020.
3. Adaptation to climate change based on ecosystems and mitigation through conservation of nature.
4. Integration of tourism with transversal value chains: transportation, mobility, water, zero waste.

For an overview, see Mexico's Sustainable Tourism Strategy ([Executive Summary in English](#) and [full version in Spanish](#))

The importance of measuring and reducing tourism's ecological footprint for competitiveness and resilience

1. Tourists and developers cannot take care of the things they do not know and value the things that are not measured. This also applies to our biocultural heritage.
2. Low-carbon travel market is increasing and must be addressed by the tourism and transport sector for effective climate action.
3. It is imperative to recognise, demonstrate and teach that there is an economic rationale, in addition to an ecological, to integrate biodiversity into the tourism sector.
4. Apply whole systems-thinking to complex eco-agri-tourism value chains. Recognise externalities along these value chains.

Recommendations and requirements

1. Mexico has tremendous potential to expand its tourism site base as one of the most megadiverse countries, with new and more granular innovative models to not only protect our cultural heritage and assure local-fair distribution of income, but to promote the importance of preserving, and restoring biodiversity and its ecosystems.
2. Invest in the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.
3. Promote innovation and collaborative thinking.

Additional Information

“México 2030: land of future tourism”

- [presentation](#)
- [executive summary](#)
- www.mexico2030.org

Examples of members:

[Fundemex](#), [Reforestamos México](#), [World Wildlife Fund in Mexico](#), Ministry of Agriculture, [SUUM](#), [National Commission for Biodiversity](#), [Red Indígena de Turismo](#), [Alianza Peninsular para el Turismo Comunitario](#), [Sierra Gorda Ecotours](#), [Sierra Norte](#), [Alternare](#), [Natura Mexicana](#), [Outward Bound](#), Commission on Natural Protected Areas, [Red Turismo Sustentable](#)



Manfred Häupl

Owner and Executive Director



Hauser Exkursionen
(founded in 1973)



Tour operator for sustainable
trekking tourism



Headquarter: Munich, Germany



Destinations: Nepal, Peru, East
Africa (approx. 400 routes in more
than 100 countries)



Employees: 50 at the headquarter
in Munich and offices in Berlin, Linz
and Zurich; all employees have
kept their jobs (sharing of workload;
governmental “Kurzarbeit” compen-
sation)

Strategy and measures to turn headwinds related to ecology into opportunities

On the corporate level of Hauser Exkursionen:

1. Hauser Exkursionen has been working according to principles of sustainable tourism as of the late 1980s. In 2012, it received the CSR certification by TourCert and became member of [forum anders reisen](#).
2. In the COVID-19 context, Hauser Exkursionen developed a new mission, based on the vision to use tourism to make the world a better place. It elaborated a [manifesto](#) and communicated it to its customers.
3. In 2020, Hauser Exkursionen decided a) to aim for overcompensating the CO2 emissions of its products (e.g. by matching customers' voluntary contributions), b) to label all its products to inform customers better about sustainability, c) to make animal welfare a key

aspect of product development, and d) to stop printing catalogues.

On the destinations' level:

1. In general, the COVID-19 crisis seems to have enhanced the awareness in destinations that a fundamental reorientation towards ecological sustainability is necessary. Furthermore, security and health care have been identified as critical factors for future tourism development.
2. Nepal serves as positive example, as authorities' interest in the [Climate Trek](#) has greatly increased in 2020, a project for sustainable trekking tourism which Hauser Exkursionen launched after the earthquake in 2015. The project may well serve as blueprint for

Nepal's transformation into a sustainable trekking destination, e.g. by pursuing the vision of a carbon neutral country. There are many small-scale projects, but no governmental master plan. For instance, by using biogas only, Nepal could reduce its carbon emissions by half.

The importance of measuring and reducing tourism's ecological footprint for competitiveness and resilience

1. Both the necessary data and the certifications to verify and communicate the ecological footprint are available.
2. What is missing is
 - a) a framework that makes the different certificates comparable (the Sustainable Development Goals could serve as a common reference)
 - b) the political will at a national and international level to set the right legal and economic incentives.

Recommendations and requirements

1. Authorities should closely cooperate with the industry, and tour operators in particular, to ensure that their sustainability policies lead to the development of interesting products.
2. An international taxation of CO2 emissions is needed (with tax revenues being dedicated solely to CO2 compensation/reduction efforts).
3. Masterplans for sustainable tourism, focusing on climate protection and human rights in a balanced way, not only at the local, but also at the national level.





