



Southeast Asia

A DESTINATION FOR EVERY DREAM



Economic Research Institute
for ASEAN and East Asia



Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Part 1 Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN	3
Introduction	3
A. Current State of ASEAN Tourism	6
B. Sustainable Tourism Supply and Demand in ASEAN	9
C. Global Developments in Sustainable Tourism and ASEAN's Response	14
Part 2 Key Insights from AMS Consultations	19
Part 3 Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN	25
A. Key Priority 1: Sustainable Economic Growth	25
B. Key Priority 2: Social Inclusiveness	26
C. Key Priority 3: Resource Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability	28
D. Key Priority 4: Cultural Diversity and Heritage Protection	29
E. Key Priority 5: Resilience Planning and Adaptation	30
F. Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN	31
Part 4 ASEAN Case Studies on Sustainable Tourism Development	53
Concluding Remarks and Way Forward	64
References	66
Appendices	70

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. **The Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN, hereafter the Roadmap, is a holistic and long-term strategic plan for the ASEAN region, which delineates the strategies and essential actions required to attain sustainability objectives within the regional tourism industry.** The Roadmap builds upon the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development (AFSTD), published in early 2023, following the development of the Study to Develop a Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN in the Post COVID-19 Era. This study was conducted by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in 2022 for the Tourism Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat, for the information of the ASEAN national tourism organisations (NTOs).
2. **Whereas the AFSTD identifies the long-term vision for sustainable tourism** development in ASEAN, the overarching operational goal, strategic goals, guiding principles and key pillars; the Roadmap intends to go a step further and guide the ASEAN member states (AMS) with the necessary strategies, actions and best practices to achieve the key priorities identified through AMS consultations and surveys, and, consequently, the long-term vision for sustainable tourism in ASEAN.
3. **The consultations emphasise the necessity for this regional roadmap, with the survey results pinpointing key action areas such as improving energy and resource efficiency in tourism infrastructure, enhancing staff training in sustainability practices, promoting cultural heritage and fostering community engagement in sustainable development efforts.** They also highlighted the importance of a collective approach to sustainable tourism, with a focus on sharing best practices, capacity building and facilitating technical expertise exchange. The Roadmap therefore aligns with the collective aspirations of the AMS by encompassing their need for further environmental conservation, socio-cultural empowerment, economic growth and local development.



4. The specific objectives of the Roadmap include:

- i. Present the findings of the AMS consultations on the key priorities for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN, including environmental protection, cultural conservation and sustainable economic practices, ensuring efforts are directed toward the most impactful initiatives
- ii. Identify the strategies needed to achieve each priority, which are broad enough to be inclusive of different AMS priorities, yet specific enough to guide action, such as enhancing industry standards, promoting innovation and increasing visitor awareness of sustainability
- iii. For each strategy, identify the necessary supporting actions along with the specific activities to be carried out for the effective implementation of actions, expected outcomes, suggested indicators and the stakeholders which must be involved
- iv. Present ASEAN case studies to provide the AMS with practical, actionable insights on sustainable tourism development best practices
- v. Provide considerations on AMS implementation of the Roadmap.

5. To address the specific objectives, the Roadmap consists of four major components.

Part 1 focuses on providing an overview of the sustainable tourism landscape in ASEAN to contextualise the development of the Roadmap.

Part 2 consolidates the findings of the AMS consultations.

Part 3 presents the Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN, which consists of five key priorities.

Part 4 comprises ASEAN case studies, which touch on all the key priorities for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN.

6. The Roadmap is envisioned as a regional guiding framework rather than a prescriptive action plan, enabling the AMS to align their individual sustainable tourism strategies with the overarching goals of ASEAN, thus fostering a cohesive and integrated approach to sustainable tourism development in the region through country-level and region-wide activities.

PART 1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN



INTRODUCTION

7. **Tourism is undoubtedly one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world, contributing significantly to the economies of both developed and developing nations.** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry accounted for one in four new jobs across the world and was responsible for 10.3% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (US\$ 9.6 trillion).¹ In ASEAN, similar to other regions, tourism has also been responsible for a significant percentage of GDP, boosting the regional small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) landscape and job opportunities. From 2010 to 2019, international visitor arrivals (IVAs) in ASEAN increased 96%, and international tourism receipts by 115%.²
8. **This tourism growth in ASEAN can be explained by enhanced air connectivity and visa openness, a growing middle class in the region, governmental prioritisation of tourism and investment in infrastructure, and geographic proximity to key outbound markets such as China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and India.** Pre-COVID-19, the Asia Pacific welcomed 360 million international tourists and was responsible for 26% of global tourism growth.³ Within this macro region, ASEAN accounted for over 70% of tourism growth⁴ and 38% of total IVAs in 2019.⁵ That same year, Thailand was the 8th most visited country in the world, with nearly 40 million international arrivals.⁶ Malaysia came in 14th place, Viet Nam in 21st, Indonesia, 28th, and Singapore, 29th.⁷

¹World Travel & Tourism Council. 2022. *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2022: Global Trends, August 2022*. London.

²United Nations World Tourism Organization. *International Tourism Highlights*. Madrid. Editions 2013, 2015, 2018, 2020.

³Asian Development Bank. 2022. *COVID-19 and the Future of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

⁴Asian Development Bank. 2022. *COVID-19 and the Future of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

⁵United Nations World Tourism Organization. 2020. *International Tourism Highlights: 2020 Edition*. Madrid.

⁶ASEAN Stats Data Portal. 2019. *Visitor Arrival to ASEAN Member States by Origin Countries (in person)*.

⁷United Nations World Tourism Organization. 2020. *International Tourism Highlights: 2020 Edition*. Madrid.



9. **The growth of tourism, however, does not come without impacts.** Tourism reached a record high in 2019, with many destinations around the world suffering from overtourism and its socio-cultural and environmental consequences. In 2020 and 2021, as global travel restrictions were put in place, the strain excessive visitor numbers had been placing on infrastructure, local resources and the environment became more evident than ever before. In ASEAN, overtourism and overcrowding in popular destinations and heritage sites such as Bali, Phuket and Angkor Wat, resulted in environmental degradation, waste management problems and overuse of water resources. There are also concerns about cultural commodification of local traditions as they are adapted to cater to mass tourism.
10. **From the economic perspective, tourism revenue is not evenly distributed.** Large international hotel chains and tour operators often dominate the industry, with a significant share of profits leaving the region, contributing to income inequality and economic dependency on tourism. The influx of foreign investment and capital has also led to the displacement of local communities and the gentrification of neighbourhoods. Moreover, the rapid growth of the tourism industry in some ASEAN countries has raised concerns about the preservation of historical sites and natural habitats.

11. **To address these and other challenges toward sustainable tourism development, the AMS have been taking concrete steps to implement comprehensive strategies.** These encompass a wide range of initiatives, including strengthening collaboration among member states, promoting responsible tourism practices and investing in green infrastructure. Efforts are also being made to engage local communities and preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the region. Nevertheless, the creation and implementation of a comprehensive regional roadmap with actionable strategies for sustainable tourism development is of great importance, to help address the complex challenges and opportunities facing the tourism industry.
12. **The following section further elucidates the rationale behind the development of the** Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN, which builds upon the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development (AFSTD), published in early 2023.
13. **The AFSTD was developed to propose an operational framework for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN, taking into account multi-stakeholder, national and regional perspectives and dimensions.** The AFSTD aims to support COVID-19 recovery in ASEAN and help the AMS effectively address environmental challenges and climate change, as well as socio-cultural issues related to tourism in the region. It does so by reinforcing the strategic actions and activities outlined in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 and other regional and national strategies, as well as providing ASEAN tourism with a long-term vision for sustainable tourism development, an overarching operational goal, strategic goals, guiding principles and key pillars.
14. **Part 1 of this report provides a summary of the AFSTD to contextualise the creation of the Roadmap, starting with an overview of the current landscape of sustainable tourism in ASEAN, along with an examination of the legal framework which facilitates the progress of regional sustainable tourism development.** This is followed by an analysis of the effects of COVID-19 on the ASEAN tourism industry and the existing supply and demand for sustainable tourism in the region, which highlights the need for a regional roadmap to foster COVID-19 recovery, which is underpinned by resilience and sustainability. Lastly, it presents an overview of global developments in sustainable tourism and ASEAN's strategic response to these, which culminates in the development of the AFSTD and this Roadmap.

A. Current State of ASEAN Tourism

- 15. The COVID-19 pandemic halted international travel in 2020 and caused unprecedented impacts on the global tourism industry and its vast value chain.** Whereas travel and tourism before COVID-19 accounted for 10.3% of the world's GDP, this figure dropped to 5.3% in 2020. The pandemic also left 62 million people working in the industry unemployed.⁸ COVID-19 also led to negative cultural and environmental consequences. Protected areas, national parks and heritage sites across the world struggled to continue their conservation efforts due to the lack of tourism revenue and reduced staff.⁹
- 16. In ASEAN, the importance of tourism for the economy has led it to being one of the hardest hit subregions by the COVID-19 pandemic.** IVAs plummeted from 138.51 million in 2019 to 3.25 million in 2021¹⁰, and nearly one-third of the total jobs lost in ASEAN were related to the tourism sector.¹¹ Strict COVID-19-related travel bans and restrictions caused severe impacts, as the borders of Asia Pacific countries remained closed for significantly longer than other regions in the world. Moreover, heavy reliance on international tourists contributed to severe impacts on ASEAN's economy – especially tourists from China. Before COVID-19, Chinese tourists accounted for 10% of all global international tourist arrivals and were also the world's highest spenders.¹² In ASEAN, they represented the main market in 2019 in Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, and were the second or third main market¹³ for all other AMS.
- 17. During 2020 and 2021, the AMS attempted different strategies to either stimulate domestic tourism and/or attract international visitors, while maintaining health and safety as priorities.** These included incentives for domestic travel, marketing campaigns and, at the Asia Pacific level, strategies to facilitate regional travel such as bilateral agreements, travel bubbles and vaccine passport schemes.¹⁴ These strategies, however, were not enough to prevent the Asia Pacific from having the slowest tourism recovery in 2021. As for 2022, international arrivals more than tripled, but remained 77% below 2019 levels, with Asia Pacific continuing as the region with the slowest recovery in 2022.¹⁵

⁸World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021, *Economic Impact Report*, London.

⁹International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2021, *COVID-19 fallout undermining nature conservation efforts*.

¹⁰United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023, *Global and regional tourism performance*.

¹¹International Labor Organization, 2021, *COVID-19 and employment in the tourism sector in the Asia Pacific region*, Bangkok.

¹²Asian Development Bank, 2022, *COVID-19 and the Future of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*, Manila.

¹³AMS Tourism Statistics Reports from 2019.

¹⁴Asian Development Bank, 2022, *COVID-19 and the Future of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*, Manila.

¹⁵United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023, *Tourism is set to return to pre-pandemic levels in some regions in 2023*.

- 18. ASEAN is helping lead COVID-19 recovery in the Asia Pacific by being one of the first subregions to fully reopen to international visitors and implement important strategies to revive the industry and bring back tourists.** These strategies include Thailand's 2021 Phuket Sandbox Programme; changes in visa policies either to attract more tourists and gain competitiveness, such as the case of Viet Nam's implementation of e-visas for all nationalities¹⁶, or to control overtourism and target high-quality visitors, such as with Indonesia's changes on visa exemptions¹⁷; Malaysia's launch of digital nomad visas to adapt to growing post-COVID-19 market trends¹⁸; and the development of new products and destinations across the region.

¹⁶Vietnam Briefing. 2023. *Vietnam Introduces E-Visa for All Nationalities from August 15, 2023*.

¹⁷Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia. 2023. *Gov't to Evaluate Visa Exemption Program*.

¹⁸Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation. 2023. *Foreign Digital Nomads*.

19. ASEAN had the largest number of IVAs compared to other subregions, representing 47% of all Asia Pacific IVAs in 2022.¹⁹ Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia saw the strongest IVA recoveries in 2022, reaching 38.6%, 36.6% and 34.4% of their 2019 IVAs respectively, but Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and Viet Nam lagged behind.²⁰ By the third quarter of 2023, Thailand had the largest number of IVAs, with nearly 22 million arrivals, followed by Malaysia and Singapore. Lao PDR reached its 2023 IVA target of 1.4 million in June, with 1,674,000 IVAs. In September 2023, Cambodia was close to reaching its 4 million target, registering 3.5 by August. See more details below.

Figure 1: Post-COVID-19 ASEAN IVAs (in thousands), Jan-Sep 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total	Target	% of target
BD	10	9	9	8	8	10	9	9	9	82	54	152%
CA	403	435	454	430	442	416	457	465	425	3,927	4,000	98%
IN	736	702	810	866	946	1,063	1,123	1,133	1,070	8,449	11,000	77%
LA	280	276	275	295	279	269	1,674	1,400	120%
MA	1,496	1,298	1,593	1,543	1,550	1,678	1,822	1,717	1,768	14,467	18,000	80%
MM	36	50	84	80	69	136	154	142	133	884
PH	425	432	436	417	353	468	407	404	356	3,699	4,800	77%
SI	932	958	1,021	1,129	1,113	1,129	1,420	1,309	1,131	10,142	14,000	72%
TH	2,145	2,114	2,219	2,182	2,014	2,241	2,490	2,468	2,131	21,800	28,000	78%
VI	871	933	895	984	916	975	1,217	1,217	1,054	8,880	13,000	68%

...: Data not available.

Source: Department of Tourism of the Philippines; Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao PDR; Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia; Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand; Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture of Malaysia; Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia; Stan, Singapore; Vietnam National Tourism Authority. In: Pear Anderson. 2023. The Recovery of the Southeast Asia Tourism Industry: Weekly Summary 17 December 2023.; Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar. 2023.

¹⁹United Nations World Tourism Organization. 2023. *Global and regional tourism performance*.

²⁰Pacific Asia Travel Association. 2023. *Annual Tourism Monitor*.

B. Sustainable Tourism Supply and Demand in ASEAN

- 20. While the COVID-19 recovery is underway, sustainable tourism has gained more importance than ever.** The pause in travel and tourism caused by COVID-19 highlighted the pressure facing many destinations due to overtourism and poor destination management. The pandemic has therefore presented a reset moment for destinations, allowing them to reassess and rethink their tourism strategies, with a renewed focus on sustainability and responsible tourism to address long-standing issues and prepare for a more balanced and resilient future in the post-pandemic era.
- 21. COVID-19 has also prompted tourists and visitors to rethink their travel habits.** According to a study conducted by Booking.com in 2023, which collected responses from approximately 33,000 travellers from around the world, 80% reported that travelling more sustainably is important to them, and 76% want to travel more sustainably in the coming year.²¹ This is in line with a similar study of 11,000 travellers by Expedia Group in 2022, which revealed 90% of visitors look for more sustainable options when travelling.²²
- 22. These global results are in line with research in the Asia Pacific and ASEAN.** A study carried out by Economist Impact in 2022 of over 4,500 travellers from Australia, Japan, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand shows that more than 70% of respondents believe COVID-19 has made sustainable tourism more important for them. For Filipinos, this is true for 98.5% of respondents, and 93.5% of those in Malaysia.²³
- 23. Yet, the willingness to become a more sustainable traveller expressed by consumers has not always materialised.** In 2022, only 46% of global travellers with Booking.com stayed at sustainable accommodation at least once. Research indicates awareness of sustainability in the tourism industry is growing, but there is still much work to be done to make travel more sustainable and facilitate sustainable travelling for tourists.²⁴ Expedia Group found similar results: 70% of travellers reported feeling overwhelmed by starting the process of being a more sustainable traveller, and two out of three respondents would like to have more sustainability information from accommodation and transportation providers.²⁵ Hence, as there is growing demand for sustainable travel, there is much opportunity for creating and communicating sustainable tourism products, services and experiences.

