



PRINCIPLE 06

# Industry Collaboration



**Sustainable tourism is only possible if we work together. To fully engage the powers of tourism - in capabilities & possibilities - industry collaboration is key.**

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals highlights collaboration and partnerships as central for action. SDG 17 targets encourages and promotes effective public, public-private and society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships. SDG 9 also aims to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, where the tourism sector plays a vital role. Industry collaboration is crucial in this process!

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# Importance and impact to business in the short and long term

Sustainability agenda is crucial not only for the success of your business, but also to create an impact.

In order to deliver great nature experiences, we have to agree on how we utilize natural resources while maintaining the socio-cultural authenticity of local communities, conserve cultural heritage and contribute to understanding with tolerance. We need to involve local communities at the core of decision making. And last but not least, in order to ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits in a way where income is fairly distributed, and giving stable employment and income opportunities by involving stakeholders. Industry collaboration is necessary to streamline social services and sustainable development for Sri Lanka.

Collaboration leverages the sustainable development of tourism between diverse groups of agencies, organizations, businesses and people with diverse values and agendas. Collaboration in tourism can sustain livelihoods, create profitable partnerships, protect cultures and the environment. Making true efforts to collaborate widely in your community will not only give you a stable ground, it can establish shared ownership making all stakeholders stronger over time.



# How you can live up to this principle

## 01 Local ownership amongst neighboring SMEs

A destination is only as strong as the combined community and industries. Make sure to create a collaborative environment around sustainability with your immediate business neighbors. At best this is a common plan for sustainability amongst the SMEs in the area, at least this is a common understanding of each other's stance in terms of sustainable destination development. If you have a common plan for sustainability for your destination, and are able to show collaborative efforts on sustainable development, you will also have easier access to funding, visibility and marketing.

## 02 Join forces for real

Collaboration does not imply a simple division of tasks. The greater value achieved by collaboration is when the sum of the efforts is more than each party's individual parts combined. Collaboration should leverage the sustainable development of tourism between diverse groups of agencies, organisations, businesses and people with different values and agendas. For example, the the conservation of biodiversity in your area allows your business to have a sustainable offer over time and gain positive exposure, and you might relieve yourself of some of the time consuming conservation tasks through cooperation. But simply dividing tasks will not enable the full picture of conservation, and the real protection of the ecosystem and biodiversity, make sure collaboration is not just delegation of tasks, but real labor together.

## 03 Involve, engage and explore your region

Have an open approach to involve, engage and explore new areas of cooperation in your region. The collaborative efforts will not only give you someone to share burdens with – it can also offer new opportunities, such as other supply chain partners or new activities that can be offered to your guests. If you explore the opportunities of industry collaboration with curiosity, you will find new and exciting partners you might not have thought of before. The cooperative space is never fully explored.

## 04 Join an alliance and invite others!

As a member of SLTA you know how much can be gained through working together as an industry. Make sure you share this knowledge, and that you continue to extend your efforts in other alliances and networks, as well as inviting in others actors to join forces with you where you already have valuable networks.

# What can we do as an industry?

## Local political anchoring in plans and decision making

The industry should act to make sustainable tourism integrated in relevant plans and strategies nationally, regionally and on municipal level. As a tourism operator you can join forces with other local or regional businesses or membership organisations and ask that measures for sustainable tourism be included in municipal and / or regional plans and strategies so that future resource management and value creation decisions are taken with long term sustainability in mind.

## Speak in One Voice

In order to secure sustainability in the regulations and plans that impact the tourism sector the industry must work together to safeguard politically sound decisions that support the long term sustainable development of Sri Lanka. In order to ensure this, industry coalitions must work together through advocacy and action on the ground, to demand the right political and regulative change from the government.



# How can you influence others?

## Tell the stories

The stories of collaboration in the tourism industry can be strong identity builders – that entire communities will be proud to tell, as this becomes part of their identity as well. Both successes and failures can function as important stories to get across the needs of collaboration for sustainability in the industry, and should be told through common efforts. If possible, also see if you can share your impact, by having collaborations for data sharing, monitoring, reporting and accountability.

## Join forces with NGOs

In order to fully support Sustainable development through tourism, partnerships with local NGOs can be important. This will enable you to align to verified solutions and strategies to meet local environmental or social challenges. These partnerships can often also end up in cooperative relations, with mutual benefits like knowledge sharing, common activities and capacity building that can strengthen all participants.

# Local Best Practices Case Study

## The Global Tourism Glasgow Declaration

The Glasgow Declaration is dedication from the tourism industry to drive increased urgency about the need to accelerate climate action in tourism and to secure strong actions and commitment to support the global goals to halve emissions over the next decade. Some of tourism's biggest businesses have joined governments and destinations in committing to cut emissions in half by 2030 and achieve Net Zero by 2050 at the latest.

The industry partners commits to;

1. Measure and disclose all travel and tourism-related emissions.
2. Set and deliver targets aligned with climate science to accelerate tourism's decarbonisation.
3. Restore and protect ecosystems, supporting nature's ability to draw down carbon, as well as safeguarding biodiversity, food security, and water supply.
4. Collaborate and share evidence of risks and solutions with all stakeholders and our guests, and work together to ensure our plans are as effective and co-ordinated as possible.
5. Finance and ensure organisational resources and capacity are sufficient to meet objectives set out in climate plans.

Read more on how you can commit and get involved here:

<https://www.unwto.org/news/tourism-unites-behind-the-glasgow-declaration-on-climate-action-at-cop26>



# Organizations and institutions that can help you on your journey

## UN

The United Nations SDG 9 target to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, while SDG 17 target aims to strengthen the implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

***<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal9>***

***<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>***

## The SDG Compass

provides guidance for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realization of SDG 9 and SDG 17. The Compass have clear recommendations on how different actors can contribute to the goals as well as measure impact:

***<https://sdgcompass.org/business-tools/>***

## UNWTO

□The United Nations World Tourism Organisation has several initiatives and means to promote sustainable and resilient tourism development, such as resource efficiency in tourism, travel facilitation and common resolutions to the UN General Assembly

***<https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>***

## GSTC

Sri Lanka Tourism Alliance is Sri Lanka's only Alliance truly focused on bringing the industry together for sustainability. The Alliance has several programs focused on building a resilient and sustainable tourism industry. They provide member resources like capacity building programs, research reports, sustainability trainings, champions programs etc

***<https://www.srilankatourismalliance.com/member-resources/>***

## SLTA

□The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed criteria and indicators for overall sustainability both for hotels and destinations in line with the UN sustainability goals. The criteria and suggested Indicators were created in an effort to come to a common understanding of sustainable tourism, and they present a minimum of what tourism businesses should aspire to do:

***Hotels: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-industry-criteria-for-hotels/>***

***Destinations: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-destination-criteria/>***

***Tour operators: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-industry-criteria-for-tour-operators/>***

# Key words and definitions

## Sustainable tourism

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (*UNWTO, 2022*).

## 'Net Zero'

Achieving Net Zero emissions highlights the actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as close to zero as possible with remaining emissions being reabsorbed through natural systems such as forests and wetlands and artificial 'sinks' such as carbon capture and storage technology (CCS) (*Net Zero Coalition, 2022*).



Sustainability  
Principles

**For more information about the  
Alliance and our projects**

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