Martina von Münchhausen
Senior Programme Manager
Sustainable Tourism



World Wildlife Fund For Nature (WWF), Germany



Nature conservancy through sustainable tourism



Headquarter:
Hamburg, Germany



Number of tourism projects (worldwide): approx. 100



Number of collaborators in the WWF Tourism Working group (worldwide): approx. 30

Strategy and measures to turn headwinds related to ecology into opportunities

1. Sustainable tourism is key in leveraging global WWF activities for nature conservancy. Most sustainable tourism activities are located in or near nature reserves and/or biosphere hotspots.
2. Sustainable tourism serves nature conservancy directly (e.g. by funding wildlife guards) and indirectly (by providing an alternative form of creating economic value and employment).
3. The WWF programme for sustainable tourism develops and applies market-based tools to reduce [food waste in hotels kitchens](#) and plastic waste (see "[Plastic Smart Cities](#)" and [guideline for hotels](#)), to foster [corporate climate action](#) or improve [water management](#).
4. The COVID-19 crisis has made many destinations review their strategies, such as Belize, Ecuador (Galapagos), Mexico (Cozumel), Kenya, Philippines, and Vietnam. The WWF collaborates with such destinations to make them recover in a sustainable and resilient way.

The importance of measuring and reducing tourism's ecological footprint for competitiveness and resilience

1. Focusing on domestic or nearby markets can clearly enhance destinations' resilience to external shocks such as the collapse of air travel due to COVID-19. However, short-haul tourism does not necessarily improve a destination's ecological performance, as transportation is only one factor to be considered.
2. Certification as a means to measure, verify and communicate a destination's ecological performance can improve a destination's image and therefore its competitiveness. A case in point is Costa Rica. However, the success of such a strategy depends on guests' preferences and therefore on the source markets.
3. The example of the Vietnamese island Phu Quoc demonstrates that a destination's incentives to improve its ecological performance varies according to source markets: before COVID-19, European guests drove the destination to reduce plastic waste; the local guests who have replaced them have different preferences and do not care much about plastic waste.

Recommendations and requirements

The COVID-19 crisis has clearly demonstrated how interdependent effective nature protection and successful tourism are. Therefore, tourism business should

1. do more to create socio-cultural and ecological co-benefits;
2. become an active partner of environmental organisations to advance a political agenda for nature conservancy.





Paul Jones
Chief Executive Officer

THE LUX
COLLECTIVE



The Lux Collective



High-end hospitality management



Headquarters:
Singapore and Mauritius



Destinations: Mauritius, Maldives,
Reunion Island, China



Net room revenue: Rs 4203 million
(2019) vs. Rs 1485 million (est. 2020)
RevPAR: Rs 7040 (2019) vs. Rs 2776
(est. 2020)



Employees:
3877 (2019) vs. 3221 (2020)

Strategy and measures to turn headwinds related to ecology into opportunities

On the corporate level of The Lux Collective:

1. In 2019, elaboration of the new vision “We care about what matters”. In cooperation with an external consultant, creation of a “Circle of care” which concretises the different aspects that “matter” and relates them to one another. See [The Lux Collective Integrated Report 2020](#)
2. COVID-19 as reinforcing momentum for the new vision and strategy, as “care” becomes key to doing business – regarding both people and nature.
3. Commitment to the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as cooperation with the UN Global Compact to depict the “Collective Sustainability Journey 2030”. See the UN Global Compact COP Report included in the The Lux Collective Integrated Report 2020
4. Different measures towards a circular economy such as
 - avoiding food waste;
 - using supposed waste for other purposes (e.g. coffee beans for mushrooms cultivation, lemon peels as detergent);
 - renovation of a hotel with zero imports (see [high resolution video](#) or [preview](#))

On the destination level of Mauritius:

1. Hotels produce their own food (“from farms to fork”).
2. Hotels cooperate to distribute food waste to those most in need.
3. Public-private strategy for and investments into renewable energy (photovoltaic, wind)
4. Governmental management of the lagoon and the reef through sustainability policies.

The importance of measuring and reducing tourism’s ecological footprint for competitiveness and resilience

1. As most hotels in Mauritius belong to publicly traded companies, they have to report on both their financial and non-financial performance (e.g. on the basis of the Global Reporting Initiative’s standards). This has created a “culture” of reporting and avoiding any waste.
2. Due to and after COVID-19 more than ever, guests will have a preference for destinations and hotels that credibly report on their sustainability measures and performance.
3. Due to Mauritius’ large distance from all major markets (especially in Europe), the reduction of the ecological footprint has to be reached mainly on the supply-side, not on the demand-side (e.g. by focusing on local or nearby markets).

Recommendations and requirements

1. In the COVID-19 context, leaders in and outside of business have an even greater responsibility than before and therefore have to put other people first.
2. This new leadership has to be based “superior wisdom” and serve a greater purpose – that is a more sustainable tourism and society at large.
3. Therefore, sustainability is not about a corporation’s individual quest for a competitive advantage, but about a collective endeavour towards a greater purpose.
4. Cooperation among businesses and with public authorities is required to a) carefully and progressively open the borders to foreign tourists in the short-run and to b) develop a (more) circular economy in the middle- and long-run.

