

ENHANCING RESILIENCE

To drive sustainability
in destinations



WORLD
TRAVEL &
TOURISM
COUNCIL



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Julia Simpson, President & CEO, WTTC

“In 2019 the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 10.3% to global GDP and it was responsible for 1 in 10 jobs on the planet. But, with COVID-19, our sector experienced its worst ever crisis. When the pandemic raged, 62 million jobs were lost and countless establishments that shaped the fabric of destinations worldwide were shut down, some permanently. However, Travel & Tourism is bouncing back. Our sector will continue its remarkable growth, providing crucial jobs for people all over the world, as it drives long-term sustainable growth. To secure the future of Travel & Tourism, along with the businesses and communities that sustain it, we must prepare for future crises and manage ongoing challenges. Therefore, we are delighted to partner with ICF to create this report which examines what resilience means for different destinations across the globe. It also provides guidance to ensure a better prepared and more resilient Travel & Tourism sector in the years to come.”



John Wasson, Chair & CEO, ICF

“For over half a century, ICF has been passionate about partnering with organizations all over the world to enact and institutionalize sustainable policies and practices,” said John Wasson, chair & CEO of ICF. “Today, we are proud to partner with WTTC to offer unique insights and practical guidance on developing adaptable sustainability plans that build long term resilience, despite prevailing uncertainties and increasing extreme events.”

Executive Summary

What is resilience and how does it support sustainability in destinations?

This report aims to provide practical, structured inspiration to destinations as they think about resilience and sustainability. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is far reaching with numerous destinations also grappling with other major stresses and shocks, ranging from electricity or water shortages to extreme weather events. Recovery from COVID-19 provides as an opportunity to implement transformational shifts as the Travel & Tourism sector creates a more resilient and inclusive future.

Destination resilience is the concept of successfully adapting to external shocks and crises, in a way that results in a better prepared and more robust eco-system in the future.

By definition, it is a shorter-term concept than sustainability, but the two are intrinsically linked. Sustainability is not possible without resilience, and resilience is rarely possible without sustainability.

How are destinations addressing resilience priorities?

Resilience priorities differ between destinations and at different points in time. These different priority areas depend on location, climate, visitor mix, reliance on Travel & Tourism as an economic driver, typology of visitor, political vision and prioritisation of tourism among other activities.

- Typically, destinations most exposed to climate risk and/or extreme weather focus on environmental and infrastructure.
- Those with a high reliance on Travel & Tourism receipts tend to focus on economic resilience, and particularly the ability of the destination, its businesses and its workforce to quickly pivot in case of crises.
- Societal support and acceptance are key priorities for destinations with the most seasonal or concentrated demand, with the balance between visitor and resident value being a key ingredient to resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all destinations, many dramatically so, and highlighted both the value of Travel & Tourism and the risks inherent in over-reliance without flexibility.

Resilience dimensions and example solutions

Based on ICF and WTTC's literature review and in-depth interviews, a framework is proposed that summarises the range of possible resilience actions - relating to the natural environment, infrastructure, water & energy, economic resilience, and social resilience - that destinations can undertake before, during, and after shocks. Undertaking these in a systematic and coordinated way, increases resilience and paves the way for longer term sustainability.

The main body of the report focuses on the practices in place to address some of these resilience aspects, based on a combination of in-depth interviews with destinations around the world, a review of the existing literature on the topic of sustainable destination management and tourism resilience, and ICF's practical experience in this field.

The future-looking recommendations focus on four key areas:

1. Developing successful governance models
2. Ensuring ownership, legitimacy, and transparency
3. Fostering destination shared value projects
4. Preparation and processes for the next catastrophic shock (whilst dealing with recurrent stresses)

It is hoped that by collecting and organising these actions around a clear resilience framework, all destinations can benefit and gain ideas for further improvement.



What is tourism resilience and how does it support sustainability goals in destinations?

Introduction

Although the academic literature around resilience in a tourism or destination context remains in its infancy, the concept is comparable to what makes a person resilient¹. When a child is considered 'resilient', it typically means that they have a strong capacity for withstanding adventure, crises or traumas and to grow stronger through adaption, through learning and dealing with risk in their stride. The phrase "*What doesn't kill you makes you stronger*" is also relevant, as it introduces the temporal aspect that starts to tie the concept of resilience in the face of one-off or repeated shocks, to the idea of progress over time, and thus to the longer-term concept of sustainability.

The focus of this report is neither the academic definition of resilience or sustainability in destinations, nor the theoretical frameworks for building resilience, but rather the practical actions on the ground. It describes specific things destinations can do, and are already doing, to learn from recent and ongoing stress and shock events, to prepare for the next catastrophic event, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of their evolving tourism activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is without question one of the most significant global shocks to Travel & Tourism since the World Wars of the twentieth century. While global GDP declined 3.3% in 2020 relative to the previous year, Travel & Tourism related GDP declined over 50.4% in the same period and is not forecast to return to 2019 levels before 2023. Over 60 million Travel & Tourism jobs were lost, billions of trips were not taken, and many destinations only began their restart and recovery in early 2022. But the COVID-19 pandemic is certainly not the first major shock that

Event, shock, crisis or disaster?

- In resilience literature there is some degree of interchangeability between these four terms and certainly varied views on what falls into each category.
- For the purposes of this report, events are considered to typically be negative events, which may result in a shock. A crisis is the outcome of a shock or disaster – for example the COVID-19 pandemic may be considered a crisis for tourism destinations, precipitated by the shock of the virus and of the ensuing travel shutdowns.

has rocked destinations, their inhabitants and their wider stakeholders. Natural disasters, acts of terrorism and health scares, among others, have taught valuable lessons and caused destinations to adapt their offerings, their operations and their governance models. The rapid variability of climate also continues to be a growing threat for disruption to Travel & Tourism.

Through a series of in-depth interviews and a review of recent tourism and resilience literature, the following framework of resilience dimensions for destinations has been compiled. These dimensions are brought to life with case studies from the destinations themselves. While every destination and every shock is unique, there are lessons that can be shared and best practices which can be adapted, in order to help ensure that all destinations can increase their resilience and ensure a smoother path towards sustainable development.

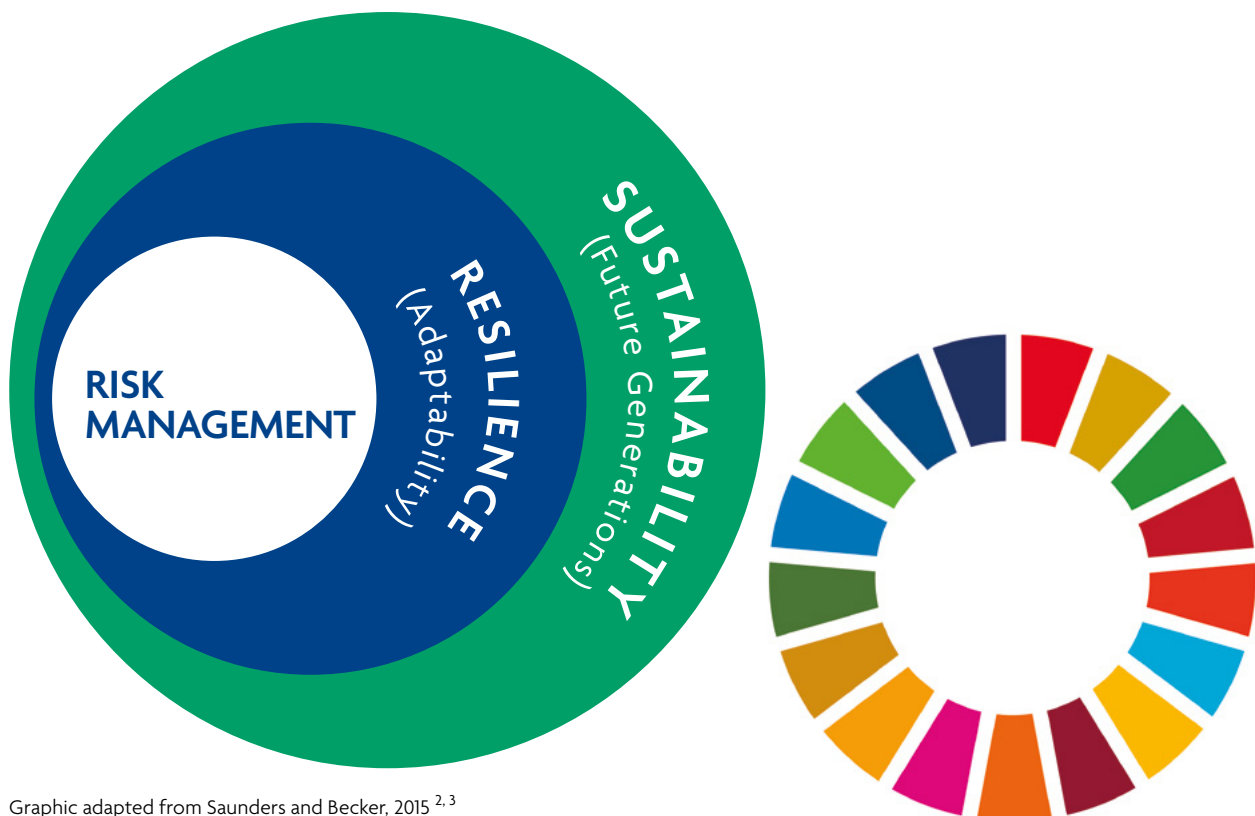
Defining and linking resilience and sustainability

At the heart of both resilience and sustainability is risk or uncertainty. Destinations, policymakers, businesses and travellers continuously make decisions based on assessments of hazards and resulting risk. Sometimes these are relatively well-known and well-understood (for example, the likelihood that the weather will be warm and sunny in Majorca in July) but other times they are not (for example, the chances of a terrorist attack in central London).