²¹Booking.com. 2023. *Sustainable Travel Report 2023*.

²²Expedia Group. 2022. *Sustainable Travel Study: Consumer Attitudes, Values, and Motivations in Making Conscientious Choices*.

²³Economist Impact. 2022. *Rebuilding tourism in Asia-Pacific: A more conscious traveller?*.

²⁴Booking.com. 2022. *Sustainable Travel Report 2022*.

²⁵Expedia Group. 2022. *Sustainable Travel Study: Consumer Attitudes, Values, and Motivations in Making Conscientious Choices*.

- 24. COVID-19 recovery in ASEAN is underway, with AMS, such as Thailand, having already achieved 55% of their 2019 IVAs by September 2023.** With the return of tourists to the region, it has become crucial to evaluate whether ASEAN destinations are providing sustainable tourism options and effectively communicating them to visitors. This assessment is not only essential for sustainable development, but also aligns with the growing post-COVID-19 market trend, which prioritises sustainable, responsible tourism.
- 25. According to the 2019 World Economic Forum's Competitiveness Index, ASEAN ranks high, particularly in price competitiveness, achieving an average score of 5.9 (where 7 is the best), the highest among other Asia Pacific subregions.** Additionally, it excels in terms of natural resources, with seven AMS²⁶ ranking in the top 70 out of 140 countries. Nevertheless, when it comes to environmental sustainability, ASEAN faces challenges, as nearly all AMS find themselves in the bottom 20% of the list.²⁷ Similarly, in the 2021 World Economic Forum's Development Index, although the Asia Pacific was the second-highest performer in the overall ranking and scored above average for natural resources, the region registered the lowest performance in environmental sustainability.²⁸
- 26. The importance of sustainable tourism is recognised and prioritised in individual AMS tourism policies, as well as in regional policies and frameworks.** Here is a summary of the AMS' sustainable tourism landscape, as outlined in the Study to Develop a Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN in the Post COVID-19 Era, and some key strategies and policies implemented by them.
- i. Brunei Darussalam.** It is in the early stages of developing sustainable tourism, aiming to increase awareness of the benefits among industry stakeholders. The Brunei Darussalam Tourism Industry Roadmap 2023-2035 is being developed to position it as a destination for nature, culture and adventure; create a sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism industry; strengthen innovative partnership and collaboration; and build a highly skilled workforce to ensure quality tourism services. Other sustainability efforts, including reducing reliance on oil and gas and adopting renewable energy, are crucial. Balancing tourism viability with carbon emission reduction is a significant challenge, especially in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase.

²⁶7 out of 9, as Myanmar is not part of the index.

²⁷World Economic Forum, 2019. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019: Travel and Tourism at a Tipping Point*. Geneva.

²⁸World Economic Forum, 2022. *Travel & Tourism Development Index 2021: Rebuilding for a Sustainable and Resilient Future*. Geneva.

- ii. **Cambodia.** Siem Reap, its most visited destination, grew rapidly due to the popularity and importance of Angkor Wat, but this led to challenges in visitor management and heritage conservation. The Tourism Development Master Plan of Siem Reap (2021-2035)²⁹ is a strategic response to transform it into a high-quality destination, prioritising affluent tourists and mitigating the impact on the heritage site. The plan employs sustainable heritage management and inclusive development, emphasising seven key areas: site development, new products, promotion, quality enhancement, environmental management, infrastructure development and participatory governance. Even before the Master Plan, the government was already committed to ecotourism for green economic development, establishing 22 ecotourism communities to stimulate local economies.

- iii. **Indonesia.** Its sustainable tourism development is well institutionalised, both at the national and local/regional levels. The country's tourism strategic plan emphasises regional commitment, collaboration and establishment of sustainable tourism destinations. Key performance indicators monitor diverse sites beyond commercial businesses, reflecting stakeholder recognition. Challenges include funding constraints and geographical barriers, requiring technological advancements and crisis management for sustainable tourism success. One of Indonesia's many efforts toward sustainable tourism and environmental protection is the visitor management strategy implemented in 2019 at the Komodo National Park. This approach caps daily visitor numbers and has increased entrance fees, with a portion channelled directly into conservation and community development efforts.³⁰

- iv. **Lao PDR.** Tourism is an important sector for Lao's socioeconomic development, but challenges remain to increase its international openness, connectivity and competitiveness. As tourism grows, it wants to be positioned as a sustainable tourism destination, emphasising its cultural and natural assets, and attracting high-end, longer-stay tourists for a green recovery. The Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park is a good example of sustainable tourism development in a natural protected area. The park's ecotourism initiatives offer an extra source of income for the communities residing around the protected zone. Tours are strategically crafted to establish a direct connection between conservation efforts and tourism, ensuring the funds contributed by visitors play a constructive role in motivating local residents to safeguard biodiversity.³¹

²⁹Royal Government of Cambodia, 2021, *Tourism Development Master Plan Siem Reap 2021-2035*.

³⁰The Jakarta Post, 2019, *Don't sell it cheap: Komodo Island targeted at 'premium' tourists; Komodo Island to be closed in January 2020*.

³¹Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park and Wildlife Conservation Society, n.d. *Conservation*.

- v. Malaysia.** The concept of sustainable development has been an element of its tourism agenda since the first Malaysia Tourism Policy formulated in 1992. Since then, more comprehensive policies have been developed, with greater attention to the preservation and enhancement of natural attractions, historical sites, buildings and artefacts. The 2020-2030 National Tourism Policy (NTP)³² positions sustainable tourism as a competitive advantage and driver of inclusive growth. Transformation strategies include strengthening governance, creating special investment zones, adopting smart tourism and promoting sustainability. Products such as ecotourism, adventure tourism and cultural experiences are prioritised. Malaysia also emphasises private sector and local government roles, promotes intra-ASEAN travel and strongly supports community-based ecotourism.
- vi. Myanmar.** In 2017, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism set the goal of positioning it as a sustainable tourism destination, prioritising cultural awareness, environmental consciousness and economic fairness for tourists. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted efforts, leading to the creation of the Myanmar Tourism Strategic Recovery Roadmap (MTSRR) in 2021. Developed with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency, the roadmap focuses on economic recovery, marketing and institutional strengthening. Seven strategies aim for long-term resilience and sustainability, including a smart tourism ecosystem, a Myanmar Tourism Board and investment in inclusive and community-based tourism. Domestic tourism is prioritised to revitalise the sector.
- vii. The Philippines.** The nation prioritises sustainability in tourism through the National Tourism Development Plans (NTDP) and National Ecotourism Strategies (NES). The NTDP (2011-2016; 2016-2022) integrates competitiveness and inclusive growth, aligning with the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan. The NES (2013-2022) focuses on globally competitive ecotourism, diversification, rural community empowerment, conservation incentives, recreation promotion and community involvement. The Transforming Communities towards Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism (TouRIST) programme launched in 2019

³²Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia. 2019, *National Tourism Policy 2020 - 2030*. Kuala Lumpur.

targets seven pilot sites, emphasising inclusive local economic development and environmental sustainability. The Philippines promotes sustainable practices among tourism businesses, adopting certification, ASEAN standards and roadmaps for low-carbon tourism. Monitoring sustainable tourism lacks a nationwide system, requiring a harmonised approach for integrated destination management. Monitoring sustainable tourism lacks a nationwide system, requiring a harmonised approach for integrated destination management.

- viii. Singapore.** Aligned with the Singapore Green Plan 2030, the government emphasises sustainable tourism as a national imperative, promoting collaboration between the government, private sector and innovation solution providers. The Tourism Sustainability Programme was launched in April 2022 to support businesses in capability development, innovation, education and awareness. Singapore's regulatory environment strongly supports sustainable tourism measures, reflecting a positive international consensus. It also leads the region in terms of smart tourism and is among the global leaders. In 2019, it was awarded the World's Smartest City – a position it has retained for three years running because of its superior technology infrastructure and digital initiatives.
- ix. Thailand.** As one of the most visited destinations in ASEAN and the world, tourism is one of the major drivers of its economy. It has also long incorporated elements of sustainable tourism in its policy agenda, and sustainable tourism development projects are mostly implemented by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in collaboration with national tourism organisations such as the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS). Despite its efforts, Thailand's popularity has led to overtourism and negative impacts on natural and heritage tourist attractions, with the case of Maya Bay in the Phi Phi Islands being the most well-known. In 2018, Thailand embarked on a critical environmental restoration project, closing the bay to rejuvenate the coral reefs and ecosystem. The marine park was reopened in January 2022, but with new measures in place, including a carrying capacity, the prohibition to swim and a new docking area for boats on the opposite side of the island.³³

³³TAT News, 2018, *Thailand's DNP announces four-month rejuvenation for Ku Phi Phi's famed Maya Bay*; The Guardian, 2022, *Thailand cove made famous in The Beach reopens to visitors after four-year closure*.

- x. **Viet Nam.** The term sustainable tourism is relatively new here, and as such has not yet been officially adopted in the industry. In practice, its tourism industry relates to this concept in terms of being responsible for the management of resources and the environment. Nevertheless, greater attention should be given to effective enforcement of environmental protection regulations, sustainability of tourism development, and participation in international commitments on sustainability issues such as water resources, waste treatment and biodiversity conservation.

27. Despite the AMS initiatives and policy frameworks mentioned above, significant opportunities for enhancing sustainable tourism practices in ASEAN still exist, hence again the need for this Roadmap.

C. Global Developments in Sustainable Tourism and ASEAN's Response

28. The tourism industry recognises the importance of sustainable practices to ensure the long-term viability of destinations and protect the environment and local communities. Here are some key developments in global sustainable tourism and ASEAN's strategic response.

- i. **Technology for sustainability.** Technology plays an increasingly important role in sustainable tourism. For example, booking platforms are now offering filters for eco-friendly accommodation, and apps are helping tourists find sustainable transportation options. The ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025³⁴ aims to enhance regional digital integration, innovation and inclusivity, and foster collaboration among the AMS to further digitalise all major sectors of the region, including travel and tourism. Further, in 2020 ASEAN has adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Digital Tourism³⁵ which seeks to promote the use of digital solutions to promote safe and seamless travel experiences in Southeast Asia.
- ii. **The rise of community-based tourism (CBT) and ecotourism.** CBT and ecotourism involve local communities in decision-making and ensure they benefit from tourism development. By taking place in natural areas and rural/indigenous community areas, they help preserve cultural heritage and traditions, the local environment and boost local employment and economic

³⁴ASEAN, 2021. *ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025*. Jakarta.

³⁵ASEAN, 2021. *ASEAN Declaration on Digital Tourism*. Jakarta.

growth through community stewardship. The 2016 ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Guidelines provide recommendations for developing and managing CBT initiatives in the region, and are a good example of how ASEAN is meeting global developments and standards.

- iii. **Growth of green certification.** A number of green certification programmes have been developed to recognise tourism destinations and businesses committed to sustainability. These programmes help travellers make informed choices about sustainable destinations, experiences and suppliers. The ASEAN Green Hotel Standard³⁶ provides criteria for hotels to meet in order to be certified as sustainable, and is another great example of ASEAN's alignment with global standards to maintain the region's competitive edge in the global tourism market through upholding sustainability principles.

29. Tourism has been one of the main areas of ASEAN cooperation since the early days of its establishment. The ASEAN Tourism Agreement, signed in 2002, outlines AMS commitments toward tourism development for the sustainable socio-economic growth of the region.³⁷ Since then, many regional strategic plans, frameworks and studies for tourism have been developed, further strengthening the commitments. The ASEAN Economic Blueprint 2025 confirms the ASEAN vision for tourism, which is to make ASEAN, by 2025, 'a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and committed to responsible, sustainable and inclusive tourism development, so as to contribute significantly to the socio-economic well-being of ASEAN peoples'.³⁸

30. To achieve this, the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 outlines the main strategic directions: to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination and ensure ASEAN tourism is sustainable and inclusive. As strategic actions, the plan suggests upgrading local communities and public-private sector participation in the tourism value chain; ensuring safety and security; prioritising the protection and management of heritage sites; and increasing responsiveness to environmental protection and climate change. The plan also outlines stakeholder responsibilities, such as ASEAN tourism ministers providing the policy framework and direction, ASEAN NTOs serving as the executing body to implement and monitor the plan, and ASEAN committees implementing the strategic actions and activities.³⁹

³⁶ASEAN, 2016. *ASEAN Green Hotel Standard*. Jakarta.

³⁷ASEAN, 2022. *ASEAN Tourism Agreement*.

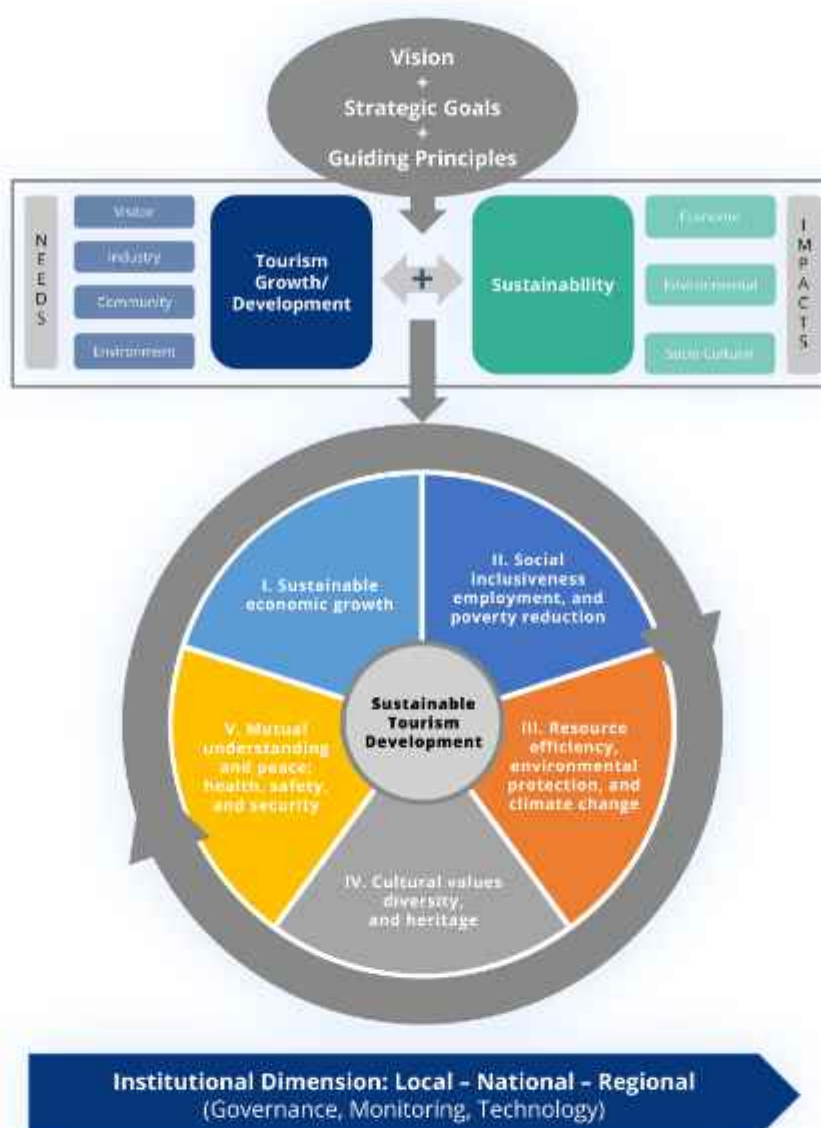
³⁸ASEAN Secretariat, 2015. *ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025*, p. 26.

