



# Sustainable Tourism How-to-Kit

---

How to take the first steps towards becoming a profitable, sustainable and successful tourism company.



***“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.” - Dalai Lama***

The information in this How-to-Kit has been compiled from presentations and advice provided by the ‘Improving your Business through Sustainable Tourism’ workshops hosted by CBI and NTB in December 2018. The information in this kit is not meant to be exhaustive, but a starting point on your journey to becoming a sustainable, profitable and successful tourism business.

According to the World Travel Organisation (WTO), sustainable tourism establishes a suitable balance between the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and plays an important role in conserving biodiversity. Sustainable tourism attempts to minimize its impact on the environment and local culture so that it will be available for future generations, while contributing to generating income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems.

Critical aspects of sustainability are:

- Sustainability is not co-dependent - you don’t have to rely on someone else to do something for you to become sustainable.
- It involves working together - partnering and collaborations are important to driving growth and profitability.

- Comes from your heart - means believing that you are a custodian and guardian of the natural and cultural world around you.

*Why is being sustainable especially important in the tourism industry?*

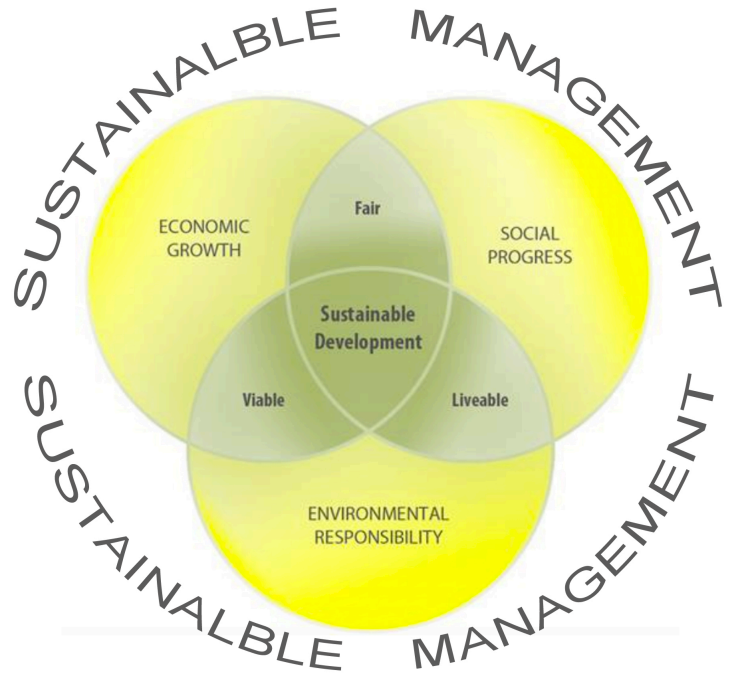
The tourism sector is uniquely able to link economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability and to act as a driving force for their protection and development.

Tourism, as an economic activity, is highly dependent on the presence of intact environments, rich cultures and welcoming host communities.

This places a heavy responsibility on the sector to address the social, cultural and environmental impacts of its own business operations.

And even more so in mountain regions!

- Where tourism provides valuable foreign currency.
- Creates business opportunities and jobs.
- Helps local communities to understand and value their natural and cultural heritage, which reinvigorates identity.



**Effective sustainable tourism development must include social, economic, environmental benefits within a comprehensive management system.**

The Global Sustainability Tourism Council has developed 4 pillars to becoming sustainable:

1. Sustainable management - effective sustainability planning
2. Socioeconomic impacts - maximizing social and economic benefits for local communities
3. Cultural impacts - enhancing cultural heritage
4. Environmental impacts - reducing negative impacts to the environment (including consumption of resources, reducing pollution, and conserving biodiversity and landscapes)

However, you might prefer to 'package' these four areas into a more attractive and meaningful format to suit your business. There are many systems to choose from, or you can develop your own. Some examples are:

The 3 W's - Wisdom, Wealth, Work

The 3 R's - Responsibility, Respect, Reward

The 5 E's - Environment, Education, Exploration, Employment, Empowerment

It is very important to remember, that your system must incorporate the four pillars above, be easy to explain to your staff and customers, be something that you are truly passionate about and is authentic - you need to be able to show that what you are doing is real and tangible through photos, videos and stories.

**Local success #1:  
Pavilions Himalaya,  
Pokhara. The most  
sustainable hotel in  
Asia.**

**Local success #2:  
3-Sisters Trekking.  
Building a strong  
sustainable business  
in the mountains.**

**Local success #3:  
Social Tours,  
Kathmandu. Making  
all that you do  
sustainable.**

## Is Sustainability Linked to Competitiveness?

**YES!! For business and the industry!**

Each year, the World Economic Forum publishes a Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report and in Nepal, the research information is provided by the Competitiveness and Development Institute (CODE).

Over the last decade, and again in 2017, Nepal did not rank well when compared against 136 other countries, the smaller the number the better the ranking:

**Nepal ranking = 103**

Venezuela = 101 / Mongolia = 102 / Bhutan = 78 / India = 40

*Why is this?*

When Nepal is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> for price competitiveness, 27<sup>th</sup> for natural resources, and 51<sup>st</sup> for prioritizing the travel and tourism industry?