While sustainability, broadly speaking, is about ensuring unending prosperity, resilience is the concept of managing those stresses, shocks or events which may or may not have been predicted, but which result in conditions far outside the 'normal' or 'business as usual' conditions at a destination. The stresses are typically considered ongoing in nature – for example, recurrent loss of water or energy supply, while shocks are typically short-term and sudden in nature, such as a hurricane or flood, but recovery and resetting towards a 'new normal' can take weeks, months or even years in some cases, especially when the shocks are compounded or cascading.

Is resilience a prerequisite for sustainability? And vice versa?

The direction from resilience to sustainability is clearer cut than the other way round – without resilience, achieving sustainable tourism or sustainable development goals will become virtually impossible. As extreme weather events become more common, political instability continues to ebb and flow, and pandemics are widely predicted to become more prevalent, progressing towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require ever greater adaptive capacity.



Graphic adapted from Saunders and Becker, 2015^{2,3}



2.

How are destinations addressing resilience priorities?

In preparing this report, tourism officials and leaders in a diverse range of destinations were interviewed – from deserts to islands and from cities to beach communities. When asked what resilience meant to their destination, tourism leaders shared diverse answers. Some common responses included:

- Maintaining Travel & Tourism jobs in the face of travel shut-downs.
- Swiftly adapting to new visitor markets to keep hotel occupancy high.
- Implementing effective processes for responding to natural disasters protecting local populations and natural assets, and reopening for tourism as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Ensuring community involvement in tourism activities to build greater connection and information flow.

Not surprisingly, the different priorities were informed and influenced by recent experiences in each destination, which have varied according to location, climate, visitor mix, reliance on Travel & Tourism as an economic driver, political vision, visitor typology and Travel & Tourism prioritisation.

Destinations most exposed to climate risk and extreme weather will most typically focus on environmental and infrastructure themes in destination resilience. Those with a high reliance on tourism receipts tend to focus on economic and social resilience, and particularly the ability of the destination, its businesses and its workforce to quickly pivot in case of shocks. Destinations that experience seasonal or concentrate demand tend to focus more on finding a balance between visitor and resident value to ensure social acceptance of Travel & Tourism.

All destinations have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has highlighted both the value of Travel & Tourism and the risks inherent in over-reliance without flexibility.



Tourism Resilience Dimensions and Associated Actions: Including case studies

Combining the temporal and typological aspects of resilience, the table below summarises some of the actions that destinations can take to build both resilience and longer-term sustainability across five main groupings:



The natural environment



Economy



Infrastructure



Society




Energy & water





Environment Resilience refers to the capacity of an environment to resist damage and recover quickly from disasters. This is particularly important for destinations where natural assets such as beaches, mountains, rivers, and forests are a key selling point. Environmental resilience can come in many forms such as developing land use policies to carefully control development around key natural assets, pursuing initiatives to conserve biodiversity and a robust natural environment, developing solutions for carbon absorption, or working with the agriculture and industrial communities to ensure the provision of food, fuel and natural products.




Infrastructure Resilience relates to accommodation and transportation infrastructure and support facilities that enable the Travel & Tourism economy to work efficiently. This can mean the physical assets and ensuring the infrastructure is fit for purpose, safe and aligned with the broader destination strategy. Resilience also requires adequate plans and processes to deal with the infrastructure in a crisis such as evacuation drills.

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Energy Resilience is about a destination's ability to ensure a reliable, regular supply of energy. This can range from building additional energy supplies to serve as backup or surge capacity, to developing local policies on energy efficiency best practices. The primary aim of energy resilience is to enable the destination to operate smoothly and provide a consistent level of service to travellers while also ensuring local populations are not disadvantaged by the sharing of resources.
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Water Resilience refers to a destination's ability to ensure a reliable, regular and sustainably sourced supply of fresh-water for recreational use. This can range from diversifying sources of water supplies to serve as backup or surge capacity, to developing local policies on water efficiency. The primary aim of water resilience is to enable the destination to operate smoothly and provide a consistent level of service to travellers and residents.
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Economic Resilience can be segmented into two definitions, one focused on the household's ability to survive a shock, while the other focuses more on the broader operating environment of businesses. During COVID-19, we have seen governments support both through furlough schemes for key Travel & Tourism workers, and loans or grants for businesses. These are very much reactive policies arising from the sudden and unpredicted shock of the pandemic, while pro-active policies such as training and capacity building can also be implemented to improve the resilience of an economy.
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Societal Resilience focuses on people and social entities' ability to deal with environmental, economic and social threats. This primarily relates to ensuring those outside the Travel & Tourism sector are not adversely affected by the sector, creating societal discord or unrest, and ensuring those in the sector are presented with opportunities to learn and develop key skills in positive working conditions. In a shock, crisis or stress context, as has been seen with overcrowding, the needs of the local society must be adequately prioritised in order to avoid tourism 'resistance' or apathy.

The four phases or tasks in the framework follow the logic of other resilience frameworks, including the World Bank's Resilient Tourism Framework⁴ and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.⁵

These are to:

1. Understand the risks as far as possible.
2. Prepare appropriately for each type of shock.
3. Implement protocols to minimise the impact and duration of the threat.
4. Apply learnings to ensure growth and development addresses longer term goals and to embed resilience in sustainability planning.

	Understand the risks	Prepare for shocks	Respond to shock	Longer term strategies
The natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate risk assessment. Biodiversity risk assessment. Ecological risk assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazard mapping, vulnerability assessment and risk mapping by area. Physical as well as non-physical measures to safeguard vulnerable assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess loss and damage. Prioritise repairs and recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism development plans aligned with climate adaptation plans and bio-diversity/ ecological conservation plans to ensure decreasing overlap of tourism burden, bio-diversity conservation and climate impacted areas
Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical infrastructure assessment (accommodation, transportation, residential); Identify key vulnerabilities and risk areas for different types of hazards, shocks and stresses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan based on maximum capacity and ability of infrastructure in case of evacuation scenarios. Practice drills involving residents, businesses and tourists in case of shocks and stresses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close collaboration between various agencies and private sector to ensure infrastructure safety following shocks and stresses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future / new development based on climate risk assessments and climate adaptation strategies. Close public-private sector collaboration in developing future infrastructure for tourism, aligned with sustainability and resilience goals.
Energy and Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water and Energy systems resilience assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create or enhance back-up generator capacity in key tourism locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow established protocols for crisis management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversified sources for water and energy; for energy sources, where possible, including local generation and renewables.
Economic resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism reliance assessment. Source market assessment. Visitor profile and typology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenario planning for short/mid-term cessation of arrivals, including alternative markets / activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal/state/ local support for destinations and tourism stakeholders. Risk transfer mechanisms such as insurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building to support versatility of tourism workforce. Food security.
Social resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and other stakeholder surveys (e.g. local businesses and institutions) to understand areas of resistance, vulnerability and risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement policies and procedures aimed at safeguarding working conditions and visitor experiences ahead of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance the needs of the local and visitor communities in responding to crises through clear and consistent protocols and communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved monitoring and implementation of health protocols. Robust community and tourism communication frameworks to ensure community engagement, correct information transfer and help rebuild traveller confidence.

Following the thematic areas outlined in the framework, the following case studies have been selected to illustrate how destinations as diverse as the Bahamas and Ras Al Khaimah, or Las Vegas and Portugal, apply resilience awareness for the long-term benefit of their communities and visitors.

Overview of resilience case studies



Resource Resilience | Public and Private Collaboration



Singapore Case Study

Cherie Lee, Director Strategic Planning and Incentive Policy, Singapore Tourism Board

Sustainability runs deep in Singapore, a small island where resource efficiency is heavily supported in law and where the public and private sectors, along with travellers themselves, are actively involved in this priority.

Travel & Tourism has been an important economic pillar, contributing 11% to Singapore's GDP in 2019. It has played a central role in creating a vibrant city that attracts people from all over the world to live and to visit, thus acting as a magnet for investment.