³⁹ASEAN, 2015. *ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025*.

- 31. As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed/halted the implementation of several strategies and activities in the ASEAN tourism sector.** To assist in regional COVID-19 recovery without undermining efforts toward sustainable and inclusive tourism, the Study to Inform the Post-COVID-19 Recovery for ASEAN Tourism was developed by the Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development (CTIF), in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN NTOs. This study provides recommendations and actions for a phased recovery of the region's tourism industry aligned with the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025. The suggested recovery trajectory includes three phases: reopening, recovery and resilience, and highlights that COVID-19 tourism recovery in ASEAN must be underpinned by principles of sustainability and inclusivity.
- 32. The study calls for a redefinition of success in tourism, with key performance indicators (KPIs) which go beyond IVAs and receipts, taking into account indicators such as length of stay, jobs created, gender equality in tourism employment, funding for local conservation, the number of sustainability certified businesses, resource usage and residence well-being scores.** It also suggests setting a stronger foundation for future tourism development through alignment of sustainability standards, guidelines and monitoring and evaluation platforms; improving vital infrastructure, with the emphasis on green infrastructure in all new developments; and promoting human rights in tourism, eg, fighting against gender discrimination, child exploitation and modern slavery.
- 33. The COVID-19 pandemic urged ASEAN to rethink its tourism strategy, not only to advance recovery, but also to build stronger resilience in the region.** To help mitigate the severe impact on ASEAN tourism, COVID-19 also served as a motivation for the sector to try to build forward better by designing and building a more sustainable tourism industry. Sustainability therefore must play a central role in all future travel and tourism planning within ASEAN. This will not only mitigate tourism's negative impacts on the natural environment, but also increase the region's competitiveness and help attract visitors who stay longer, spend locally and engage in more responsible and sustainable travel experiences, boosting the local economy and empowering host communities.
- 34. The need for a multi-sectoral and long-term approach with a stronger emphasis on sustainability and resilience called for the development of the AFSTD, introduced in the beginning of this section.** According to the framework, the long-term vision for sustainable tourism in ASEAN is to be a region which 'is recognised as a quality sustainable tourism destination, which promotes the economic prosperity, welfare, and engagement of the local community; protects and develops its natural environment and culture; and provides a high quality experience to responsible and sustainable-minded visitors/tourists.'

35. The framework highlights that interventions across the visitors, industry, communities, environment (VICE) dimensions of tourism; as well as collaborations across the public and private sectors, communities and other stakeholders, are critical if a more sustainable path for tourism is to be established. Making tourism more sustainable involves managing economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts by incorporating the needs of all stakeholders in tourism planning, development and operations.

Figure 2: ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development



Source: ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Post COVID-19 Era: Summary, 2023.

36. The framework also outlines five interrelated and overlapping pillars for sustainable tourism development in the ASEAN region. These pillars are considered key elements of sustainable development to which tourism could make a significant and lasting contribution.

- i. Pillar 1: Sustainable economic growth.
- ii. Pillar 2: Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction.
- iii. Pillar 3: Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change.
- iv. Pillar 4: Cultural values, diversity and heritage.
- v. Pillar 5: Mutual understanding and peace; health, safety and security.

37. The pillars were defined to help identify the key priorities for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN, which are presented next, following the consultations with the AMS. To read the full AFSTD, with the overarching operational goal for sustainable tourism in ASEAN, strategic goals and guiding principles, you can access the document [here](#).

PART 2

KEY INSIGHTS FROM AMS CONSULTATIONS



- 38. The Roadmap was developed based on the AFSTD, and with reference to the latest relevant international guidelines,** such as the Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals⁴⁰, and the G20 Bali Guidelines for Strengthening Communities and MSME as Tourism Transformation Agents: A People-centred Recovery⁴¹, as well as the results obtained in an AMS quantitative and qualitative study conducted in 2023. The study consisted of online and offline consultations, together with an online survey. This component of the report presents the key insights and findings from this research, including key challenges and focus areas identified for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN.
- 39. The consultations and accompanying survey data jointly emphasise the critical need for a regional roadmap.** The overarching goal remains steadfast: to transform the ASEAN region into a leading tourism destination unreservedly committed to sustainable development. This commitment is particularly crucial given the post-COVID-19 landscape, with both its challenges and opportunities.

⁴⁰United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023. *Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*. Madrid.

⁴¹United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2022. *G20 Bali Guidelines for Strengthening Communities and MSMEs as Tourism Transformation Agents – A People-centred Recovery*. Madrid.



40. The online survey was distributed to AMS in June 2023, and 21 representatives from 11 ASEAN public sector organisations participated:

- i. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia
- ii. Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism
- iii. Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration, Thailand
- iv. Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao PDR
- v. Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia
- vi. Sarawak Tourism Board, Malaysia
- vii. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar
- viii. Tourism Development Department of Brunei Darussalam
- ix. Tourism Malaysia
- x. Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia
- xi. Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand.

41. The survey data provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by stakeholders in ASEAN's tourism industry. It also provides insights on the most important priorities for AMS' sustainable tourism initiatives, types of support needed to advance sustainable tourism development, and the most important elements to be added to their tourism plans and strategies. One of the survey's most meaningful findings is that the minority of respondents believe their AMS' tourism policies have a strong focus on sustainability, which highlights the need for improvements in sustainable tourism development regulatory frameworks. Here is a summary of other critical findings from the survey.

42. Part 1 – Importance of factors (on a scale of 1-5)

i. What do you consider the most significant challenge in promoting sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction?

Lack of funding and resources was identified by 57% of respondents as the most significant challenge in promoting sustainable tourism in their jurisdiction. Some 56% emphasised limited awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism principles as an extremely important factor, while 48% agreed it was an important factor, while 50% cited insufficient policy frameworks and regulations as a critical contributor. It is imperative to note that 68% said they face difficulty in coordinating efforts among different government departments.

ii. Which of the following priorities is most important for your sustainable tourism initiatives?

Environmental conservation and protection was cited by 62% of respondents as an extremely important priority, with 81% saying socio-cultural preservation and community engagement is a priority, and 68% said economic growth and local development is critical. Some 56% of respondents also emphasised balancing tourism development with local needs and interests.

iii. What kind of support or assistance do you need to advance sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction?

Some 71% of respondents cited capacity building and training programs as a critical support element, with 81% saying technical expertise and knowledge sharing would be an important enabler, and 75% said assistance in the form of financial incentives and funding opportunities would allow them to advance sustainable tourism in their jurisdictions. Some 90% of all respondents agreed collaborative platforms and networks for exchange of best practices are imperative.

43. Part 2 – Multiple-choice questions

i. How would you rate the current focus on sustainability within your tourism development policies?

Some 52.4% of respondents replied having some focus, but with room for improvement in sustainability integration; 28.6% responded having limited attention to sustainability, with more efforts required; and the minority, at 19%, reported wanting a strong emphasis on sustainability principles and practices.

ii. What specific elements would you like to see included in the sustainability action plan for your jurisdiction?

The majority of respondents at 42.9% replied they would like to see further enhancing of policy frameworks and regulatory measures, with 28.6% saying encouraging public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism development, 19% chose strengthening community participation and engagement, and 9.5% selected addressing specific environmental challenges and opportunities.

44. In response to short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities, respondents' short-term objectives focused on capacity building among tourism stakeholders to foster a better understanding and integration of sustainability practices. Mid-term goals involved establishing public-private partnership projects and creating platforms for the exchange of good practices in sustainability. Long-term plans were to adjust policy, regulatory, and incentive frameworks to comprehensively support sustainable tourism development and management. The full list of survey questions, answers and more detail on participants can be found in the Appendices at the end of this document.

45. The online and offline consultations took place in August and September 2023, and were joined by representatives from all AMS. The timeline of activities is as follows:

- i. August 2, 2023: Online focus meeting – joined by representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Viet Nam (with Thailand sharing comments via email)
- ii. August 10, 2023: Individual online meeting with representatives from Brunei Darussalam
- iii. August 10, 2023: Individual online meeting with representatives from Indonesia
- iv. September 4, 2023: Offline workshop in Luang Prabang, joined by representatives from the 10 AMS.

46. The consultations and discussions have been pivotal in shaping this Roadmap for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN. The discourse centred on the integration of environmental conservation, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and the promotion of economic growth through sustainable tourism practices. In the focus meeting, individual discussions and workshop, a strong consensus emerged on the urgency of environmental protection, with a significant majority recognising it as a top priority. The dialogue was rich with proposals for innovative policies, such as the adoption of no-plastic initiatives and the enhancement of waste management systems, reflecting a regional commitment to reducing the environmental footprint of tourism.

- 47. Cultural heritage preservation is also a focal point, with discussions highlighting the need for educational programmes, heritage mapping, and public-private partnerships to protect and promote local cultures and traditions.** This aligns with the broader goal of maintaining the socio-cultural fabric of the region while fostering tourism. Economic considerations are equally prominent, with a clear understanding sustainable tourism should contribute positively to local economies and support the post-COVID-19 recovery. The emphasis is on creating job opportunities, encouraging responsible investment and ensuring tourism growth aligns with the principles of green growth and sustainability.
- 48. The meetings also identified the need for a more holistic approach to sustainable tourism, suggesting ASEAN should not only set specific targets for emissions reduction and industry certification, but also focus on broader strategies.** These include raising industry standards, developing sustainability plans which incorporate international guidelines, and responding to the demand for sustainable tourism experiences. Throughout the discussions, collaboration was a recurring theme – whether through capacity building, knowledge sharing, or the establishment of platforms for sharing best practices. The aim is to foster a regional ecosystem where sustainable tourism practices are not only encouraged but also actively supported through collective efforts.
- 49. The results obtained from AMS consultations, meetings and the online survey led to the identification of five key priorities for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN, which the strategies and proposed actions of the Roadmap build upon.** These key priorities are also in line with the pillars outlined in the AFSTD, but were slightly adjusted to fit with different AMS' priorities and their recovery stages. For instance, whereas Pillar 5 of the AFSTD is Mutual Understanding and Peace, Health, Safety, and Security, the Key Priority 5 is Resilience Planning and Adaptation. This change was made to incorporate the fundamental aspects of health, safety and security, but also to go a step further and encompass resilience-building and adaptive capacity. As the AMS' tourism industry recovers from COVID-19, they emphasised the need for not only meeting safety protocols but also being able to adapt and better respond to future crises and challenges. Another change was made in Pillar 4/Key Priority 4, where heritage protection was added as a response to the needs of the AMS highlighted in the consultations.

50. Therefore, the five key priorities, which are further described in the next component of the report, are:

- i. Sustainable economic growth
- ii. Social inclusiveness
- iii. Resource efficiency and environmental sustainability
- iv. Cultural diversity and heritage protection
- v. Resilience planning and adaptation.

PART 3

ACTION ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN



51. This component of the report consists of the Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN. It describes the key priorities for sustainable tourism development in ASEAN, as well as the strategic areas for intervention under each priority, as outlined in the AFSTD.

A. Key Priority 1: Sustainable Economic Growth

52. Sustainable economic growth means building an economy which is strong, stable and sustainable, and capable of providing prosperity and opportunities for all. It requires a comprehensive approach to align the growth of the tourism sector with environmental, social and economic sustainability practices. The viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and businesses needs to be ensured for them to continue prospering and deliver benefits in the long term.

53. Strategic areas for intervention include:

- i. Sustainable tourism policy, regulatory environment and strategy.** Strengthening policy frameworks and institutional arrangements ensures sustainable tourism development is prioritised and coordinated effectively.
- ii. Promotion of green investment and investment in physical and digital infrastructure.** Investing in green public infrastructure such as energy-efficient transportation and renewable energy sources not only reduces the carbon footprint of tourism, but also helps protect and preserve fragile ecosystems. At the same time, smart tourism development – driven by advanced technologies and data insights – helps optimise resource utilisation, reduce environmental impacts and enhance the visitor experience.



iii. Tourism offers diversification and marketing for sustainability and resilience.

Diversifying tourism – including destinations, products and markets – enhances adaptability. Leveraging destination marketing for promoting off-peak travel and responsible, off-the-beaten-track experiences helps reduce overcrowding and seasonality, as well as spread the benefits of tourism in the destination.

- 54. Together, these strategic areas work to foster sustainable economic growth in the tourism industry, balancing economic gains with environmental and social considerations.**

B. Key Priority 2: Social Inclusiveness

- 55. Social inclusiveness is a critical priority in sustainable tourism development, aiming to create a tourism industry which benefits local communities and ensures inclusivity in every aspect.** Besides reducing poverty and inequality, tourism is well placed to engage, protect and promote vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including women, minorities and young people, who are more strongly represented in tourism when compared to other economic sectors. Inclusive tourism also entails providing a high level of access and quality experiences for people with physical, sensory and other disabilities. An inclusive ASEAN also involves a greater focus on people engagement and empowerment.

56. Strategic areas for intervention include:

- i. Quality jobs in the tourism sector.** Improving the employment quality in tourism includes the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all, supported by fair labour practices and regulations and investment in human resources (ie, skills training/retraining programmes). It also involves addressing specific vulnerabilities faced by women, both in the formal and informal sectors, such as seasonality/part-time work, low wages or wage gaps, precarious working conditions and sexual harassment.
- ii. Widespread and fair distribution of tourism benefits.** Direct and indirect economic and social benefits from tourism must be fairly distributed throughout the local community, with additional focus on improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor and disadvantaged. Accessibility in destinations must also be provided to ensure all can enjoy and benefit from the tourism experience.
- iii. Support local MSMEs.** Supporting local entrepreneurship and supply chains stimulates the local economy. Targeted interventions include training and mentorship programmes for MSMEs on key business management skills (ICT, market access, accessible finance, marketing, etc).
- iv. Engage local communities in planning and decision-making.** Developing public-private-community partnerships and mechanisms helps engage community members in the planning and decision-making process on the development of long-term inclusive and sustainable tourism strategies. A greater sense of ownership and well-being among locals promotes social cohesion and facilitates tourists-locals' relations. Community-based, indigenous and rural tourism initiatives also help empower local communities, as well as increasing their economic resilience.