The government is at the forefront of setting strategic direction in sustainability matters, both at a sectoral and at a wider economic level, for instance through unveiling the Singapore Green Plan 2030⁶ which outlines Singapore's targets to advance its national agenda on the SDGs over the next 10-15 years and which is based on five key pillars:

- **City in Nature** – developing green spaces.
- **Sustainable Living** – waste management; green transportation; carbon reduction in schools.
- **Energy Reset** – adoption of green energy, greener infrastructure and buildings; reducing energy consumption in towns and districts; cleaner energy vehicles.
- **Green Economy** – investments in energy/ carbon efficiency; sustainability at the core of job creation and economic growth.
- **Resilient Future** – adapt to sea-level rise and enhance flood resilience; self-reliant in food production.

As part of this plan, the government has been collaborating with the private sector to align on focus areas, providing resourcing and incentives such as grants to facilitate buy-in to the journey, to develop innovative solutions in areas like food waste, and to support renewable energy initiatives e.g. solar technology.

Singapore has also launched a tourism sustainability strategy⁷ which envisions Singapore as a **'City in Nature where large experiences come with small footprints'**, and where resource efficiency is pursued in order to mitigate the negative environmental impact of tourism and bolster its resilience. The tourism sustainability strategy is particularly designed around the following areas:

- Becoming a sustainable urban destination;
 - Making sustainability fun.
 - Developing sustainable tourism hardware and software.

- Creating sustainable experience across all consumer touchpoints.
- Building a sustainable tourism sector;
 - Partnering with associations to provide industry specific directions to shape businesses' sustainability strategies.
 - Leveraging innovation to support sustainable tourism outcomes.
 - Building sustainability related capabilities of the workforce.
- Showcasing Singapore as a sustainable urban destination;
 - Showcasing sustainable experiences and stories.
 - Highlighting Singapore's strengths as a destination of innovation.

A targeted programme was also launched which aims to support tourism businesses' sustainability journeys, at all stages of development, equipping them to build their workforce capabilities and develop innovative solutions to capture opportunities from sustainable travel.

Additionally, the Singapore Tourism Board also devised the Hotel Sustainability Roadmap to achieve the following targets through adoption of sustainability strategies anchored around water and energy conservation, waste management, and sustainable sourcing and procurement:

- At least 60% of hotel room stock to achieve internationally recognised hotel sustainability certification (e.g. by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) by 2025).
- For hotels to commence tracking of emissions by 2023 and reduce emissions by 2030, with a view to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Key Learnings:

- An emphasis on resource efficiency will reduce environmental impacts and bolster resilience.
- Adopting a comprehensive top-down approach is key to achieving widespread adoption of sustainability measures, and should be complemented by training programmes to ensure effectiveness.

Social Resilience | Residents and Tourism



Bahamas case study

Lynette Virgil, Head of International Relations, Ministry of Tourism of The Bahamas

In many destinations, there exists a complex relationship between locals and visitors. Education, the creation of meaningful career opportunities and greater local sourcing help to maximise local benefits and thus social resilience.

“Travel & Tourism, for a while, had a negative view among many professionals in the country. A lot of people didn’t want their children to work in the sector.”

In the Bahamas, a combination of actions have been taken by the government to increase the value that Travel & Tourism brings to residents:

- Popularised tourism through school programmes to stimulate career choice and address the mismatch of skills issue among school leavers.
- Encouraged Travel & Tourism businesses to employ qualified locals, at all levels, as far as possible.
- Promoted the use of local resources, products, and service providers, as much as possible, and encouraged the development of linkages to integrate more local producers into the Travel & Tourism supply chain.
- Changed the approach to tourism marketing and promotion, to focus more on authenticity and to infuse more of the uniqueness of the Bahamian people, culture, and environment into the messaging.
- Helped communities and entrepreneurs to develop local products and experiences that enrich the tourism product, to make the most of the opportunity to develop sustainable livelihoods that benefit from tourism, beyond just having jobs with big corporations.

These actions were linked to three sustainability pillars:

- **Stewardship:** Travel & Tourism must be proportional to local communities and destination size. It needs to be socially acceptable and sustainable. For instance: managing and coordinating the number and size of cruise ships to ensure visitor numbers are distributed across time.
- **Environmentally sustainable:** Travel & Tourism activities must fit into the way people live, and not compete for and deplete natural resources.
- **Economic linkages:** Travel & Tourism needs to be more beneficial to countries;
 - It should support local business development.
 - It should offer equal, inclusive job opportunities, i.e. locals should be able to move up into senior positions and not only be able to access low paid jobs.
 - It should support other sectors (agriculture, creative industry, etc.), by sourcing locally to stimulate local manufacturers and other local industries.

“Tourism has the potential to support environmental conservation efforts, as we encourage communities and entrepreneurs to integrate natural resources and related experiences into the tourism product, so that visitors can enjoy them without destroying them, while the locals develop more sustainable livelihoods.”

Key Learnings:

- Build societal connections and social resilience by incorporating tourism into school programmes to raise awareness about potential career paths and ensure alignment of skill sets.
- Leverage the Travel & Tourism sector to support and develop other sectors such as creative industries, manufacturing and agriculture, thereby creating a positive feedback loop.

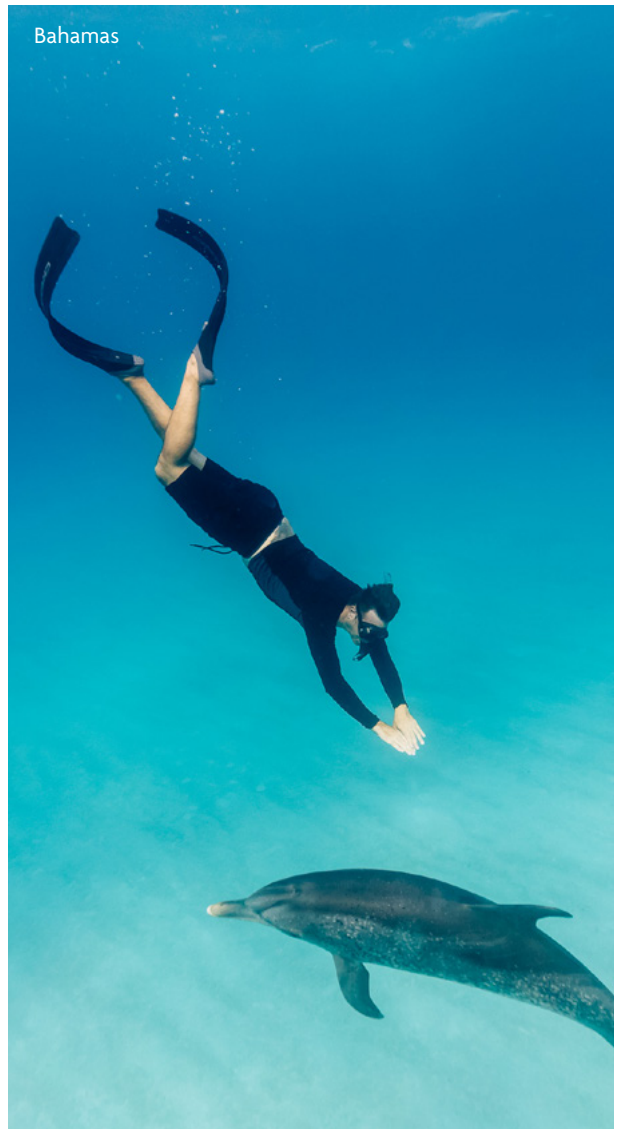
Singapore



Bahamas



Bahamas



Bahamas



Economic Resilience | Public and Private collaboration



Mauritius Case study

Daren Moodely, Project Coordinator: Sustainable Island Mauritius Project, Mauritius Tourism Authority
Lindsay Morvan, Director, Mauritius Tourism Authority.

By successfully accessing funding and support, Mauritius has maximised the value from a fixed term project to build long-lasting public-private sector relationships and models, which not only support more sustainable tourism products but build industry resilience.

“In Mauritius we have a good partnership between [the] public and private sectors, under the leadership of the Ministry of Tourism, to motivate everybody to join and come up with new activities and more sustainable activities.”

Ensuring well-structured, effective public-private collaboration lies at the heart of Mauritius’ efforts to bolster sustainability and resilience. Each industry comprising the Mauritian Travel & Tourism private sector has its own associations - representing among others large hotels, small and medium hotels, tour operators, boat operators, handicrafts, and SMEs - to facilitate dialogue and engagement with the public sector, create partnerships and directly involve these industries in policy-making. The objective is to work hand in hand to keep everyone informed, gather new ideas and understand challenges.

Since 2018, [the Sustainable Island Mauritius](#) (SIM) Project has been working to promote innovation in sustainable tourism by demonstrating and scaling up a self-sustaining mechanism for improving sustainability impacts along the value chain and improving awareness of the market for sustainable tourism products. The project Steering Committee is chaired by the Director of the Tourism Authority and comprises the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Environment, key tourism associations and members of the EU delegation in Mauritius. One of the main initiatives of the project is to support tour operators in redesigning and co-creating packages that encourage sustainable tourism at the source by selecting certified hotels, more environmentally friendly transportation (e.g. hybrid or electric cars), low footprint excursions (e.g. cycling rather than quad biking) and local suppliers of food and products. The proposed package is priced slightly higher than prior offers and targets visitors who will contribute more to the local communities across the island.

The continuous dialogue and collaboration between the private and public sector have allowed the SIM Project to lead multiple initiatives in cooperation with all stakeholders.

These include the following activities carried out in 2022:

- The first Mauritius Sustainability Award for Tourism which recognised individuals or organisations within five categories for their sustainability efforts: Hotel/ Accommodations, Tour Operator/Tour Guide, Boat & Pleasure Crafts Operator, Handicraft & Local Products, Other Businesses (Taxis, SMEs, Restaurants etc.).
- A workshop with hotels and tour operators, to introduce and train end-users in the Mauritius Pro-Handprint Innovation (MauPHI) Framework, a monitoring tool to guide businesses through their sustainability path. Each tourism actor will be able to report their measurement monthly and monitor the progress according to the baseline.
- A workshop which brought Travel & Tourism organisations and local producers together to explore how to better collaborate, particularly with a view to enhancing local, sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Green financing events, inviting financial institutions and main Travel & Tourism associations to interact and discuss funding solutions.

At the end of this project, the Tourism Authority aims to delegate actions to the associations and related authorities to continue and lead the appropriate strategy required for their industries and to ensure that Mauritius will remain a sustainable and resilient island destination for travellers.

Key Learnings:

- Resilience can be supported through the effective use of organisations and structures (e.g. local industry level association).
- Positive incentives (e.g. recognition for sustainability) can drive innovation and foster awareness and inspiration across a broader spectrum, ensuring wider uptake.

Environmental Resilience | Community and Restoration



Philippines Case Study

Maria Anthonette (Tonette) Velasco-Allones - COO Tourism Promotions Board, Philippines

The Philippines endures more adverse weather events than most destinations. When these events occur, the strong cultural ties across the sector and the nation are what ensure destination resilience. Places where both locals and visitors take care and take ownership recover and sustain best.

“A silver lining brought about by the pandemic was highlighting the importance of protecting destinations from overcrowding. Through the course of the pandemic, we were able to manage them better to protect biodiversity and were given the opportunity to implement measures to institutionalise sustainability practices.”

Travel & Tourism has been an integral part of the Philippines' economy, contributing to more than a fifth of the country's GDP and employing about 9.5 million people in the pre-pandemic era. The sector is ingrained in the lives of local communities because the Philippine tourism experience aims to immerse visitors in the country's diverse heritage by providing authentic experiences, supporting cultural inheritance and thriving traditions, and creating pride in local destinations.

While economic growth was significantly disrupted by the pandemic, with visitor arrivals and receipts down by approximately 82% in 2020, the lull in leisure tourism activities led to a greater appreciation for environmental sustainability among policymakers, local government units, stakeholders, and communities. This heightened sustainability consciousness led to the development of a digital app to track tourist numbers entering a destination, tourist activity, and hotel capacities - contributing to better management and preservation of natural resources and ecology. This has supported destination capacity management on the islands of Boracay El Nido, for instance by controlling the number of boats entering fragile lagoons to protect marine life and ecology.

Adverse weather events (such as typhoons) are another key resilience issue for the Philippines. Due to its geographic location, the Philippines experiences an average of 20 typhoons a year. The country bears the brunt of climate change, which is worsening the typhoon season, despite the country's minimal contribution to carbon emissions. Aside from the economic impact of these conditions, the population endures physical and social distress.

With culture as the backbone of its Travel & Tourism sector, and adverse weather events as a key risk, the Philippines has demonstrated built its resilience strategy around three pillars:

- Capacity to persevere
- Flexibility to adapt
- Ability to bounce back

Resilience and sustainability are strongly intertwined in the National Tourism Development Plan which gives focus to how socially responsible tourism can contribute to a circular economy. Community engagement, capacity building at the ground level, and promoting inclusive culture are key focus areas. Community disaster preparedness is managed by the National Disaster Risk and Reduction Management Council and coordinated at various levels, anchored around preparedness, mitigation, and adaptation.

Key Learnings:

- Building resilience starts with measurement. The use of technology to monitor tourism activities is a progressive step towards the conservation of the environment and responding to shocks.
- Socially inclusive tourism development can strengthen engagement and action in crisis response and management.

Economic Resilience | Business and People



Ras Al Khaimah Case Study

Raki Phillips – CEO of RAK Tourism Development Authority

Rehan Rizvi – Director Destination Strategy & Market Insights, RAK Tourism Development Authority

Alka Winter – VP Destination Marketing and Comms, RAK Tourism Development Authority

Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE has set itself an ambitious sustainability goal which is helping to galvanise citizens, businesses and the public sector around both short and long term actions. A holistic view of resilience aims to ensure that the destination, its businesses and its people all benefit.

“When it comes to sustainability and resilience there are three parts – it is good for business, it is the right thing to do, and customers are demanding it”

RAK’s view of resilience is a holistic one, based on the following pillars:

- The Destination – how does it remain relevant and contribute to society?
- The People – how do they grow and prosper?
- The Businesses – how they grow, survive, and prosper?

Travel & Tourism was the fastest growing sector in the UAE economy, contributing 12% of GDP in 2019. Hence, when the pandemic hit, the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) – with the above pillars in mind - rapidly adapted its strategy to ensure business continuity and the related positive Travel & Tourism impacts by focusing on domestic tourism. Specific mitigating actions taken during the pandemic included:

- Constant engagement with stakeholders to avoid misinformation and panic.
- A stimulus package for private sector operators, such as hotels to carry on ‘business as usual’ operations.
- Proactive marketing – promoting Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) as a safe tourist destination to the domestic market by creating the ‘Shortcations’ offer.
- Regular interactions with the WTTC Taskforce to help benchmark recovery against other destinations.

Additionally, before the pandemic, RAKTDA conducted a study on how to make RAK a more sustainable tourist destination with the ambition of becoming the first certified sustainable tourism destination in the region, and positioning itself as the Regional Leader in Sustainable Tourism by 2025 (making this formal pledge at the *Global Citizen Forum 2021*). This ambition puts businesses within the tourism value chain firmly at the centre of all the mitigating actions. In broad terms, and according to three of RAK’s sustainability pillars, this means:

- Social – local community development through encouraging businesses to consume locally produced goods, respecting local culture and heritage, and local job creation.

- Environment – conscious minimisation of food waste, water usage, and energy consumption.
- Economic – green finance.

With the sustainable tourism strategy in place, RAKTDA has now set about creating an implementation plan to be launched in 2022, which includes the following two programmes;

1. Destination Certification Programme for Ras Al Khaimah

- The objective is to achieve the “**Sustainable Tourism Destination**” certificate for RAK which is internationally recognised.

2. Tourism Business Accreditation Programme for RAK

- Development of RAK-branded (‘white labelled’) sustainable business accreditation programme with an online portal and accompanying criteria and documentation. This programme will provide an inventory of international sustainable visitor experiences to support RAK’s tourism market positioning and provide credibility in the marketplace via a recognised or endorsed certification process. It will also help individual businesses become more sustainable by providing a management framework and a means of benchmarking their performance, as well as a way for businesses and the industry to map and manage their carbon footprint. The aim is to certify 30 businesses in the first year of the programme.

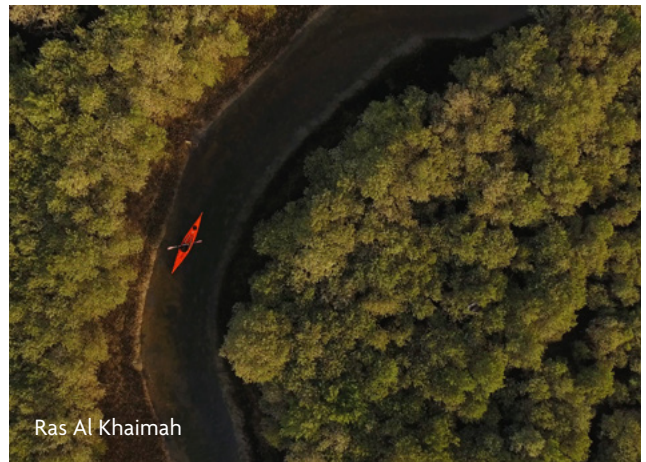
Some further specific examples of actions on the ground taken so far include:

- Initiatives to improve the livability of hotel employees – RAKTDA worked closely with the RAK Transport Authority to improve access to public transport for hotel employees to get to places of worship and sporting activities on their days off.
- Zero food waste initiative in hotels – RAKTDA has supported and coordinated the introduction of ‘Orca’ devices to collect all food waste to convert into fertiliser which is then distributed to local farmers.

- Cultural preservation through 19th century fisherman’s village – RAKTDA worked with the Ministry of Heritage to restore and preserve 19th century heritage, and to involve local businesses in providing direct and ancillary tourism experiences.
- Support for local suppliers – “Buy RAK” is an initiative to incentivise hotels to buy fresh produce and products like honey and olive oil directly from local fishermen and farmers instead of from abroad. This initiative has the triple benefit of being more sustainable, more cost effective, and better for the local economy.

Key Learnings:

- Setting goals and having a clear strategy in place which puts tourism businesses at the centre, is key to successfully implementing actions on the ground.