57. These strategies collectively work to empower and benefit local communities, foster economic stability and create a more inclusive and sustainable tourism industry.

C. Key Priority 3: Resource Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability

58. **COVID-19 led to a renewed focus on sustainability and the natural environment.** Even after the effects of the pandemic-induced crises have been more or less resolved, risks such as dwindling resources and climate change will continue. To the best extent possible, the impact of tourist facilities on the environment should be minimised in recognition that the environment is a finite resource. Thus, there has to be a cohesive approach to tourism and the environment, particularly where tourism-related economic growth is decoupled from environmental degradation and excessive resource use.
59. **Overall, the ASEAN region is under incredible stress with respect to its resilience and sustainability due to loss of biodiversity, pollution of water bodies, loss of tropical rainforests, increasing solid and industrial waste and plastic marine pollution.** The region is also prone to natural disasters, making it especially vulnerable to the ill-effects of climate change. Thus, fostering sustainable development requires strengthening natural resource management, encouraging and empowering communities to engage in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and promoting clean energy and the circular economy.
60. **Strategic areas for intervention include:**
- i. **Low carbon and resource efficiency.** To ensure a low carbon tourism industry, it is imperative for governments and authorities to establish and uphold stringent regulations governing waste management, water use and energy consumption. Tourism businesses must be trained and incentivised to reduce resource usage, adopt renewable energy and circular economy practices, and take part in sustainability certification programmes. Local communities and visitors also play a part in reducing carbon emissions and usage of non-renewable resources. Therefore, they must also be made aware of their carbon footprint in destinations and how to mitigate negative impacts.
 - ii. **Environmental preservation.** As with responsible and efficient use of resources, ensuring ecosystem and biodiversity conservation also requires destinations to regulate, monitor and enforce sustainable practices for preservation. Leveraging nature-based solutions (NbS) further enhances environmental protection and promotes carbon removal in destinations. Finally, providing training on environmental conservation to tourism businesses in protected

areas and raising awareness of local communities and visitors are also important strategies. The recent released of the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework also provides guidance to adapt to future economic and environmental challenges covering coastal, freshwater, and marine tourism sectors where terrestrial, wildlife-based tourism currently dominates.

61. **These strategic areas collectively promote responsible resource management and environmental protection in the tourism industry, fostering a more sustainable and eco-conscious approach to travel.**

D. Key Priority 4: Cultural Diversity and Heritage Protection

62. **Tourism can promote and amplify the preservation and enhancement of rich cultural heritage through initiatives to restore and promote significant buildings and traditions, and foster meaningful encounters between people of diverse cultures.** Socio-economic benefits may also be gained through cultural tourism and development of creative industries. Avoiding the risks of physical damage to heritage sites or the misrepresentation of cultural practices requires proper management, including raising awareness and understanding among visitors/tourists.

63. **Strategic areas for intervention include:**

- i. **Safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage.** Effective regulation, monitoring and enforcement of cultural heritage protection are vital to safeguard historic sites and practices, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. Incentives and investments further contribute to the maintenance and restoration of cultural landmarks. Training tourism businesses in cultural sustainability and heritage protection empowers them to offer experiences which respect and embrace cultural diversity. Encouraging responsible behaviour by visitors ensures local communities and cultures are respected.
- ii. **Promote local culture and heritage.** Promoting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage allows for the continued celebration of local traditions and craftsmanship. By fostering understanding and appreciation of local culture and heritage, this strategic area encourages a deeper connection between travellers and the communities they visit, enriching both the cultural experience and the sustainability of tourism.

E. Key Priority 5: Resilience Planning and Adaptation

- 64. Resilience planning and adaptation is the last key priority of this Roadmap, which encompasses Pillar 5 of the AFSTD – Mutual Understanding and Peace; Health, Safety, and Security.** The safety and security of both visitors/tourists and locals must be ensured in order to develop a thriving, sustainable tourism sector. Similar to how the September 11 attacks in the United States radically changed global security protocols while travelling, the COVID-19 pandemic is also expected to permanently change health and hygiene protocols. The need for national emergency mechanisms and crisis management systems to be in place in tourism destinations has also been amplified.
- 65. This is why the priority highlights resilience and adaptation.** It calls for tourism destinations to not only ensure health and safety, but also to withstand and adapt to crises and changing circumstances.
- 66. Strategic areas for intervention include:**
- i. Manage security issues.** Ensuring health and safety in destinations is paramount and should involve rigorous health and safety protocols to protect both tourists and local communities. It should also help reinforce the image of the destination as a safe place to visit.
 - ii. Multi-hazard risk management and preparedness.** Conducting risk assessments and increasing preparedness for crises and disasters is crucial, enabling destinations to understand, mitigate and respond effectively to potential threats. This includes early warning systems, emergency response plans and crisis management training. Contingency plans for destinations should also include detailed information for potential visitors about what to prepare in advance regarding potential threats.
 - iii. Cooperation for resilience.** There must be enhanced communication, collaboration, coordination and partnerships among the relevant government agencies, between the public and private sectors, across borders and with international organisations to facilitate swift and effective crisis management and recovery responses. Sharing of information, experiences and best practices is important, but more so is developing common, holistic responses and solutions.

F. Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN

67. The following table illustrates the Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN, with the key priorities and strategic areas outlined above. The Roadmap also presents the strategies, actions, specific activities, expected outcomes, suggested indicators and stakeholders which must play a role in each strategy. The expected outcomes and suggested indicators columns indicate measurable criteria and anticipated results associated with each strategy or action outlined in the Roadmap. They offer a clear and quantifiable way to assess the progress and success of the suggested actions. These indicators and expected outcomes aim to help stakeholders and decision-makers monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts in achieving sustainable tourism development goals.
68. The stakeholders column specifies the government entities, organisations or groups which are responsible for the implementation of each strategy or action. Delineating roles helps clarify responsibilities, promotes collaboration and ensures all destination stakeholders involved understand their part in achieving the Roadmap's objectives.
69. Before presenting the Roadmap, it is important to note the enabling environment for the achievement of the key priorities includes governance; legislative framework; human, technical and financial resources; and the need for infrastructure enhancement, technological advancement and fostering partnerships. Governance plays a pivotal role in the advancement of sustainable tourism, with the national government taking the lead in prioritising and shaping policy development. This commitment is further reinforced through the establishment of a robust legislative framework, where the government actively develops and enforces comprehensive laws, regulations, and standards tailored to sustainable tourism.
70. To effectively implement these policies, a dedicated team of tourism professionals, including tourism policy experts, is essential. These experts are responsible for regularly reviewing and updating strategic plans and providing vital support for the upskilling and development of destination management organisations (DMOs), which focus on destination stewardship and implement sustainability principles in tourism planning and management. Even though the main role of DMOs has always been to promote the destination (they are most commonly known as destination marketing organisations), they should now shift toward a more holistic approach which encompasses destination development, community collaboration and sustainability.

- 71. Effective tourism destination management maximises visitors' value and quality, while ensuring the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination, preserving the natural and cultural assets, and catalysing the benefits for the destination's local economy and community.** The DMO is responsible for formulating strategies based on the destination's needs, competencies and priorities assessed during a participatory process with all relevant tourism stakeholders, including the local community and minority groups.⁴²
- 72. Lastly, the allocation of adequate financial resources is crucial to support all of these actions, ensuring that the initiatives for sustainable tourism are well-funded and effectively executed.** This delineates the required resources that the AMS must allocate to bolster the successful implementation of strategies.

⁴²Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA). 2021. *Tourism Destination Resilience (Online Course)*.

73. As seen in the Roadmap, recommended strategies and actions are led mainly by government organisations, especially the Ministry of Tourism, the NTO and the DMOs, with the support of the private sector, communities, NGOs, media and academia, among others. For a summary of stakeholder responsibilities, see the table below.

Table 1: Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities in the Roadmap

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Public sector (ministries, NTOs and DMOs)	Policy and regulation, coordination, funding and support, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation
Private sector	Innovation, investment, capacity-building participation, compliance, promotion
NGOs	Community engagement, advocacy, capacity building, transparency and reporting
Communities	Participation, beneficiaries, stewardship
International organisations	Technical assistance, funding, capacity building
Funding organisations	Financial support, investment in innovation
Media	Raising awareness, promotion
Financial institutions	Funding, capacity building
Academia and research institutions	Research and development, innovation
Certification bodies	Standard setting, certification process, promotion

Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN

1 Key Priority: Sustainable Economic Growth

Strategic Area 1.1: Sustainable tourism policy, regulatory environment and strategy

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.1 Strengthen policy frameworks and institutional arrangements for sustainable tourism development	<p>1.1.1.1 Develop and implement policies and regulations for sustainable tourism development</p> <p>1.1.1.1.a Review and update multi-level sustainable tourism development strategies (national, regional and local) with community and stakeholder engagement in decision-making</p> <p>1.1.1.1.b Encourage multi-stakeholder networks, collaborations and partnerships through regular meetings and consultations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct policy analysis and stakeholder consultations to draft and ratify new sustainable tourism policies Encourage the implementation of the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Toolkits (ongoing- to be finalised in 2024) to measure the degree of sustainability of destinations Conduct strategy review sessions to engage communities and stakeholders in updating strategies Organise regular multi-stakeholder meetings and forums Develop platforms for collaboration and information exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established legal and policy framework for sustainable tourism Increased awareness and compliance with sustainable tourism standards Updated and relevant sustainable tourism strategies at all levels Increased stakeholder buy-in and community involvement Stronger networks and partnerships among tourism stakeholders Enhanced collaboration and shared best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new or updated sustainable tourism policies implemented Degree of stakeholder awareness and compliance as proposed under the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Toolkits Level of updates made to existing strategies Degree of stakeholder engagement and buy-in as reflected in strategy revisions Number and effectiveness of multi-stakeholder networks and partnerships formed Quality and frequency of collaborative activities and information exchange 	Ministry of Tourism, NTO, private sector (hospitality, travel agencies, tour operators, etc.), NGOs, communities, international organisations, funding organisations (e.g., ADB, World Bank) DMO staff, local community leaders, tourism sector representatives. Policy makers, environmental experts, cultural heritage specialists
	<p>1.1.1.2 Support the transition of existing Destination Marketing Organisations to Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)</p> <p>Note: The transition from marketing to management is crucial for sustainable tourism because it shifts the focus from merely promoting a destination to holistically managing it in a way that ensures long-term sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise workshops and training for DMOs to enhance their strategic planning and operational capabilities (topics can include sustainable tourism principles and practices; strategic planning for sustainable destination management; environmental conservation in tourism; cultural heritage preservation and community engagement, among others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMOs effectively manage and promote sustainable tourism Enhanced coordination and management of tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of DMOs that have transitioned and improved their management capabilities Increase in sustainable tourism initiatives led by DMOs Improvement in sustainability metrics at destinations (e.g., reduced environmental impact, increased community engagement, better preservation of cultural heritage) 	

	<p>1.1.1.3 Assess and identify potential destinations for DMF (Destination Management Framework) development</p> <p>1.1.1.3.a Incorporate essential entities within DMFs</p> <p>1.1.1.3.b Develop and implement sustainable tourism policies and guidelines within DMFs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate destinations based on tourism potential, community interest, sustainability needs, and environmental impacts • Include local government, tourism industry stakeholders, NGOs, and community representatives in DMF structure • Create guidelines focusing on environmental preservation, cultural heritage protection, and socio-economic benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational DMFs in key destinations, incorporating DMOs and other critical entities • Improved sustainability practices in destination management • Strengthened community engagement and empowerment in tourism development decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of DMFs established • Assessment of sustainability practices and management effectiveness • Level of community involvement and satisfaction in tourism decisions 	
	<p>1.1.1.4 Collaborate with private sector, NGOs, and international organisations to fund and support green tourism projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively identify and secure diverse funding opportunities, and initiate joint projects with various stakeholders focusing on sustainable tourism initiatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and scale of green tourism projects funded and implemented • Quality of collaborations and joint initiatives 	

Strategic Area 1.2: Promotion of green investment and investment in physical and digital infrastructure

1.2.1 Invest in low-carbon and resource-efficient infrastructure in the tourism sector	<p>1.2.1.1 Invest in and promote the use of low-carbon transportation options (e.g., electric buses, bicycles, electric scooters) specifically for tourism purposes following studies such as the UNWTO Transport-related CO₂ Emissions of the Tourism Sector – Modelling Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop electric vehicle (EV) rental programs for tourists, establish EV charging stations at key tourist spots, and encourage the use of bicycles in tourist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced carbon emissions in tourism transportation, increased availability of eco-friendly transport options for tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of EVs and bicycles available for tourist use, amount of reduced emissions due to the use of low-carbon transportation in tourist areas 	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, financial institutions, international organisations, NGOs
	<p>1.2.1.2 Invest in renewable energy sources for hotels, resorts and tourism businesses as well as tourist attractions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install solar panels and other renewable energy solutions in tourism businesses and attractions • Promote energy-efficient practices in the hospitality industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of renewable energy in tourism facilities, reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage increase in renewable energy use in hotels and tourist attractions, reduction in carbon footprint of tourism facilities 	
	<p>1.2.1.3 Facilitate collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant ministries (such as Environment, Transport and Infrastructure) for integrated sustainable tourism infrastructure development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular consultation and coordination meetings, establish joint task forces for sustainable tourism infrastructure projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective inter-ministerial coordination, holistic development of sustainable tourism infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint projects initiated, regularity and outcomes of inter-ministerial meetings 	

1.2.2 Support smart tourism development	1.2.2.1 Invest in digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet access, mobile networks, and reliable Wi-Fi, to support the growth of digital tourism services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with technology providers for infrastructure development • Implement projects to enhance digital connectivity in tourist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced digital connectivity in tourism destinations • Increased use of digital services by tourists and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability and reliability of high-speed internet and Wi-Fi in tourist areas • Increased use of digital services by tourists and businesses 	Ministry of tourism, NTO, DMOs, financial institutions, private sector, academia and research institutions for innovation
	1.2.2.2 Support the development of smart destinations that leverage technology to enhance the visitor experience and improve resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Internet of Things (IoT) solutions for resource management • Develop apps and platforms for visitor information and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved visitor experiences through technology • Efficient resource management in tourist destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of IoT solutions implemented for resource management • User satisfaction ratings for apps and platforms for visitor information 	
	1.2.2.3 Encourage data collection and analysis to gain insights into traveller behaviour and preferences as well as environmental performance of destinations, including use of big data and AI for predictive analytics and sustainability impact assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement data collection initiatives • Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data for analysis and insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-driven decision-making in tourism • Enhanced understanding of traveller behaviour and destination performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of data collection initiatives • Improvements in data-driven decision-making 	
	1.2.2.4 Design and deliver training for tourism businesses, especially MSMEs, on information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce paper and plastic usage in daily operations and promotional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ICT training programmes that include business digitalisation (e.g., using cloud systems), digital marketing, digital and online payments, etc. • Collaborate with educational institutions for programme delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased digital literacy among tourism businesses • Enhanced adoption of digital tools and practices in the tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tourism businesses participating in ICT training • Level of digital literacy improvement among tourism businesses 	