Economic and Environmental Resilience |

Small Businesses and Pre-planning



Puerto Rico Case Study

Imaris Arocho, Chief Marketing Officer, Puerto Rico Tourism Company (PRTC)

Ronald Castro, Advisor to PRTC on sustainable economic impact, SDG impact

For many destinations, the period before COVID-19 represented the halcyon days of the Travel & Tourism sector. However, for Puerto Rico, a string of environmental crises such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 as well as the economic challenges arising from the government’s debt crisis made becoming resilient a cornerstone of their tourism strategy.

“Resilience means experience – if you go through a crisis and recover, you have the experience you can continue growing, developing and learning.”

The economic impact of the 2017 Hurricanes is estimated at over \$80bn, while the Travel & Tourism sector, which represented nearly 6% of GDP in 2019, was effectively grounded. As the hurricane left, so did many of the jobs. However, as physical infrastructure was rebuilt and travellers returned, there were lessons learnt from the experience which required embracing resilience as part of the country’s general approach to Travel & Tourism. From the economic side, lessons learnt include:

- The need to foster investors’ confidence in the destination to enable inward investment in critical tourism infrastructures such as accommodation, utilities and activities, while ensuring the natural beauty of a destination is maintained.
- The need for financial support for SMEs. Small businesses are essential for the tourism ecosystem to succeed, but they lack the capital or voice of the larger corporations and need assistance. Puerto Rico Tourism Company set up the ‘*Tourism Made in Puerto Rico*’ programme - a partnership created in 2021 to promote and foster the development of local entrepreneurs in the tourism field by providing training, tools and partnerships to empower small and family-run businesses. It aims to ensure that capital investment stays in the community rather than going abroad.

In terms of crisis management, PRTC has developed a sophisticated playbook for tourism recovery following a crisis, utilising three core pillars:

- **Relief** – Secure basics and essentials and provide relief in the immediate term.
- **Restoration** - Restore crucial infrastructure such as accommodation, utilities and attractions, and rebuild the tourism eco-system such as providing jobs and training for workers.
- **Recovery** –Support and enable the sector’s recovery.

The country has also identified potential future natural disaster risks and has pre-emptively set up plans to handle such crises. For instance, in the case of tsunamis and earthquakes, local authorities have implemented several initiatives:

- Coastal communities have been fitted with early warning alarm systems and signage.
- Community training sessions take place in schools and tourism organisations, which are also required to develop situational protocols.
- Island wide drills are scheduled.
- Marketing campaigns are implemented in anticipation of the high-risk seasons to inform locals and tourists.

Separately, PRTC has worked to enhance both sustainability and resilience on the island through their ‘Agrotourism’ Certification Programme which is targeted to suppliers offering agricultural activities. It creates a win-win situation for local farmers and visitors. Tourists who are foodies, or have an interest in agricultural techniques, can explore a variety of working farms throughout the island.

Key Learnings:

- Identify potential risks and develop a playbook to guide stakeholders before a crisis.
- Conduct regional drills so the tourism sector and locals understand the procedure for a crisis.

Infrastructure Resilience | Innovation and Technology



Las Vegas Case Study

Brian Yost – COO of Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

While sustainability has not historically been a priority for Las Vegas, climate change and the shock of COVID-19 are driving accelerated focus, coupled with growing customer expectations around destination sustainability.

“Customer demand is the stimulus for change in the private sector”

Las Vegas has been a Travel & Tourism pioneer in the US, hosting about 43 million visitors a year in pre-COVID times. The sector is the number one contributor to the economy amounting to almost US \$63 billion per year.

The globally popular destination faces a number of sustainability challenges, not least an acute shortage of water which is prevalent in the wider Southwest American geography, and more recently a constrained water supply from the Colorado river as it is redirected to other areas. Attempts are being made to resolve it through active public-private collaboration.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitor’s Authority (LVCVA) is leading the charge to engender public-private collaboration to tackle these issues. Most notably big corporate hotel groups are increasingly collaborative and proactive around sustainability. Some key initiatives in this area are:

• **Environmental**

- Installation of solar panels for renewable electricity generation on rooftops as well as on city outskirts.
- Early and widespread adoption of electric vehicles. This includes the introduction of Elon Musk’s innovative tunnel transportation system that uses Teslas to transport passengers across the Las Vegas Convention Center campus and, eventually, throughout the destination, reducing surface transport emissions in the medium term.
- Regarding water, Southern Nevada Water Authority estimates there are about 5,000 acres of non-functional turf spread out throughout Southern Nevada. The authority has introduced and achieved legislative approval on an act that will ban decorative grass by the end of 2026, saving the state 12 billion gallons of water every year.

• **Social**

- Channelling of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds into community development activities. For example:
- Caesar’s Entertainment donated US \$3.1 million generated from parking fees at Las Vegas properties to nine local non-profit organisations in 2021, and generated over 91,000 hours of volunteer time for community projects by their employees.

MGM Resorts Foundation distributed over US \$3 million to local organisations and generated over 12,000 volunteer hours to help non-profit organisations in the community.

• **Economic**

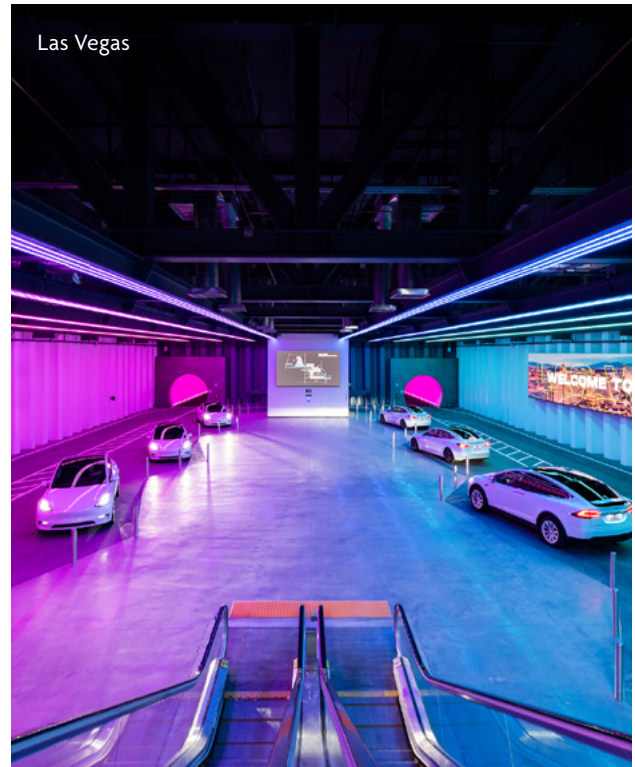
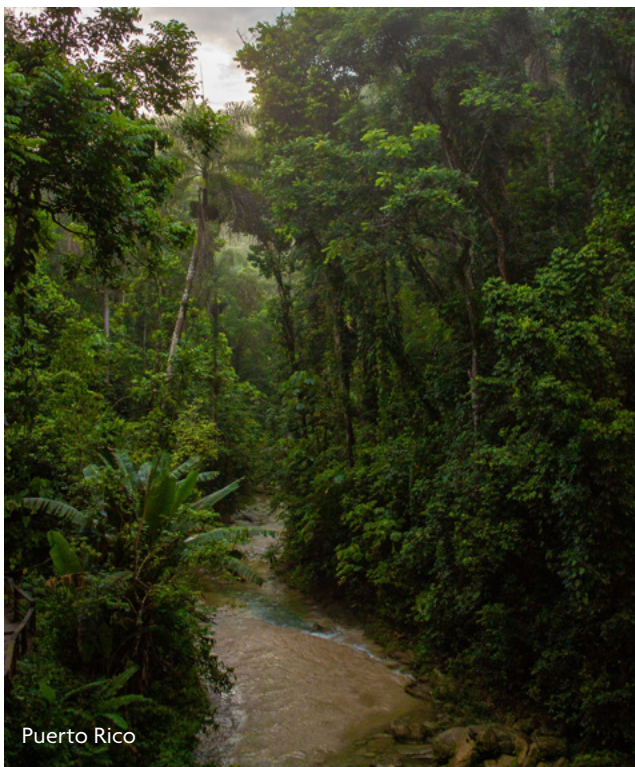
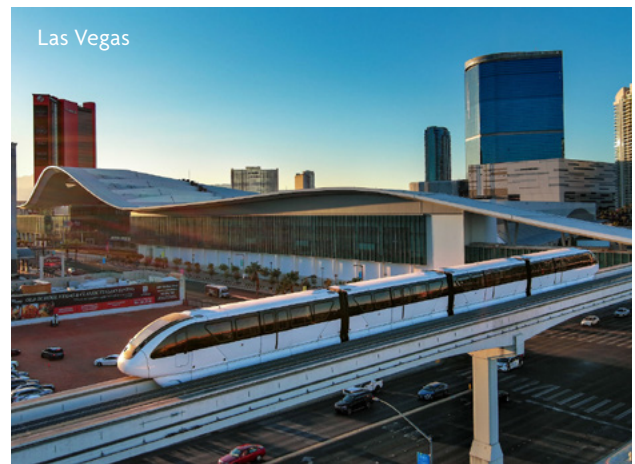
- Recognising the need to diversify the economy to include other sectors such as technology, manufacturing, and mining (gold, lithium) etc, to reduce financial pressure on the Travel & Tourism sector.

The LVCVA has begun carbon foot-printing to develop a baseline and is actively developing mitigations against this baseline – notably, the Las Vegas transportation system and urban infrastructure. A few examples of significant steps taken in this direction are:

- Reopening the Las Vegas Convention Center with an underground people mover system to address efficiency, improve customer experience, and reduce emissions.
- Operating a Las Vegas electric monorail which transports around five million people annually.
- Planning for a destination-wide underground electric vehicle solution for reducing surface access/emissions, delivering significant potential for modal shift. There will be 19 stops and the businesses closer to each will invest in that stop. The project is expected to operationalise by 2024.

Key Learnings:

- Public-private collaboration is key to driving change.
- Economic diversification can help reduce the impact of shocks.
- Use of innovative transportation systems can be a significant contributor to decarbonisation.



Environmental and Social Resilience | Conservation and Regeneration



NEOM Case Study

Andrew McEvoy – MD Tourism, Natasha Martin – Innovation and Engagement (Tourism)

Dr Paul Marshall – Head NEOM Nature Reserve.

NEOM in Saudi Arabia aims to showcase what is possible when the best learnings from resilience and sustainability globally are applied in a brand new greenfield destination.

“Conservation at a tourist destination is best achieved by including tourists – not excluding them.”

NEOM is an emerging destination in northwestern Saudi Arabia. The name is a portmanteau of two words, the Greek word for new, ‘neo’ and the Arabic word for future ‘mustaqbal’, meaning “the new future”. For NEOM, the future is one that integrates sustainability in every sector, including tourism. The NEOM tourism team is leveraging technology, a new legal framework and traveller demand to build the world’s most sustainable and resilient tourism destination.

NEOM is 26,500 sq kms, approximately the size of Belgium. 95% of the territory will be protected and regenerated, and 5% has been designated for development including urban living. As of May 2022, NEOM has announced three development regions, including The Line. The Line will be a city without cars and streets with everything accessible by foot, within 20 minutes. ‘The Line’ is where the majority of the population will live and thrive.



Concentrating the urban population within 5% of land designated for development is considered to be the best means of securing environmental resilience whilst also building preparedness against future shocks and changes.

Economic resilience will be built by creating a balanced and diversified economy, where the tourism sector will be an important contributor to job creation and revenue generation. There are plans to develop ‘4-season products’ to drive workforce resilience. To

drive community resilience NEOM plans to integrate local people from the start of the development to be able to narrate the ‘untold heritage story’ which will become an integral part of the tourism attraction.

Through this project, NEOM hopes to demonstrate that Travel & Tourism can be an economic generator while driving social and environmental sustainability. It will rely on licensing rules to help enforce high sustainability standards and it will balance value and volume. The hope is that this deep commitment to sustainability will generate a competitive advantage over other destinations, and technology tools, such as a destination application will be used to empower tourists to make better choices.

Sensitive planning and careful design and delivery will be used to mitigate pressure on natural resources and the environment. To drive sustainability, NEOM is planning to adopt the following measures:

- Learnings from other global destinations which promote the concept of lower density tourism.
- Implementing visitor management tools to better manage visitor pressure and minimise guests’ environmental footprint.
- Introducing new visitor management concepts such as a Graduated Experience Framework where a scale from one to ten is applied to a place, based on exclusivity and volume. The traveller would progress through each level to experience all the places in the higher levels offering, more exclusivity. For example, wildlife experiences would be in the higher levels.
- Tracking visitor impact through a measurement tool to drive balance between negative and positive impacts.

The use of advanced data collection tools will underpin all the above measures to drive resilience. For example, travellers will be able to track the impact of every element of their trip on the local economy, conservation and the liveability of NEOM, in real-time, enabling them to make more sustainable choices, even once they are in the destination. This will be achieved through the implementation of a permission-based tech platform

which allows the visitor to opt-in to data collection, to individualise the visitor experience. At the end of each trip, opted-in visitors will receive a ‘Regenerative Receipt’ informing them of their personalised impact during their visit – generating awareness and promoting greater accountability.

Since sustainability is being built at the design stage and is a key driver for the overall development of NEOM, it is not only restricted to the Travel & Tourism sector but also cuts across all verticals of development. In fact, the investments in the region are driven by investors having the right mindset toward sustainability and the concept of NEOM. The development plan has in-built resilience for the future with consideration of:

- Climate change as a key urban design factor in the living environment, including heating effects, channelling of breeze, street orientation, green spaces, etc.
- Conservation of the ecosystem by providing opportunities to regenerate.
- Embracing the natural diversity of landscape which includes deserts, snow-capped mountains, deep oceans, coral reef islands, rocky outcrops etc.
- Avoiding past mistakes of overuse of natural resources to restore innate resilience.

“NEOM will be at the forefront of cultural transformation by using nature as the key to balancing tensions.”

Key Learnings:

- Adopting sustainability as the core principle of development can help people and planet to co-exist.
- Where this can happen from the inception and design phase, it provides a particularly strong advantage.



Environmental and Social Resilience | Shared value



Lanzarote Case Study

María Dolores Corujo Berriel, President, Cabildo de Lanzarote; **Héctor Fernández Manchado**, CEO, Turismo Lanzarote; **Paula Muñoz López**, Chief Marketing Officer of Lanzarote Tourism; **José Valle**, President, Círculo de Empresarios

Environmental protection has a 50+ year history in Lanzarote. Yet, this has not prevented the challenges of climate change, exacerbated by the advent of mass unsustainable tourism. Now, with a focus on more sustainable and socially resilient products, the island is repositioning its offerings towards those that maximise value for the local community.

“Both tourists and inhabitants are more and more conscious that there is only one planet.”

Lanzarote is one of Spain’s Canary Islands, located off the northwest coast of Africa. Its economy is firmly centered around Travel & Tourism and the island is one of Europe’s most popular destinations, with over three million visitors in 2019.

Lanzarote Tourism believes the key to building long term resilience against future climate or health related shocks is to pay attention to the environmental sustainability of the islands’ natural resources and the social sustainability of its people.

The island has a long history of protecting its natural assets, as these are key to its popularity. Indeed, Lanzarote has been aware of the importance of protecting its landscape since as far back as the 1960s when the first conservation regulations were put in place. In 1991 a territorial plan on land use was approved, incorporating a cap on the number of hotel beds allowed in future development as a means of managing the island’s tourist capacity and preventing overcrowding. In 1993 the island was awarded the status of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) nature reserve.

While Lanzarote has ensured the protection of its environment over the decades, its biggest challenge as an island destination is now climate change. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and changing weather patterns are significant concerns. While these issues may be local in impact, the root cause is global. Identifying this and understanding that some challenges cannot be addressed locally, Lanzarote Tourism became actively involved at the international level and joined NECSTouR (European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism) – an EU body advocating on behalf of European Regions for Sustainable Tourism Development and heavily focused on the decarbonisation agenda.

Being one of Europe’s most frequented holiday locations also poses social challenges. Lanzarote recognises that for a destination to thrive and feel alive and authentic, it needs the support and input from the local community. This means understanding the impact of tourism on the local population, the conditions for people working in

the sector, and the importance of working on solutions to improve people’s way of life. Lanzarote achieves this through working with key sector partners to develop educational, social, and sustainability initiatives. Some specific examples of these initiatives are below:

- Local supply chains - Collaboration with local restaurants and hotel chains to achieve a **‘zero kilometer food’** policy where food is produced and consumed locally to reduce transport emissions. This initiative is led by the gastronomy-related platform, [“Saborea-Tasting Lanzarote.”](#) Its website allows for products to be filtered by categories of interest to find local businesses and producers that match the search.
- Celebrating traditions - Preserving traditional volcanic-related winemaking traditions and landscapes, a unique Lanzarote technique, with industry support from the [TUI Care Foundation](#). The project aims to maintain the wine cultural heritage in La Geria, a protected wine landmark, by fostering the production of ecological wine and providing locals with disabilities new employment opportunities.
- Authentic design - Tourism sites, such as The Cabildo de [Lanzarote’s Centres for Art, Culture and Tourism](#), are integrated in the volcanic nature of the island. They are a must-visit for anyone wanting to discover the true essence of Lanzarote and are therefore carefully preserved. César Manrique, a local artist of international renown, created these unique spaces by bringing together Art and Nature under a philosophy of sustainability fifty years ago, a visionary perspective that anticipated future trends.
- Improved waste management - by developing a materials recycling facility ([Environmental complex Zonzamas](#)) that generates energy from organic waste through Biomethanisation.
- Certification – Lanzarote was the first destination to use the *‘Biosphere Sustainable*’* certification tool based on the UN’s Official Document System. Through this initiative, companies from all over the island related to the Travel & Tourism sector are able to measure the impact of sustainable

solutions they implement through quantitative and qualitative results. This helps to educate all tourism stakeholders about the importance of sustainable practice.