Strategic Area 1.3: Tourism offer diversification and marketing for sustainability and resilience

1.3.1 Diversify the tourism offer	1.3.1.1 Develop and promote secondary destinations to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits Note: Cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g., airlines, Ministry of Transport, etc.) is imperative for this action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with the transport sector, local governments, private sector, and communities. • Identify and promote less-visited destinations • Invest in infrastructure and services in these areas • Develop marketing campaigns for secondary destinations • Highlight unique attractions and experiences in these areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More evenly distributed tourism benefits • Reduced pressure on primary destinations • Increased tourist visits to secondary destinations • More evenly distributed socio-economic benefits of tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tourism in secondary destinations • More balanced socio-economic benefits across regions 	NTO, DMOs, private sector (tour operators and activity providers), communities, NGOs, culture offices / departments
	1.3.1.2 Develop different tourism products (e.g., gastronomy, adventure, heritage, rural experiences, etc.) to cater to different niche markets and spread tourism in destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and promote diverse tourism products like gastronomy, adventure, and rural experiences • Collaborate with local communities for authentic experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction of varied tourist segments • Enhanced visitor experience and satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved visitor experience and satisfaction • Increased cultural and product diversity in tourism offerings 	
	1.3.1.3 Promote different sustainable tourism products (e.g., gastronomy, adventure, heritage, rural experiences, etc.) to spread tourism in destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targeted marketing campaigns for various tourism products • Collaborate with local businesses and communities to showcase diverse experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased diversity in tourist activities and experiences • Enhanced visibility and appeal of a wider range of tourism products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of diverse tourism activities and experiences available • Views & actualisation of tourism products 	
	1.3.1.4 Support domestic and regional travel to reduce reliance on international, long-haul markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and incentivise domestic and regional travel • Develop travel packages and marketing campaigns targeting domestic and regional markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased domestic and regional tourism • Diversified and resilient tourism market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage YoY increase in tourist arrivals • Improved visitor experience and satisfaction 	
	1.3.1.5 Stay updated and adapt to trends and changes in source market conditions, travel patterns and preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly analyse global travel trends • Adjust marketing strategies to align with changing preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased agility in responding to market shifts • Sustained interest from diverse tourist demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved visitor experience and satisfaction • Increased cultural and product diversity in tourism offerings • Number of diverse tourism activities and experiences available • Percentage YoY increase in tourist arrivals 	
Flagship Program 1: Invest in digital tourism to improve visitor experience and resource management	Promotion of low-carbon transportation, renewable energy in tourism, smart tourism development.	Electric vehicle programs, solar panel installations, digital infrastructure development.	Reduced emissions, enhanced digital connectivity, sustainable tourism growth.	Number of IoT solutions implemented for resource management; User satisfaction ratings for apps.	Ministries of Environment, Infrastructure, Tourism, NTOs, DMOs, NGOs.

2 Key Priority: Social Inclusiveness

Strategic Area 2.1: Quality jobs in the tourism sector

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS
2.1.1 Ensure quality and inclusiveness in tourism employment	2.1.1.2 Identify skill gaps in tourism and deliver online and offline training for upskilling tourism professionals (with certification and credentials)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct skill gap analysis • Develop and execute training programmes with certification options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased skill levels among tourism professionals • High participation and positive feedback from training programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of capacity building workshops conducted • Feedback rating from participants 	Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Education, private sector (all), NGOs, schools and universities
	2.1.1.3 Facilitate the formalisation of tourism jobs and workers by simplifying and streamlining the registration and licensing processes and providing incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify registration and licensing processes for tourism workers • Offer incentives for formalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of formal tourism workers and businesses • Streamlined processes for tourism employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal tourism workers and businesses • Efficiency of registration and licensing processes (benchmark numbers to previous year) 	
	2.1.1.4 Protect the rights of women in the workplace by establishing and enforce labour laws that address gender-specific issues, including anti-harassment policies, equal pay, health and maternity leave and flexible work arrangements for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and enforce gender-specific labour laws • Implement policies for a safe and equitable work environment for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women feel safe and legally protected in the tourism workplace • Gender equality in tourism employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence of workplace harassment cases • Gender wage gap and satisfaction level of female employees in the tourism sector 	
	2.1.1.5 Support women upskilling, entrepreneurship and leadership through training and mentorship programs as well as incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create targeted training and mentorship programmes for women • Provide incentives for women-led tourism businesses and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher number of women-led businesses in tourism and women in leadership positions • Empowerment of women in the tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women-led businesses in tourism • Women in leadership positions and participation in training and mentorship programmes 	
	2.1.1.6 Attract and support youth to enter the tourism industry by providing career counselling services in schools and universities, and promoting internship and apprenticeship opportunities with tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement career counselling in educational institutions • Develop internship and apprenticeship programs with tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased youth interest and participation in the tourism industry • Enhanced career opportunities for young people in tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth participation rate in the tourism industry • Effectiveness of career counselling and internship/ apprenticeship programmes 	

	2.1.1.7 Support other minority groups (e.g., disabled individuals) to enter the tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create targeted training and mentorship programmes for minority groups • Provide incentives for tourism businesses to support the entering of minority groups into the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased inclusion of minority groups in the tourism industry • Enhanced career opportunities for minority groups in tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority groups participation rate in the tourism industry 	
Strategic Area 2.2: Widespread and fair distribution of tourism benefits					
2.2.1 Implement tourism revenue-sharing models	2.2.1.1 Establish a regulatory body to oversee the distribution of tourism revenue to ensure fairness and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a regulatory body with clear mandates • Develop guidelines and standards for revenue distribution • Set up departments/agencies for revenue collection • Design and implement community development projects funded by tourism revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair and transparent distribution of tourism revenue • Increased trust among stakeholders in the revenue-sharing process • Effective collection and allocation of tourism revenue • Tangible improvements in community development and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness and transparency of the regulatory body • Stakeholder satisfaction and trust levels • Impact and success rate of community development projects 	Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, communities, advocacy and capacity building NGOs
	2.2.1.2 Ensure that revenue is used to improve infrastructure not only in tourist areas but the entire destination (specific strategies for community engagement in decision-making on how revenues are used)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop inclusive decision-making processes involving local communities • Allocate funds for infrastructure development beyond tourist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced development of infrastructure in the entire destination • Enhanced community involvement and satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of infrastructure development in non-tourist areas • Community involvement and satisfaction with decision-making processes 	
2.2.2 Ensure accessibility in destinations	2.2.2.1 Provide accessible public transportation and infrastructure for residents and visitors, and facilitate collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Infrastructure, and other relevant sectors to integrate accessibility into tourism planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade public transportation to be accessible to all, including those with disabilities • Ensure that public spaces and infrastructure are compliant with accessibility standards • Conduct regular consultation and coordination meetings • Develop joint initiatives and programs focusing on improving accessibility in tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accessible public transportation options • Improved infrastructure accessibility for all visitors and residents • Effective cross-sectoral coordination leading to integrated and comprehensive accessibility solutions in tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of accessible public transportation options • Number of visitors and residents using the infrastructure 	Ministry of Infrastructure, NTO, DMOs, private sector (accommodation, tour operators, service and activity providers), Ministry of transport, transport sector, local government authorities
	2.2.2.2 Require tourism businesses to offer accessible accommodations, guided tours, and activities suitable for people with disabilities in line with universal accessibility guidelines such as by the UN or as in the Directory for Tourism for All in ASEAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement regulations mandating accessibility in tourism accommodations and activities • Conduct inspections and provide certifications for compliant businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the number of accessible tourism accommodations and activities • Enhanced inclusivity in tourism offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of accessible tourism accommodations and activities • Increase in the number of inclusive tourism offerings 	

	2.2.2.3 Encourage tourism destinations to have maps, signage and websites available in multiple languages and formats (physical, digital and multimedia) to cater to a diverse audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multilingual and accessible information materials • Ensure websites and digital platforms are accessible and user-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of accessible tourism information • Improved visitor experience through better information access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of posts on accessible tourism information, signages and websites. (multi language) • Number of positive visitor feedback 	
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Strategic Area 2.3: Support local SMEs

2.3.1 Support local entrepreneurship and local supply chains	2.3.1.1 Design and provide training and mentorship programmes for local community members interested in opening their businesses on key business management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comprehensive training and mentorship programmes • Deliver sessions on business management, marketing and financial planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of locally-owned tourism businesses • Enhanced business skills among local entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of locally-owned tourism businesses • Level of business skill enhancement among local entrepreneurs. 	Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Economy, NTO, DMOs, private sector (all), communities
	2.3.1.2 Ensure that the legal and regulatory framework is conducive to the establishment and growth of local businesses (e.g., simplifying processes, reducing fees, facilitating loans, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and simplify business registration processes • Implement favourable tax policies and financial support mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier establishment and growth of local businesses • Increased economic activity and entrepreneurship in local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplification in business registration processes. (no. of days) • Increase in the number of new local businesses established and growth metrics 	
	2.3.1.3 Incentivise tourism businesses to prioritise local products and services and facilitate collaborations between local producers and tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for using local products and services • Establish platforms for collaboration between local suppliers and tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher percentage of locally-sourced products in tourism • Stronger linkages between local producers and tourism businesses • Reduced reliance on imported goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of locally-sourced products used in tourism businesses • Percentage increase of locally sourced produce • Reduction in imported goods and services 	

Strategic Area 2.4: Engage local communities in planning and decision-making

2.4.1 Ensure local community rights and participation in decision-making	2.4.1.1 Foster dialogue between community leaders, business owners and government officials to address local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise regular meetings and forums for open dialogue • Facilitate discussions on tourism impact and community needs • Develop online and offline platforms where local communities can express their ideas and concerns about tourism development • Ensure accessibility and inclusivity in these platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding and cooperation between communities and tourism stakeholders • Addressed local needs and concerns in tourism development • Enhanced community voice in tourism development • Better informed decision-making processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency and effectiveness of dialogue meetings and forums • Degree of community needs and concerns addressed in tourism plans • Number and usage rate of feedback platforms • Number of feedback incorporated/ answered in tourism development 	NTO, DMOs, communities, private sector (all), NGOs
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	2.4.1.2 Create local committees or councils that allow community members to participate in decision-making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish committees/councils with diverse community representation Regularly involve these groups in tourism planning and decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct community participation in tourism decision-making Increased community influence on tourism policies and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of active committees/ councils and diversity of representation Influence of committees/ councils on tourism policies 	
	2.4.1.3 Ensure the participation of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, informal workers, elderly and individuals with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement targeted outreach and inclusion strategies Create specific forums or committees for vulnerable groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive decision-making processes Empowerment of vulnerable community members in tourism development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusivity and effectiveness of outreach strategies Active participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making 	
	2.4.1.4 Ensure that land and resource usage for tourism respects and prioritises community rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines and policies for responsible land and resource use Monitor and enforce compliance with these guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable and community-friendly tourism development Protection of community rights regarding land and resource usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with responsible land and resource use policies Level of community satisfaction with land and resource usage 	
2.4.2 Support and promote community-based, indigenous and rural tourism	2.4.2.1 Design and deliver training to communities on the potential positive impacts of tourism and how to mitigate negative impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop educational programs on sustainable tourism practices Conduct workshops on managing tourism impacts and maximising benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities are better informed about the impacts of tourism Effective management of tourism to ensure positive community outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community members trained Degree of change in community practices and approaches to tourism 	NTO, DMOs, communities, NGOs, private sector (tour operators, OTAs)
	2.4.2.2 Incentivise and facilitate the development of community-based, indigenous and rural tourism with the communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide financial incentives and support for community-led tourism projects Assist in the development of tourism products that showcase local culture and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of community-led tourism initiatives Enhanced economic benefits from tourism for local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community-led tourism initiatives established Economic impact assessment of community-led tourism projects 	
	2.4.2.3 Collaborate with private sector to promote community-based, indigenous and rural tourism for both domestic and international markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish partnerships with tour operators and travel agencies Develop marketing campaigns targeting domestic and international tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visibility and market reach for community-based tourism experiences Strengthened partnerships between communities and the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of tourist arrivals in community-based tourism destinations Number and effectiveness of partnerships with tour operators and travel agencies 	
Flagship Program 2: Collaborate with private sector to establish an Inclusive Tourism Empowerment Program	Fair labour practices, community engagement, MSME support.	Skills training, inclusive marketing, community-based tourism.	Improved employment quality, equitable benefits, empowered local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of partnerships with relevant private sector partners Level of business skill enhancement among local entrepreneurs 	Ministries of Tourism, Labor, local communities, NGOs, international organisations.