- DMO management - Lanzarote has brought together the public and private sectors to drive change towards more sustainable practice. Lanzarote Tourism focuses on integrating all tourist actors, institutions and economic operators with Lanzarote’s brand marketing strategy so that actions are aligned and cooperation is improved. Lanzarote Tourism comprises the local government *Cabildo* (council), local councils, accommodation associations, tourist federation and more than 100 hundred private sponsoring companies.
- Shared value - In parallel, the Lanzarote private sector, through the association *Círculo de Empresarios* is developing a destination shared value project for implementing sustainable actions on the ground. This initiative was included in the Lanzarote Repositioning Strategy designed in 2020, which established clear roles and specific activities to be carried out by the public and private sectors. The focus is to place the traveler at the centre by offering the opportunity to contribute to Lanzarote’s positive transformation through significant socially sustainable activities. The first practical action in place aims at supporting the preservation of local crafts, a relevant element of cultural heritage at risk of disappearing, by funding knowledge transfer and fostering the creation of a shopping collection that showcases local products made by Lanzarote artisans and artists.

Key Learnings:

- Managing tourist numbers is key to protecting the natural environment.
- Creating industry partnerships to deliver on educational, environmental and social initiatives is key to ensuring local satisfaction. The principle of “shared value” can help drive stronger public-private-community collaboration.



Environmental Resilience | Sharing information and ideas



Kenya Case study

Esther Munyiri, Director, Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre, Eastern Africa, Kenyatta University

Kenya has developed resilience and the governance, and communications frameworks to enable it, over several challenging years. Its large and dispersed tourism stakeholder base benefits greatly from a trusted, centralised, technology-enabled information hub.

As one of the world's most popular destinations for wildlife watching, approximately 9% of jobs and 8% of Kenya's GDP was generated by Travel & Tourism in 2019. Given its importance as an economic driver, Kenya has focused on ensuring that the sector is able to operate in a resilient manner while balancing sustainable economic growth.

From an environmental perspective, a key draw for tourists visiting Kenya is the country's biodiversity - from safaris to the coastline. Recognising this, the country has designated over 50 National Parks and Reserves to ensure conservation of its local flora and fauna and established a number of partnerships with both local and global organisations to study, learn, and implement conservation initiatives. For example:

- Council of Governors: Kenya's tourism work plan is aligned with the work of the Council of Governors (CoG) - a collective of the leaders of the 47 Kenyan counties to advocate for policy change and to share best practice; the Global Tourism Resilience Centre – East Africa (GTRCMC-EA) aims to become the implementing agent of the CoG and will then lead on projects such as;
 - Inventory building on tourism projects and cultural products (museums etc.).
 - Intel/data gathering from key stakeholders and communities on the ground.
- Erasmus Programme: An alignment of the GTRCMC-EA mandate with that of the European Union Erasmus+ programme; this enables reciprocation of researchers between Europe and Eastern Africa to spread ideas and learn from one another.
- UNWTO Observatory programme: a collaborative endeavour between local and national leadership to ensure continuous improvement in ocean management through the measurement, monitoring, and reporting of 11 set variables including for example, tourism numbers and waste management.

Resilience for Kenya means preparedness, management, and recovery from crises, with the ultimate aim of mitigating losses as much as possible. To achieve this, they review potential issues and problem areas before, during, and after a crisis. Research is central to informing stakeholders how to deal with potential scenarios. To

assist with meeting these objectives, in March 2020 the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife gazetted the GTRCMC-EA alongside the National Tourism Crisis Steering Committee (NTCSC) as the think tank for the management coordination, response, and steering organ for all crises in the tourism sector in Kenya. The GTRCMC-EA was designated as the main body to gather and collate data during the pandemic and was responsible for supplying information, creating policies, and supporting crisis management. One lesson learnt during such a rapidly evolving crisis was to ensure information was shared as efficiently as possible. To achieve this, the NTCSC established regular meetings with key stakeholders as well as using instant messaging services for providing updates throughout the day. This information was then collated and distributed via emails, website updates, and various forms of social media.

Another key lesson learnt, following the initial wave of the pandemic was the importance of working closely with media houses to ensure clear and accurate public communications with tourism in mind. In one instance, some tourism operators suffered a 50% cancellation rate due to one bad report on an outbreak of Ebola in spite of it being in a separate country. Closer co-operation with the media can also contribute to the creation of a more favourable 'brand image' for the tourism sector.

Key Learnings:

- Participation in pan-regional organisations supports collaboration which may help solve local issues.
- Establishing an agency which holds the accountability of ensuring clear and active engagement with stakeholders can help alignment on strategic direction as well as provide operational clarity.

Energy and Social Resilience | Green energy and a circular economy



Portugal Case study

Leonor Picao, Tourism Portugal

Portugal is one of Europe's most popular tourism destinations. In a highly competitive market, sustainability must be coupled with value and resource efficiency.

“We need tourists to think about our country like their home because it is our planet.”

“We cannot continue to waste effort in theoretical studies, we need measures that change our destinations. Actions, actions, actions.”

Tourism Portugal believes that sustainability and resilience require concrete plans, with measurable projects and initiatives with quick targets and deadlines. All stakeholders should be involved, from the public sector and businesses to families and individuals, working across different ministries such as Environment, Transport and Culture, with a priority on the end results.

Travel & Tourism has particular potential as a catalyst for sustainable development in Portugal - not only does the sector contribute 17% to GDP (in 2019), it also contributes significantly to the development of other industries. At a national level, the Portugal 2027 Tourism Strategy is based on the affirmation of “Tourism as a hub for economic, social and environmental development throughout the territory, positioning Portugal as one of the most competitive and sustainable tourist destinations in the world” and comprises eight strategic objectives:

- Increase tourism demand in the country and across various regions.
- Grow at a faster rate in revenue than in overnight stays.
- Extend tourist activity throughout the year.
- Increase the qualifications of the population employed in tourism.
- Ensure tourism activity generates a positive impact on resident populations.
- Increase energy efficiency levels in tourism companies.
- Promote rational management of water resources in tourism.
- Promote efficient waste management in national tourist activity.

Tourism Portugal launched a public consultation to build the +Sustainable Tourism Plan, in accordance with the 2027 Tourism Strategy. The end goal is to place the Travel & Tourism ecosystem at the forefront of the climate transition towards a new green and inclusive economy that stimulates the circular economy. Collecting everyone's ideas

facilitates practical solutions and helps the population feel more engaged in the initiatives. The objective is “to consider the needs of visitors, the tourism sector and communities, as well as its environmental, economic and social impact now and in the future”. [The 3-year plan](#) contains 119 projects aligned with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A sustainability monitoring group involving 53 entities has been created to ensure the plan meets its objectives and ensures traveller and resident satisfaction.

Some examples of specific projects undertaken are:

- Employee engagement: development of an SDG chart, inviting all employees to become exemplars of sustainability through their own behaviour and interactions with others by leading by example on environmental factors such as turning off lights and using less water.
- Stakeholder training:
 - [Good Practice Guides and Tools on Sustainability](#) in accommodation, restaurants, tour operators and golf courses. Developed in collaboration with tourism stakeholders and academia, these documents were produced in 2021 with easy-to-follow content, examples, and tools to help guide users towards implementation of good sustainability practices.
 - Digital Training Course “[Upgrade Sustainability](#)”: 45-hour digital course, to help businesses build preparedness on sustainability issues (2020-2022).
 - [Water efficiency](#): Providing national guidelines for water efficiency in tourist accommodation, developed by a national agency to help hotels achieve certification on water efficiency.

Key Learnings:

- Actions matter. If no budget is available implement low budget action plan as a priority.
- The entire stakeholder spectrum should be involved from inception to implementation for best results

Climate resilience | Community and Collaboration



California Case Study

Caroline Beteta, President and CEO, Visit California

California is one of the US States most frequently impacted by geological and climate-related events. At the same time, it is the largest tourism destination in the US. Adapting to climate change and embedding stewardship among both residents and visitors lies at the heart of the state's tourism sustainability philosophy.

“Although California possesses unanimity of culture and vision, the key challenge is how to bring them together for execution to enhance sustainability and resilience.”

California is the largest tourism destination in the US. Visitor spend in 2019 was US \$145 billion while more than 1 million people were employed in the sector, generating US \$12 billion tax revenue for the state.

Climate change is the biggest threat to California and surrounding places, causing frequent wildfires, rising sea levels, drought, changing seasonality and extreme weather conditions. In order to combat this, there needs to be a global outlook and a strategy, adopted across the following five objectives:

- Expanding sustainable practices across the California Travel & Tourism sector.
- Encouraging responsible tourism among stakeholders including travellers themselves.
- Developing approaches to check visitation patterns
- Infusing the California brand with stewardship principles - core to the operating DNA.
- Amplifying the sense of pride Californian residents have in their state.

California has implemented various sustainability measures which have brought it closer to achieving these objectives. Some examples include:

- Conducting sustainability workshops and providing resilience building handbooks to the destination tourism marketing organisations, focusing on coming out of the pandemic and resetting the sector.
- Recasting travel websites to provide sustainability strategies by industry segments.
- Running resident sentiment research across the state to understand their view on tourism pinch points.
- Collaborating with the University of California to collect historic data on water use and conservation efforts in the sector.