3 Key Priority: Resource Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability

Strategic Area 3.1: Low carbon and resource efficiency

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS
3.1.1 Regulate, monitor and enforce sustainable use of resources	3.1.1.1 Establish and enforce regulations on water and energy usage and waste generation in tourism and monitor compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standards for resource usage and waste management in tourism Conduct regular inspections and monitor compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced resource consumption and waste generation in tourism Improved sustainability practices in the tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in resource consumption and waste generation Compliance rate with sustainability standards 	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs
3.1.2 Train tourism businesses on sustainable use of resources	3.1.2.1 Design and deliver training on sustainable use of water and energy and waste management and reduction (especially food waste and single-use plastics) for tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop comprehensive training programmes on resource efficiency Conduct workshops on reducing water and energy consumption and minimising waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of participation in sustainability training Reduced resource consumption and waste generation in tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rate in sustainability training Reduction in resource consumption and waste in participating businesses 	NTO, DMOs, private sector (all)
3.1.3 Incentivise the adoption of low-carbon and circular practices by tourism businesses	3.1.3.1 Provide financial incentives or grants for businesses to replace their devices to water- and energy-efficient ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer grants or subsidies for purchasing energy and water-efficient appliances Educate businesses on the benefits of using efficient devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased adoption of energy and water-efficient devices in tourism businesses Reduced resource consumption in the tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses adopting energy and water-efficient devices Reduction in overall resource consumption in the sector 	Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy, NTO, DMOs, private sector (all)- Tourism businesses, suppliers, waste management companies, local authorities
	3.1.3.2 Provide financial incentives for businesses to repair or refurbish their appliances and furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement subsidy programmes for refurbishing or repairing appliances and furniture Promote the benefits of maintaining and repairing over replacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased lifespan of appliances and furniture in tourism businesses Reduced waste and increased circular practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses participating in refurbishment programmes Reduction in waste generation due to refurbishment and repair 	
	3.1.3.3 Facilitate and promote reverse logistics in the tourism sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with tourism businesses, such as hotels, tour operators, and local vendors, to establish reverse logistics systems Engage with suppliers to ensure the return and reuse of materials and resources, such as packaging, food supplies, and operational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced circular economy practices in the tourism sector Reduced waste and improved resource efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of reverse logistics practices Impact on waste reduction and resource efficiency 	

	3.1.3.4 Provide tax breaks or grants for tourism businesses to switch to renewable energy sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer tax incentives or grants for adopting renewable energy solutions • Assist businesses in the transition to renewable energy sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of renewable energy in the tourism sector • Reduced carbon emissions from tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses switching to renewable energy • Reduction in carbon emissions in the sector 	
	3.1.3.5 Promote the use of local carbon offsetting programmes by tourism businesses for unavoidable carbon emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with local carbon offsetting providers • Educate businesses on the benefits and processes of carbon offsetting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in carbon offsetting programmes • Mitigation of unavoidable carbon emissions by tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses participating in offsetting programmes • Volume of carbon emissions offset 	
3.1.4 Incentivise sustainability certification programmes for tourism businesses	3.1.4.1 Provide technical assistance (e.g., training, mentoring) to businesses interested in applying for a sustainability certification programme (e.g., Travelife, EarthCheck, Greenview, among others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver training and mentoring programmes for certification • Offer guidance and support throughout the certification process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of businesses applying for sustainability certification • Enhanced knowledge and capability among businesses for sustainable practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses applying for certification • Enhanced capabilities in sustainable practices 	NTD, DMOs, private sector, certification bodies, financial institutions, funding organisations, international organisations (e.g., GSTC, Earthcheck, GDS-Index, etc.)
	3.1.4.2 Provide financial and promotional incentives to businesses that attain a sustainability certification	Establish incentive schemes, including financial rewards or tax benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased motivation for businesses to attain sustainability certification • Greater visibility and patronage of certified businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses receiving financial or promotional incentives • Increase in certified businesses' visibility and patronage 	
	3.1.4.3 Promote sustainability-certified tourism businesses and the benefits of certification to visitors to drive demand for certified businesses and sustainability standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of supporting certified businesses • Feature certified businesses in tourist guides and platforms • Promote certified businesses through marketing campaigns <p>Adopt and endorse sustainable event management standards such as the Thailand Sustainable Event Management Standard (TSEMS) and the Thailand MICE Venue Standard (TMVS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumer demand for services from certified businesses • Enhanced reputation and market positioning of certified businesses • Increased sustainability certified standards for business events operators (applicable for all the supply chain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement level in awareness campaigns • Consumer demand and reputation metrics for certified businesses 	

3.1.5 Raise awareness of communities and visitors	3.1.5.1 Design and deliver training on sustainable use of resources (water, energy and waste management) to communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and conduct training programs for communities on resource sustainability • Engage local leaders and influencers to promote participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of community participation in sustainability training • Increased adoption of sustainable practices by residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation rate in sustainability training • Adoption rate of sustainable practices in communities 	Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, communities, NGOs, schools and universities
	3.1.5.2 Create awareness campaigns for visitors (such as do's and don'ts) for reducing water and energy usage, avoiding food waste and saying no to single-use plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and launch awareness campaigns targeting visitors • Utilise various media platforms for campaign dissemination • Collaborate with tourism businesses to promote campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High engagement level in awareness campaigns • Improved visitor behaviour regarding resource usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement metrics for awareness campaigns • Changes in visitor behaviour related to resource usage 	

Strategic Area 3.2: Environmental sustainability

3.2.1 Regulate, monitor and enforce environmental protection	3.2.1.1 Develop comprehensive environmental regulations for tourism destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and implement environmental regulations specific to tourism • Regularly review and update these regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of clear environmental standards for tourism destinations • Ongoing adaptation and improvement of environmental regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of clarity and comprehensiveness in environmental standards • Frequency and impact of regulation updates 	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs
	3.2.1.2 Require Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all new tourism developments to assess potential environmental impacts and ensure mitigation measures are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate EIAs for all new tourism projects • Ensure thorough review and approval processes for EIAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of EIAs conducted • Informed decision-making on new tourism developments with environmental considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of EIAs conducted • Quality and depth of EIA reviews and decisions 	
	3.2.1.3 Implement land-use planning and zoning to designate areas for tourism development and protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and enforce land-use plans and zoning regulations • Designate specific areas for tourism and conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of land resources • Balanced tourism development with environmental conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of land-use plans • Balance achieved between tourism development and conservation 	
	3.2.1.4 Determine and enforce carrying capacity limits for destinations to prevent overtourism and environmental degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and set carrying capacity limits for popular destinations • Monitor and manage visitor numbers to prevent overtourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of environmental degradation due to overtourism • Sustainable visitor management in tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to carrying capacity limits • Sustainability of visitor management practices 	

	3.2.1.5 Implement strict penalties for non-compliance with environmental protection regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a system of penalties for non-compliance • Ensure effective enforcement of these penalties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased level of compliance with environmental regulations • Deterrence of environmentally harmful practices in tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of compliance with regulations • Effectiveness of penalty enforcement 	
3.2.2 Invest in nature-based solutions (NbS)	3.2.2.1 In urban destinations, create and expand green spaces (parks, green roofs, green walls) and community gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand urban green spaces and community gardens • Implement green infrastructure like green roofs and walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved air quality and urban biodiversity • Enhanced community engagement and green spaces in urban areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and extent of urban green spaces • Community engagement in green space development 	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, financial institutions, international organisations (e.g., IUCN, UNDP, Wetlands Int'l.), NGOs
	3.2.2.2 In coastal destinations, incorporate natural features such as dunes, mangroves and wetlands to protect from sea-level rise and storm surges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore and protect coastal natural features • Implement NbS for coastal protection and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced resilience to climate change impacts like sea-level rise • Conservation of coastal ecosystems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of coastal protection measures • Health and conservation status of coastal ecosystems 	
3.2.3 Train tourism businesses on environmental protection	3.2.3.1 Design and deliver training on environmental and biodiversity protection to tourism businesses, especially those in natural and protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create training modules on environmental conservation and biodiversity protection • Offer specialised training for businesses operating in or near natural and protected areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness and implementation of environmental protection practices • Enhanced protection of biodiversity in tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of participation in environmental training • Impact on environmental protection practices 	NTO, DMOs, private sector (all based or with activities in protected areas)
3.2.4 Raise awareness of communities and visitors	3.2.4.1 Design and deliver training on biodiversity protection to communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and conduct training programs for communities on environmental protection • Engage local leaders and influencers to promote participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of community participation in sustainability training • Increased adoption of sustainable practices by residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation rate in sustainability training • Adoption rate of sustainable practices in communities 	Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, communities, NGOs, schools and universities
	3.2.4.2 Create awareness campaigns for visitors (such as do's and don'ts) for protecting wildlife and biodiversity and preventing pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and launch awareness campaigns targeting visitors • Utilise various media platforms for campaign dissemination • Collaborate with tourism businesses to promote campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High engagement level in awareness campaigns • Improved visitor behaviour regarding environmental protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement metrics for awareness campaigns • Changes in visitor behaviour related to environmental protection 	
Flagship Program 3: Promote the use of local carbon offsetting programmes for unavoidable carbon emissions as well as provide training on biodiversity protection to tourism business and communities	Regulations for resource use, biodiversity conservation, sustainable business practices.	Renewable energy adoption, waste management, nature-based solutions.	Reduced resource consumption, enhanced environmental protection, increased adoption of sustainable practices by business/communities.	Carbon emission reduction (decarbonisation), resource usage levels, biodiversity health.	Carbon emission reduction (decarbonisation), resource usage levels, biodiversity health.

4

Key Priority: Cultural Diversity and Heritage Protection

Strategic Area 4.1: Safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS
4.1.1 Regulate, monitor and enforce cultural heritage protection	4.1.1.1 Establish government agencies or bodies responsible for overseeing the protection and restoration (when needed) of heritage sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up dedicated agencies or departments for heritage protection Develop restoration programs for damaged heritage sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective management and restoration of cultural heritage sites Enhanced preservation of heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of heritage protection agencies Success rate of restoration programmes 	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, international organisations (e.g., UNESCO, ICOMOS)
	4.1.1.2 Develop comprehensive cultural heritage protection regulations for tourism destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate and implement regulations for heritage protection in tourism areas Engage stakeholders in the development of these regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased legal protection for cultural heritage sites Standardised practices for heritage conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of regulations implemented Level of stakeholder engagement in regulation development 	
	4.1.1.3 Require Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for all existing and new tourism developments to assess potential environmental impacts and ensure mitigation measures are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate HIAs for tourism projects Train professionals in conducting HIAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed decision-making on tourism developments Minimise negative impacts on heritage sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of HIAs conducted Quality of HIAs and training effectiveness 	
	4.1.1.4 Determine and enforce carrying capacity limits for heritage sites to prevent overtourism and heritage degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and set visitor limits for heritage sites Implement measures to control visitor numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced over tourism and degradation of heritage sites Sustainable visitor management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to visitor limits Effectiveness of visitor management strategies 	
	4.1.1.5 Establish monitoring and reporting systems at the local and national levels to regularly assess the impact of tourism on cultural heritage and identify areas that require intervention or improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop systems to monitor the impact of tourism on cultural heritage Regularly report findings and take corrective actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing assessment and improvement of heritage protection strategies Data-driven management of heritage sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and frequency of monitoring reports Responsiveness to findings and actions taken 	
	4.1.1.6 Implement strict penalties for non-compliance with heritage protection regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce penalties for violations of heritage protection laws Publicise enforcement actions to deter non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased compliance with heritage protection regulations Deterrence of harmful practices to heritage sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of compliance with regulations Deterrence effectiveness as indicated by reduced violations 	

4.1.2 Incentivise and invest in culture and heritage protection	4.1.2.1 Allocate revenue from tourism in cultural and heritage protection (e.g., hiring more staff at heritage sites to monitor visitor activities, restoration of heritage, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirect a portion of tourism revenue to heritage site staffing and restoration projects • Establish funds specifically for heritage conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced protection and maintenance of heritage sites • Sustainable funding model for heritage conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation and utilisation of tourism revenue for heritage conservation • Effectiveness of funding models in heritage site protection 	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, international organisations (e.g., UNESCO, ICOMOS), NGOs, financial institutions
	4.1.2.2 Provide financial incentives or tax breaks for tourism businesses that use local and/or traditional architectural styles and other cultural preservation best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer tax incentives or grants to businesses adopting traditional styles • Develop guidelines for cultural preservation in business practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased adoption of local architectural styles in tourism businesses • Preservation of cultural identity in tourism developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses adopting traditional styles • Impact on cultural identity preservation 	
	4.1.2.3 Create interpretation centres and museums that help visitors understand the cultural significance of heritage sites and artefacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund and develop interpretation centres and museums near heritage sites • Collaborate with historians and archeologists for content development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced visitor understanding of cultural significance • Increased cultural engagement at tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and accessibility of interpretation centres and museums • Visitor engagement and feedback 	
	4.1.2.4 Establish licensed trademarks and provenance in local products to retain local wisdom and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop certification standards for local products • Promote trademarks and provenance to retain local identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recognition and protection of local products • Preservation of local wisdom and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of certification standards • Recognition and market positioning of local products 	
4.1.3 Train tourism businesses on cultural sustainability and heritage protection	4.1.3.1 Design and deliver training on the positive and negative impacts of tourism on local culture and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training modules on the impacts of tourism on culture and heritage • Conduct workshops and seminars for tourism businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness among tourism businesses of their impact on local culture • Adoption of practices that minimise negative impacts on heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rate in training • Changes in business practices regarding heritage protection 	NTO, DMOs, private sector (all)
	4.1.3.2 Design and deliver training on the cultural sustainability practices (promoting local crafts and arts, prioritising local architectural styles, raising awareness of visitors to cultural sensibilities, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create training programs on promoting local crafts and arts, and prioritising local architectural styles • Educate businesses on cultural sensibilities and respectful visitor behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced promotion and preservation of local arts and crafts • Increased adoption of local architectural styles in tourism developments • Improved visitor understanding and respect for local culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of training in promoting local arts and crafts • Adoption rate of local architectural styles and respectful practices 	

4.1.4 Raise awareness of communities and visitors	4.1.4.1 Design and deliver training on heritage protection to communities and how they can capitalise on tourism for cultural empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training programs for communities on heritage protection and cultural empowerment • Organise community workshops and seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of heritage protection among communities • Empowerment of communities to leverage tourism for cultural benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement in training programmes • Impact on community empowerment and cultural benefits 	Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, communities, NGOs, schools and universities
	4.1.4.2 Create awareness campaigns for visitors (such as do's and don'ts) for respecting local culture (e.g., attire in religious sites, desired behaviour when visiting communities, etc.) and protecting heritage sites (e.g., no climbing, polluting, vandalising, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and disseminate educational materials on respecting local culture and protecting heritage sites • Launch media campaigns with do's and don'ts for visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor awareness and respect for local culture and heritage sites • Improved visitor behaviour at heritage sites and in interactions with local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach and effectiveness of awareness campaigns • Changes in visitor behaviour and respect for local culture 	

Strategic Area 4.2: Promote local culture and heritage

4.2.1 Promote and support tangible and intangible cultural heritage	4.2.1.1 Promote heritage sites to support their conservation and restoration efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop marketing campaigns for heritage sites • Collaborate with media and tourism agencies for promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness and visitation of heritage sites • Enhanced funding and support for conservation efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in visitation and awareness metrics for heritage sites • Increase in funding and support for conservation efforts 	NTO, DMOs, communities, private sector (tour operators, OTAs, activity providers), NGOs
	4.2.1.2 Encourage the development of immersive cultural experiences, such as community-based, indigenous and rural tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the creation of community-based, indigenous, and rural tourism experiences • Provide support and resources for experience development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification of tourism experiences • Enhanced cultural engagement and understanding among visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and diversity of cultural experiences developed • Visitor engagement and feedback on cultural experiences 	
	4.2.1.3 Encourage the creation of authentic experiences, products and services by local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local communities in developing authentic tourism products and services • Provide platforms for showcasing these offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility and revenue for local cultural products and services • Preservation and promotion of local cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility and market performance of local cultural products and services • Impact on cultural preservation 	
	4.2.1.4 Promote cultural events and festivals that showcase local traditions, arts and crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the organisation and marketing of local cultural events and festivals • Engage with local communities for event development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor attendance at cultural events • Enhanced appreciation of local traditions and arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and impact of cultural events and festivals • Visitor appreciation and understanding of local traditions 	

	4.2.1.5 Promote local gastronomy through food markets and fairs and helping establish culinary experiences at destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote food markets, fairs, and culinary experiences • Collaborate with local chefs and food artisans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recognition of local gastronomy • Enhanced visitor experiences through culinary tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition and patronage of local gastronomy experiences • Visitor feedback on culinary experiences 	
	4.2.1.6 Incentivise private sector to include local cultural experiences in their tourism offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer incentives to businesses for integrating local cultural experiences • Facilitate partnerships between tourism businesses and cultural providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader inclusion of cultural experiences in tourism offerings • Strengthened collaboration between the private sector and cultural sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses including cultural experiences • Strength and effectiveness of partnerships between private sector and cultural providers 	
Flagship Program 4: Promote and support tangible and intangible cultural heritage	Cultural heritage protection enforcement, development of cultural tourism products.	Cultural sustainability training, local arts promotion, support local communities in developing authentic tourism products and services, provide platforms for showcasing these offerings.	Enhanced cultural heritage conservation, increased cultural awareness, increased visibility and revenue for local cultural products and services.	Increased visibility and market performance of local cultural products and services.	Ministries of Culture, Tourism, heritage bodies, local communities.