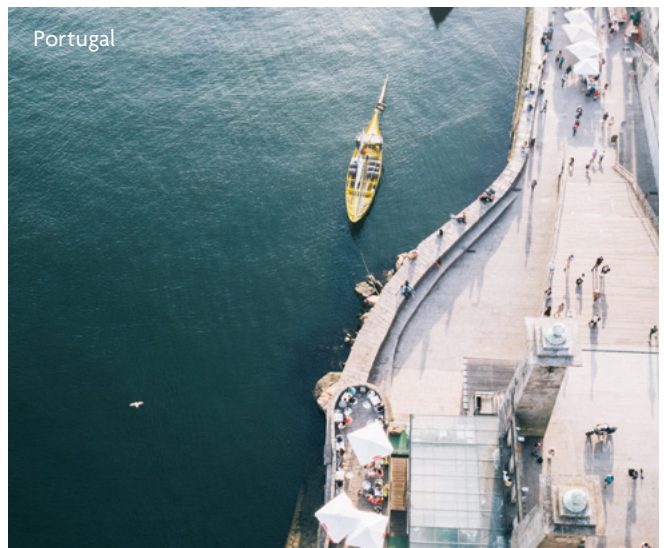
- Use of federal grants to integrate resilience and sustainability into 12 regional tourism plans throughout the state.
- Working with the community to tackle core issues such as water conservation and pollution through beach clean-up days.

During the pandemic, however, visitation patterns changed with more residents of the state visiting destinations for the first time which led to skewed tourist seasons; hence bringing sustainability practices into action became the key priority. Local residents were skeptical about the influx of travellers from other destinations during the pandemic and so it became imperative to have local community representation around the table for developing the sustainability and resilience plans.

Visit California has its own crisis management plan with a crisis management committee that brings together local leaders, media offices, government departments, international offices etc. They also have a tri-state partnership with competing destinations in Oregon and Washington that comes together during crises to communicate with trade and consumers.

Key Learnings:

- Engaging local residents in developing a sustainable and resilient tourism industry can fuel the future of sustainable tourism.
- Cross-border partnerships can help address crises and shocks that affect multiple destinations.





4.

Recommendations

This report, which has reviewed both literature and destinations, has identified a range of concepts and actions which can support destinations in becoming more resilient and sustainable. Although each case is unique, some of the common themes identified point to the importance of the following concepts:

- Developing successful governance models.
- Ensuring ownership, legitimacy, and transparency.
- Developing destination shared value projects.
- Crisis preparedness.

Developing successful governance models

Travel & Tourism affects policy, society and business necessitating clear governance and alignment across national and local structures to ensure progress in resilience and sustainability. National and regional governments that set a sustainability and resilience-driven agenda, which permeates across all ministries and departments, will pave the way for destination resilience.

Top-down leadership is essential. Piecemeal, grassroots efforts can get tangled in cross-sector contradictions and conflicts; but when clarity and strategy start at the top and cascades consistently through the ecosystem, real progress is possible.

Destinations looking to ensure that this key ingredient is in place should following these steps:

- 1) Identify the key resilience and sustainability issues relevant to the destination (e.g. environment, economy, energy supply etc).
- 2) Define the key stakeholders linked to each priority area.
- 3) Prioritise goals and initiatives to ensure those priorities are manageable and sensibly sequenced.
- 4) Identify gaps to the desired state, including finance, data & knowledge, ownership, and policy.
- 5) Define and implement governance mechanism, including structure, responsibilities, oversight, reporting, and communication.

See WTTC's publication [Towards Destination Stewardship](#) for further details on effective governance models.

Ensuring ownership, legitimacy, and transparency

Travel & Tourism has costs as well as benefits, and as long as deep asymmetries exist in who owns the burdens and who retains the benefits, destinations will never be truly resilient or sustainable. Hence, ensuring that Travel & Tourism providers are empowered to be truly responsible for their environmental, economic, and social impacts is critical. This, in turn, requires legitimacy, as a specific form of leadership is needed to establish such a framework of responsibility. This framework must incorporate the Travel & Tourism assets across all relevant stakeholders – from residents to employees, SMEs to large corporates, as well as policymakers and governors to travellers – to strengthen ties and engagement, and thereby adaptability and ingenuity – two key factors in resilience. Transparency is another key element; stakeholders need to have clear rules and requisites to enable success in achieving resilience goals.

Steps that can be taken to establish this approach include:

- Enhancing public-private-community collaboration between governments, trade unions, and civil society to identify common pool resources and ensure that the governance structure (above) addresses these.
- Addressing regulatory/policy frameworks to encourage/incentivise innovative and creative approaches which support resilience goals.
- Implementing comprehensive and transparent communication to demonstrate the value of Travel & Tourism and encourage dialogue and trust, through the DMO and/or dedicated Resilience governance body.

Developing destination shared value projects

Public-private collaboration models should convert sustainability priorities into practical initiatives. To do this, governments and DMOs can support the design and implementation of destination shared value projects. The shared value concept (Porter and Kramer, 2011)⁸ was developed for individual companies to increase their competitiveness while improving the economic and social conditions in the communities and operational ecosystems in which they develop their activities. Yet, this approach is now applied to destinations, with the participation of numerous companies and key stakeholders, proving to be a successful tool to achieve these same objectives at a larger scale. Destination shared value projects are action-oriented exercises carried out jointly by various companies in destinations to expand beyond corporate social responsibility on an individual basis, accelerate the sustainability process, and produce a meaningful impact.

This approach permits ambitious strategies to be implemented quickly within an SDG framework, while incorporating sustainable solutions into the innovation processes and promoting products and services that inspire travellers to make sustainable choices. It allows participants to increase their competitiveness through collaboration, generates new business opportunities, and supports coordinated positioning. This perspective also contributes to differentiation of the destination offer, customer loyalty, employee and investor motivation, the recovery of public confidence in the business ecosystem, and efficient use of resources for communication, thereby further enhancing resilience.

The model requires the involvement of the local population and solid partnerships with governments and institutions. It includes specific actions to be implemented by each group of stakeholders.

Stakeholders	Actions to be implemented
Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the schemes and coordinate / incentivise participation.
Tourism companies with local presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the SDGs into every level of the business strategy. • Leading collaboration with other companies in the sector by launching joint activities.
Global companies with no local presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate through sponsorships or by channeling donations from clients.
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow sustainable processes. • Respect the environment.
Local population and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer
Travellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate • Participate in joint projects.

Source: ICF

The shared value ecosystem summarised in the table above gives protagonism to visitors as travellers play a central role in creating a successful shared value project. Their incorporation into the overall vision allows them to connect with the destination and amplify the benefits of Travel & Tourism by creating a positive impact via their trip. This element is also an emerging consumer demand: contributing to positive change with daily gestures in the consumption process.

A shared value project requires a specific protocol to facilitate its implementation. Such a methodology must enable coordination, transformation, a sense of belonging, and an inspiring common goal. It must also ensure that each action does not constitute an isolated proposal but rather a carefully designed element of an integrated system in which the social dimension of sustainability is an integral part in the strategy.

Shared value project examples include:

- Collaborating with travellers in conservation, regeneration, and heritage preservation, for instance through beach clean-ups or participation in social programmes, thereby enhancing the visitor's experience and creating win-wins for visitor and destination.
- Channelling part of the receipts from Travel & Tourism back into nature conservation, infrastructure and social programmes in local communities.

Preparation and processes for the next shock (whilst managing stresses)

Change is the only constant. Future shocks are highly likely particularly with climate change, and those destinations that learn not only from their own experiences but from those of others will find their resilience 'muscles' develop rapidly. A culture of continuous improvement, a growth mindset that focuses on learning from crises rather than apportioning blame for any failings, and careful knowledge management are all necessary in crisis preparedness and resilience.

The lessons from COVID-19 must not be forgotten. Every destination should follow a clear framework for cataloguing learnings and start to prepare for the next event that will inevitably disrupt its Travel & Tourism ecosystem. Destinations need to be especially mindful that the sector works within the local capacity for water and energy and ensure that future development and infrastructure plans consider resilience and are built with any stresses to these essential systems in mind.

Risk and disaster management disciplines provide clear guidelines for how to catalogue lessons from previous experience to ensure that these are learned and applied. Having periodic cross-sectoral public-private dialogue on resilience themes will help to keep these issues front of mind and can help to ensure that the best ideas are captured, irrespective of where they come from.

Lastly, tapping into international platforms to cross-fertilise and leverage external expertise can increase efficiency of learning and preparation.

This ICF and WTTC report is part of that international repository of practical ideas, aimed at increasing destination resilience and sustainability worldwide.

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World Travel & Tourism Council – The Voice of Travel & Tourism.

WTTC promotes sustainable growth for the Travel & Tourism sector, working with governments and international institutions to create jobs, to drive exports and to generate prosperity. Council Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world's leading private sector Travel & Tourism businesses.

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