5 Key Priority: Resilience Planning and Adaptation

Strategic Area 5.1: Manage security issues

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS
5.1.1 Ensure health and safety in destinations	5.1.1.1 Invest in public health infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate funds for the development or improvement of healthcare facilities in tourist areas Collaborate with international organisations for infrastructure development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of healthcare facilities in destinations Enhanced well-being of residents and tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of healthcare facilities Quality and accessibility of healthcare services in tourist areas 	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, NTO, DMOs, financial institutions, international organisations (e.g., WHO), NGOs
	5.1.1.2 Implement and enforce health and safety regulations and standards for tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and enforce health and safety standards for tourism businesses Conduct regular inspections and compliance checks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced incidence of health and safety issues in tourism businesses Improved compliance with health and safety regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance rate with health and safety standards Reduction in health and safety incidents in tourism businesses 	
	5.1.1.3 Deploy tourist police or dedicated law enforcement units in tourist areas to provide additional security and assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish tourist police units in key tourist areas Train law enforcement personnel in tourist assistance and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced security and assistance in tourist areas Reduced incidence of tourist-related crimes and accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and presence of tourist police units Reduction in tourist-related crimes and accidents 	
	5.1.1.4 Encourage or require travellers to have appropriate travel insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the importance of travel insurance to travellers Collaborate with insurance companies for accessible travel insurance options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness and uptake of travel insurance among tourists Reduced financial and health risks for travellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and uptake rate of travel insurance Impact on reducing financial and health risks 	
	5.1.1.5 Promote and enforce sanitation and hygiene standards in food establishments and accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and enforce hygiene standards in food establishments and accommodations Conduct regular health inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved sanitation and hygiene in tourist accommodations and eateries Reduced health risks associated with poor hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with hygiene standards Reduction in hygiene-related health incidents 	
	5.1.1.6 Implement and enforce vaccination and health requirements for travellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and enforce health requirements, including vaccinations, for travellers Monitor compliance at entry points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced spread of infectious diseases in tourist destinations Enhanced health security for both tourists and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with health requirements Effectiveness in controlling infectious disease spread 	

	5.1.1.7 Provide tourists with safety information, including local emergency numbers and health and safety guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate safety guidelines and local emergency numbers to tourists Develop information campaigns and materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased tourist awareness of safety measures and emergency protocols Improved tourist preparedness for emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach and effectiveness of safety information dissemination Tourist preparedness and response in emergencies 	
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Strategic Area 5.2: Multi-hazard risk management and preparedness

5.2.1 Conduct risk assessment	5.2.1.1 Identify potential hazards and risk sources in destinations through data collection of previous and potential crises and disasters (e.g., through databases, national archives, media, forecasts, scientific papers, local knowledge, experts consultations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect data from various sources including databases, archives, media, and expert consultations Utilise local knowledge and scientific research to identify potential crises and disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive identification of potential hazards and risk sources Enhanced understanding of the range of risks affecting destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness and depth of hazard identification Degree of understanding and awareness of risks in destinations 	Ministry of Health, Disaster Risk Reduction Department, Ministry of Tourism and other relevant authorities, NTO, DMOs, academia, media, international organisations (e.g., UNDRR, GFDRR, UNEP, PEDRR)
	5.2.1.2 Analyse and estimate risks, their likelihood and potential consequences, based on past crises/disasters, forecasts, stakeholders' experiences and SWOT analysis of the destinations (existing current capacities to cope with a crisis or disaster)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct SWOT analysis of destinations to understand current capacities and vulnerabilities Use risk assessment tools and software for data analysis, modelling, and scenario planning Analyse past crises and forecast future risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed risk analysis with likelihood and potential consequences Improved preparedness and response strategies based on accurate risk estimations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and accuracy of risk analysis and estimations Effectiveness of preparedness and response strategies developed 	
5.2.2 Increase preparedness for crises and disasters in destinations	5.2.2.1 Establish a group or task force in tourism destinations to lead the development and implementation of risk management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a dedicated group or task force to lead risk management strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and focused approach to crisis management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and coordination of the task force or group Implementation and impact of risk management strategies 	Ministry of Health, Disaster Risk Reduction Department, Ministry of Tourism and other relevant authorities, NTO, DMOs, academia, media, private sector (all), communities, police and health departments, international organisations (e.g., UNDRR, GFDRR, UNEP, PEDRR), financial institutions, NGOs
	5.2.2.2 Invest in resilient and high-quality infrastructure to reduce destinations' exposure and vulnerability to crises and disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade and develop infrastructure to withstand various crises and disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of infrastructure resilience and reduction in vulnerability metrics Effectiveness of infrastructure in crisis situations 	
	5.2.2.3 Utilise risk assessment results to develop a comprehensive emergency plan, encompassing response strategies for different risk scenarios and identification and delegation of responsibilities among stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use risk assessment results to create a detailed emergency response plan Identify roles and responsibilities among stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and efficient response to different crisis scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness and applicability of emergency plans Stakeholder readiness and response in actual crisis scenarios 	

	5.2.2.4 Develop a crisis communication plan (or strengthen an existing plan) consistent with the <u>ATCCT – ASEAN Tourism Crisis Communication Team</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise the ATCCT plan for consistent and reliable information dissemination during crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely and accurate communication during emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and timeliness of communication in crisis scenarios. Stakeholder and public satisfaction with information provided 	
	5.2.2.5 Deliver training on the emergency plan and other risk management strategies to all relevant stakeholders (e.g., private sector, communities, public health facilities, police department, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct training sessions on emergency plans and crisis management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased readiness and capability of stakeholders in crisis response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation and effectiveness of training programmes Increase in stakeholder capability and readiness for crisis response 	
	5.2.2.6 Regularly review and update the emergency plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously review and revise the emergency plan based on new insights and changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date and relevant emergency response strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency and impact of emergency plan updates Relevance and applicability of updated plans in actual scenarios 	

Strategic Area 5.2: Multi-hazard risk management and preparedness

5.3.1 Establish relationships with other destinations and regional and international organisations	5.3.1.1 Create mechanisms for sharing information, experiences and best practices in risk management and disaster risk reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop platforms or forums for information exchange. Organise regional conferences or workshops. Participate in international forums on risk management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced collaboration and knowledge exchange in risk management Stronger regional and international networks for disaster risk reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and effectiveness of information sharing platforms and events Level of engagement and collaboration in risk management activities 	
	5.3.1.2 Develop common, holistic responses and solutions with neighbouring destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and unified approach to crisis management across regions. Increased efficiency and effectiveness in regional disaster response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of policy and strategy alignment among neighbouring destinations Success of joint initiatives and resource sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and effectiveness of information sharing platforms and events Level of engagement and collaboration in risk management activities 	
Flagship program 5: ASEAN Tourism Resilience and Safety Program based on the ASEAN Tourism Crisis Communication Manual	Health and safety protocols, crisis preparedness, cross-border collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency response training, risk assessments, crisis communication plans. 	Increased safety and security, effective crisis management.	Tourism-related incident reduction, emergency response effectiveness.	Ministries of Health, Tourism, Disaster Risk Reduction Departments, NTOs, DMOs.

PART 4

ASEAN CASE STUDIES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



- 73. Sharing best practices has been identified by the AMS as a key strategy for fostering a regional ecosystem where sustainable tourism practices are not only encouraged but also actively supported through collective efforts.** To do so, it is imperative the AMS establish collaborative platforms and networks for the exchange of information, experiences, best practices and case studies among each other. This section highlights five case studies – one for every key priority – to kickstart the database of best practices on sustainable tourism in ASEAN.

Key Priority 1: Sustainable Economic Growth

Malaysia's Smart Tourism 4.0 Initiative

Launched by Tourism Malaysia in 2018 and later added to the 2020 National Tourism Policy (NTP), the Smart Tourism 4.0 initiative was created to innovate the Malaysian tourism industry and pave ways to create employment opportunities in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Smart tourism refers to the use of technology to develop innovative tools and improve the tourism sector economy, inclusiveness, operational efficiency and sustainability.

A study by Monitor Deloitte found smart tourism had the potential to increase Malaysia's tourism sector revenue to US\$ 25 billion to US\$ 110 billion by 2030. According to Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Minister of Tourism and Culture, smart tourism in Malaysia could also increase the amount of visitors from China and create higher income revenue for the national economy.



Following COVID-19, Smart Tourism 4.0 was also a strategic response to the challenges caused by the pandemic on the tourism sector. In 2019, tourism contributed significantly to Malaysia's GDP, making up 15.9% of the total value. However, the pandemic led to a drastic decline in tourist arrivals and receipts. To address this, the government sought to revitalise the tourism sector and position the country as a preferred global destination.

Smart Tourism 4.0 is a forward-looking strategy aligned with Malaysia's commitment to the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The initiative leverages technological innovations to enhance tourist experiences, boost competitiveness and promote sustainability, which gained even greater importance with COVID-19. Key components include tourism apps, social media and other digital platforms to enrich the overall travel experience.

To support the recovery of the tourism industry, the government introduced initiatives such as Gamelan 2021, providing grants of up to MYR 300,000 to eligible travel-related companies. Investors have also shown interest in travel startups, injecting funds to facilitate innovation and growth. Digitalisation is seen by the Malaysian government as the key for building a resilient and sustainable future for the country's tourism sector.



Travel-focused startups such as LokaLocal, Tourplus and Moovby are actively collaborating with government agencies to implement Smart Tourism 4.0. LokaLocal, for instance, connects travellers with local partners, offering community-led adventures and virtual tours. Tourplus acts as an online travel marketplace, while Moovby provides a peer-to-peer car-sharing alternative.

During the pandemic, these startups adapted by forming partnerships and introducing virtual tours. LokaLocal collaborated with InvestKL to offer immersive virtual experiences, encouraging future visits. Tourplus, in collaboration with Tourism Selangor, launched the Go Selangor app, promoting domestic tourism and preparing for post-COVID-19 travel demands.

Malaysia's Smart Tourism 4.0 initiative has emerged as a comprehensive strategy, blending technological innovation, sustainability and collaboration to revive and transform the country's tourism industry in the post-pandemic era. While challenges exist, the initiative presents a significant opportunity for growth, job creation and sustainable economic development.

Key Priority 2: Social Inclusiveness

Thailand's DASTA and Community-Based Tourism

The Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) was established in 2003 to promote community-based tourism (CBT) in Thailand. DASTA is a public sector organisation operating under the Prime Minister's Office to support the implementation of CBT in nine designated areas in Thailand:

1. Chang Islands and vicinity
2. Active Beach tourism cluster and Pattaya City
3. Cultural World Heritage tourism and historical parks of Sukhothai, Srisatchanalai and Kamphaengphet
4. Mekong River Folkways tourism cluster and Loei Province
5. Lanna civilisation tourism cluster and Nan Old City
6. Central Chao Phraya River folkways tourism cluster and U-thong ancient city
7. Songkhla
8. Chiang Rai
9. Bang Kachao, Samutprakarn Province.

DASTA provides knowledge, advice and close support to help develop a community's tourism and self-management capabilities. Communities learn how they can create their own tourism method so as to improve their quality of life, generate employment, promote the remigration of youth, stimulate economic revenues, and increase empowerment and pride in their culture and traditions.

As highlighted by Dr Nalikatibhag Sangsnit, Director-General at DASTA: 'We work on tourism but it is not for tourism. Essentially, we strengthen local communities to become self-reliant with the ultimate goal of Sustainable Thailand.' CBT is tourism created by the local communities themselves, in which they are the owners of their own resources, create and manage tourism experiences, and tourism income is distributed fairly among all community members. CBT is, therefore, about social inclusiveness through tourism.

In 2017, DASTA published an ebook on its wealth of knowledge and experience in CBT in Thailand, which serves as a great step-by-step guide for CBT development in other destinations. Working with communities encounters challenges, thus much can be learned from DASTA's experience, projects and case studies provided in this e-book.

In 2018, DASTA launched GSTC-recognized criteria for CBT development in Thailand, which acts as a baseline standard to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of communities throughout the tourism development process, so communities and coaching units can effectively build capacity and fulfil the community's potential. According to GSTC CEO, Randy Durband: 'By gaining GSTC-recognised status for Thailand's Community-Based Tourism Development standard, DASTA has affirmed the standard blends universal sustainable tourism principles within the Thai socio-political context.'

The work of DASTA is supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, as CBT is considered by the government as a driving force for the development and growth of the Thai tourism industry, as well as an important enabler for employment and poverty alleviation, and greater environmental sustainability. The Ministry has assigned various affiliated state agencies to support CBT and DASTA, including tourism offices in all provinces and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to promote community attractions, villages and experiences domestically and internationally.

With 20 years of experience, DASTA is a key example of how a public organisation can lead change toward social inclusiveness and community empowerment through sustainable, responsible tourism.



Key Priority 3: Resource Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability

Brunei Darussalam's Fight Against Plastics

Brunei Darussalam has taken significant steps to address the escalating issue of plastic pollution, recognising the adverse environmental impacts of plastic waste. In 2011, the nation faced a substantial challenge, given its status as the highest per capita producer of waste in the region, with each person generating 1.4 kg of solid waste per day, 16% of which was plastic.

One of the pioneering initiatives was the No Plastic Bag Weekend. Plastic bags have long been a convenience but pose a significant threat to the environment due to their slow decomposition, estimated to take over 1,000 years. The initiative, initiated in 2011, encourages the use of reusable bags and has seen a positive response, leading to an extension from weekends to include Fridays. In 2015, a survey conducted by JASTRe found 80% of respondents supported the No Plastic Bag Weekend initiative and 20% indicated they use reusable bags every day.



Building on this success, the No Plastic Bag Everyday Initiative was introduced in 2018 to reduce the number of plastic bags in stores by 2019. According to the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe), the initiative has been successful in reducing the amount of single-use plastic bags, registering a 77% drop in plastic bag use at major supermarkets between January and December of 2018.

These initiatives not only address plastic bags but also acknowledge the broader issue of plastic usage in Brunei Darussalam. Over 20% of total household waste comprised plastics, with an estimated issuance of at least 1 million plastic bags to consumers monthly before the initiatives. The negative impacts of plastic, including ecological risks and emissions of toxic substances when burned, underscore the importance of source reduction.

Despite these efforts, Brunei remains a substantial contributor to ocean plastic waste, emphasising the need for sustained action. Addressing plastic pollution requires a multifaceted approach, considering factors such as cost, durability and security which drive plastic usage. The government's commitment to reducing waste generation and the public's awareness of the environmental impacts of plastic usage provide hope for a more sustainable future.

JASTRe continues to engage stakeholders to combat plastic pollution. Another effort to reduce waste is through the introduction of the 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle) concept. The country exceeded its target of 20% recycling by 2020, and the 2035 target is to achieve a rate of 30%.

More of Brunei Darussalam's initiatives on plastic waste reduction and marine pollution mitigation can be found [here](#).

Key Priority 4: Cultural Diversity and Heritage Protection

Indonesia's Tourism Village Development Programme

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (MTCE) launched the Tourism Village Development Programme in 2018 to transform villages into tourism destinations, leveraging local traditions, culture, crafts and architecture. This initiative, in collaboration with local governments, seeks to promote unique cultural experiences for both domestic and foreign tourists to safeguard and promote local culture and heritage. The programme aligns with the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan and involves collaboration with the Ministry of Villages for infrastructure development.

Recognising the potential contribution to state income, the programme focuses on the development of 74,000 villages across Indonesia, utilising local experiences to enhance tourism. An essential part of this initiative is the Tourism Village Awards (ADWI), which recognises villages meeting specific criteria set by the MTCE. The awards aim to stimulate collaboration among academics, businesses, communities, government and media for tourism village progress.

In its inaugural year, 1,831 tourist villages participated in the awards, themed Indonesia Rises. Categories included clean, health, safety and environment (CHSE) compliance; digitalisation; souvenirs; tourist attractions; creative content; homestays and public toilets. In 2022, 3,419 villages from 34 provinces participated. As for the 2023 edition, themed World Class Tourism, 4,573 villages took part, exceeding the government's target of 4,000. The evaluation criteria included:

- Uniqueness and authenticity of tourist attractions – natural, man-made and cultural
- Quality of homestay infrastructure and facilities
- Quality of homestay services and how much they help preserve local culture
- Level of digitalisation
- Quality and creativity of promotional content and marketing campaigns
- Creativity in tourist experiences (gastronomy, fashion, handicrafts, etc)
- Quality and creativity of souvenirs reflecting local wisdom
- Presence of an institution or agency of the tourism village for destination management (including risk management)
- Implementation of the national standard of CHSE.

This comprehensive programme aims to not only boost tourism but also enhance the overall development of villages by preserving and promoting local culture, fostering economic growth and ensuring sustainability through recognised standards. The ongoing success of the Tourism Village Development Programme and the ADWI Awards highlights the commitment to making Indonesia's villages key players in the country's tourism landscape.



Nagari Sijunjung Tourism Village in West Sumatra, one of the top 75 villages of the 2023 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI).

Key Priority 5: Resilience Planning and Adaptation

Thailand's Sandbox Programme: A Model for Tourism Reopening

In response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, unveiled the Phuket Sandbox Programme in mid-2021. This innovative initiative aimed to revive the battered tourism industry while prioritising the health and safety of both visitors and residents.

Under the programme, fully vaccinated international travellers were allowed to enter the designated area of Phuket island without undergoing the mandatory quarantine, provided they adhered to strict health protocols, including pre-arrival testing, regular testing during their stay and responsible behaviour within the designated zone. This phased approach enabled controlled tourism reopening and allowed for adjustments based on emerging circumstances.

The success of the Phuket Sandbox can be attributed to a number of key factors:

- The programme was a product of close collaboration between government agencies, the private sector and the local community, ensuring comprehensive planning, efficient execution, and widespread support
- Rigorous testing, mask-wearing and social distancing measures to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, fostering a sense of safety and security among visitors and residents
- Technology-driven solutions such as contact tracing apps and online platforms which facilitated communication, information dissemination and health data monitoring
- A phased approach with gradual expansion, starting with Phuket and then incorporating other destinations, allowing for a measured reopening, minimising risks and ensuring adaptability
- The Phuket Sandbox contributed significantly to the recovery of the tourism industry, creating jobs, stimulating local businesses and boosting the island's economy.



The programme's success garnered international recognition, positioning Thailand as a leader in responsible and innovative tourism reopening strategies.

It exemplifies Thailand's proactive approach to navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic and serves as a valuable model for other destinations seeking to revive their tourism industries while prioritising public health and safety, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable future for the industry.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND WAY FORWARD



- 74. The Roadmap has successfully laid out a detailed and actionable framework focusing on sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness, resource efficiency and environmental sustainability, cultural diversity and heritage protection, and resilience planning and adaptation.** Through these key priorities, the AMS demonstrate their commitment to balancing economic development with environmental conservation and social equity.
- 75. While significant progress has already been made, challenges such as climate change, overtourism and maintaining cultural integrity in the face of rapid development persist.** However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation, community empowerment, and the promotion of more responsible and conscious travel.
- 76. The successful implementation of this Roadmap hinges on the active participation of stakeholders, including government agencies; the private sector; NGOs; local communities and international organisations.** Each stakeholder brings unique strengths and perspectives crucial for holistic and effective sustainable tourism development.
- 77. Looking forward, it is imperative to continue adapting and refining the approaches in response to evolving global trends and regional needs.** Continuous monitoring, evaluation and stakeholder engagement are key to ensuring the roadmap remains relevant and effective. Furthermore, the sharing of best practices and learning across the AMS will strengthen regional cooperation and collective progress. Recognising that the current ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan ends in 2025, it is hoped the succeeding plan will take into account the proposed activities included in this Roadmap.



78. The journey toward sustainable tourism is ongoing and ever-evolving. This Roadmap not only serves as a guide but also as a commitment to a future where tourism in ASEAN is a leading force for positive change, benefiting both the present and future generations. ASEAN should continue to work toward this shared vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism sector.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND RESPONDENTS

Questions

The survey was structured as follows:

Profile
1. Email: (open-ended response)
2. Country name: (open-ended response)
3. Organisation name: (open-ended response)
Challenges towards sustainable tourism development
4. What do you consider the most significant challenge in promoting sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction? (linear scale response - 1 being the least significant and 5 being the most significant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of funding and resources• Limited awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism principles• Insufficient policy frameworks and regulations• Difficulty in coordinating efforts among different government departments
Priorities for sustainable tourism development
5. Which of the following priorities is most important for your sustainable tourism initiatives? (linear scale response - 1 being not important and 5 being the most important)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental conservation and protection• Socio-cultural preservation and community engagement• Economic growth and local development• Balancing tourism development with local needs and interests

Support for sustainable tourism development

6. What kind of support or assistance do you need to advance sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction? (linear scale response - 1 being not required and 5 being essential)

- Capacity building and training programs
- Technical expertise and knowledge sharing
- Financial incentives and funding opportunities
- Collaborative platforms and networks for exchange of best practices

Sustainable tourism development policies

7. How would you rate the current focus on sustainability within your tourism development policies? (multiple choice response)

- Strong emphasis on sustainability principles and practices
- Some focus, but room for improvement in sustainability integration
- Limited attention to sustainability; more efforts needed
- Unsure/no opinion

8. What specific elements would you like to see included in the sustainability action plan for your jurisdiction? (multiple choice response)

- Addressing specific environmental challenges or opportunities
- Strengthening community engagement and participation
- Enhancing policy frameworks and regulatory measures
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism development

Sustainable tourism development policies

9. What are your short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities for sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction? (open-ended response)

Answers

The complete responses of the survey are as follows:

Question 4 – What do you consider the most significant challenge in promoting sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction?

Lack of funding and resources

- 1 (least significant): 1 vote
- 2: 2 votes
- 3: 3 votes
- 4: 7 votes
- 5 (most significant): 3 votes

Limited awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism principles

- 1 (least significant): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 7 votes
- 4: 5 votes
- 5 (most significant): 4 votes

Insufficient policy frameworks and regulations

- 1 (least significant): 0 votes
- 2: 1 vote
- 3: 6 votes
- 4: 6 votes
- 5 (most significant): 2 votes

Difficulty in coordinating efforts among different government departments

- 1 (least significant): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 5 votes
- 4: 9 votes
- 5 (most significant): 2 votes

Question 5 – Which of the following priorities is most important for your sustainable tourism initiatives?

Environmental conservation and protection

- 1 (not important): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 0 votes
- 4: 3 votes
- 5 (most important): 13 votes

Socio-cultural preservation and community engagement

- 1 (not important): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 0 votes
- 4: 3 votes
- 5 (most important): 13 votes

Economic growth and local development

- 1 (not important): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 2 votes
- 4: 3 votes
- 5 (most important): 11 votes

Balancing tourism development with local needs and interests

- 1 (not important): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 1 vote
- 4: 6 votes
- 5 (most important): 9 votes

Question 6 – What kind of support or assistance do you need to advance sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction?

Capacity building and training programs

- 1 (not required): 0 votes
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 1 votes
- 4: 8 votes
- 5 (essential): 7 votes

Technical expertise and knowledge sharing

- 1 (not required): 1 vote
- 2: 0 votes
- 3: 2 votes
- 4: 6 votes
- 5 (essential): 7 votes

Financial incentives and funding opportunities

- 1 (not required): 0 votes
- 2: 1 vote
- 3: 0 votes
- 4: 3 votes
- 5 (essential): 12 votes

Collaborative platforms and networks for exchange of best practices

- 1 (not required): 0 votes
- 2: 1 vote
- 3: 0 votes
- 4: 8 votes
- 5 (essential): 7 votes

Question 7 – How would you rate the current focus on sustainability within your tourism development policies?

- Strong emphasis on sustainability principles and practices: 4 votes (19%)
- Some focus, but room for improvement in sustainability integration: 11 votes (52.4%)
- Limited attention to sustainability; more efforts needed: 6 votes (26.6%)
- Unsure/no opinion: 0 votes

Question 8 – What specific elements would you like to see included in the sustainability action plan for your jurisdiction?

- Enhancing policy frameworks and regulatory measures: 9 votes (42.9%)
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism development: 6 votes (28.6%)
- Strengthening community engagement and participation: 4 votes (19%)
- Addressing specific environmental challenges or opportunities: 2 votes (9.5%)

Question 9 – What are your short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities for sustainable tourism in your jurisdiction?

General priorities:

- Develop a guideline, disseminate to stakeholders, provide training, assessment and certify operators
- Sustainability principles must refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its short-term, mid-term and long-term sustainability.
- Policy framework, training to have the same understanding and PPP to act on it and finally create the right mindset in the long term.
- Progressing increase in technological know-how on sustainable tourism practice among the tourism stakeholders ie, government, private sector, NGO, local community and tourists.
- Local socioeconomic improvement or enhancement.
- Preservation and conservation of natural ecosystems and local socio-cultural.

Short-term priorities:

- Capacity building for sustainable tourism stakeholders for better integration, Focus on sustainability practices.
- By 2025, tourism recovered to the level of pre-pandemic.
- Restore confidence to boost and accelerate the international and domestic tourism industry.
- Develop capacity building and training programs for tourism personnel, as well as the local community, to enhance the understanding of sustainable tourism practices and participate in tourism development plans. Moreover, investments should be made in tourism infrastructure development and encourage local businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

to promote the local economy. If necessary, the tourism law and regulations should be amended or enacted in line with local needs and interests when developing the economy of the local community. Moreover, we should conduct market research and analysis to understand the target audience and emerging needs of tourists with changing trends.

- Creation of guidelines for sustainable tourism; increase in eco-friendly accommodations; reduce single use plastic; preservation of local culture and values while keeping in line with the era of globalisation; preservation of local flora and fauna.
- To create awareness regarding sustainable tourism among tourism stakeholders, including the general public; to produce more experts in sustainable tourism and sharing knowledge with the stakeholders.
- Promotion and awareness.
- Enhancing policy frameworks and regulatory measures.
- Evaluate and measure sustainable tourism practices annually.
- Short-term policies should emphasise enhancing the policy framework and regulatory measures with effective monitoring and evaluating systems. This includes creating an action plan with achievable milestones, concrete actions, and a clear timeline to promote sustainable practices among tourism stakeholders.

Mid-term priorities:

- Public-private partnership projects, platform for sustainability practice solutions and good practice sharing.
- Develop tourism toward sustainability and innovation; the sector focuses on environmental protection and has a flexible and effective response to risks and climate change.
- Establish and implement rules and regulations for the tourism sector in the preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- Tourism products should be developed to meet the needs of tourists and to offer the best tourism experiences. In addition, environmental conservation should be emphasised in order to protect natural resources. Moreover, public-private partnership is important to understand and exchange tourism knowledge and experiences so as to develop the destination's sustainability and enhance coordination with the local community to harmonise with their needs when developing tourism plans in the destination.
- Making optimal use of environmental resources; job creation in the private sector; increase in visitor arrival for tourists interested in regenerative tourism and sustainable practices; increase accessibility for different-able groups.

- Attracting more investment in sustainable tourism products; promoting and marketing sustainable tourism products domestically and internationally.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Strengthening community engagement and participation.
- Capacity building and raising awareness on environment and culture protection.
- Mid-term policies should focus on developing incentives and fostering integration and engagement between the public and private sectors to support sustainable tourism development.

Long-term priorities:

- Adjusting policy, regulatory, and incentive framework to support sustainable tourism development and management.
- Tourism is a key economic sector and is developed toward green growth. The tourist environment is improved and protected, while the sector effectively responds to climate change.
- Enhance human resources and skill development for an all-inclusive tourism sector.
- Develop sustainable tourism strategies to maximise the positive benefits and minimise the negative impacts on the sustainable development and socio-economic development of the local community.
- Recognition of cultural and heritage sites; increase contribution in the country's GDP.
- Increased funds to sustain tourism products and investments; increased funds for more marketing and promotion.
- Policy implementation.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism development.
- Strongly enhancing the regulations toward sustainable tourism; environment, heritage and culture conservation; and protection of natural resources; enhancing socio-economic sustainability.
- Long-term policies aim to raise public awareness about supporting sustainability in the tourism industry. This could involve incorporating sustainability know-how into educational curricula and implementing public awareness campaigns to educate both tourists and locals about the benefits and importance of sustainable tourism.

Responses

The survey was completed by 21 representatives from the following 11 organisations and institutions from eight AMS:

Responses	Organisation / Institution	Country
3	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	Malaysia
1	Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism	Viet Nam
1	Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration	Thailand
4	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	Lao PDR
2	Ministry of Tourism	Cambodia
1	Sarawak Tourism Board	Malaysia
4	Ministry of Hotels and Tourism	Myanmar
1	Tourism Development Department	Brunei Darussalam
1	Tourism Malaysia	Malaysia
2	Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy	Indonesia
1	Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Thailand
Total: 21		