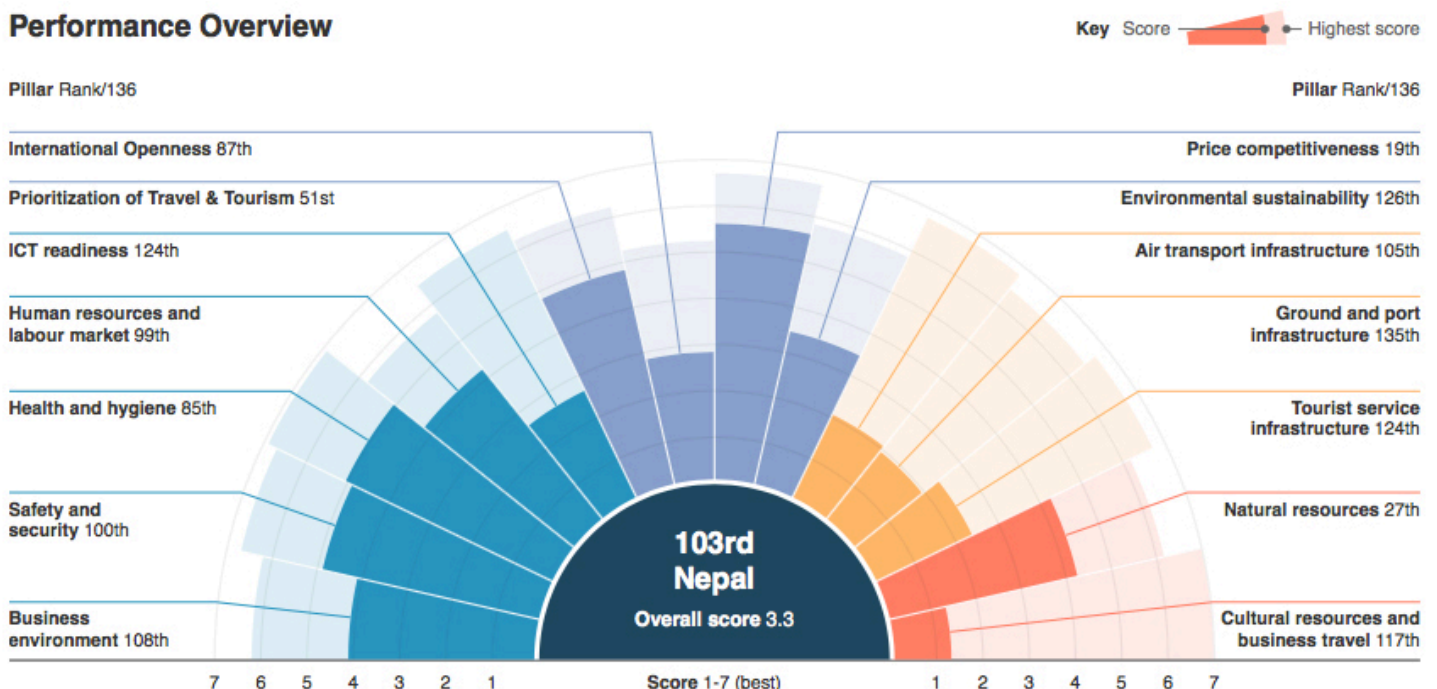
“However many holy words your read, however many you speak, what good will they do if you do not act upon them?”  
Buddha

The main downfall is the lack of sustainability in the industry - ranking 126<sup>th</sup>.

Weighting is given to each of the criteria and sustainability is now the most important criteria related to governance, industry management and market dynamics. Simply put, if a country isn't managing its resources sustainably then the opportunity to use tourism as a driver for economic and social growth can't happen in the future.

If we think about our families, we educate our children and try to create a home and family that will last generations. The tourism sector also has to educate itself to provide long-term benefits for business and all those involved in the industry if it is to live a healthy life.

### Performance Overview



# Who is involved in Sustainable Tourism and what are their roles?

Individual businesses are the drivers of sustainability, but the work in developing a fully sustainable tourism industry belongs to many other organizations as well. It is important that each stakeholder thoroughly understands their role in supporting the rest of the system, and if all work together, then the impact will reach far and last for many years.

The UNWTO has developed a framework that describes the roles and activities of all tourism stakeholders - it's a useful way to see how every organization and individual fits together in a sustainable tourism system.

Policy and planning are important to develop industry structure, coordination, promotions and effective communication both domestically and internationally.

POLICY & PLANNING ROLES	
International development assistance agencies Multilateral agencies and programs Bilateral Agencies	Integrating tourism in development policies and agreements Financial and technical assistance to sustainable tourism and individual programs and projects
National Government Tourism Ministry and other Ministries Tourism Board Regional Tourism Agencies Other government delivery agencies Resource Management Bodies eg National Parks	Tourism policy and strategy development and implementation Relating tourism to wider policies and strategies Legislation, standards and regulation relating to the sector Infrastructure planning and development Resource management Communication, information and marketing

Product and operation involves the development and management of tourism products and services, engagement between local bodies and the business sector is critical.

PRODUCT & OPERATION	
Local Government and destination bodies Regional government Local authorities e.g. District Councils Destination management organizations, e.g. public-private	Local strategic direction and planning Implementation of policy and regulations Local infrastructure development and management Stakeholder engagement, coordination and support
Private sector businesses Tourism trade associations, national and local Tourism service providers. e.g. hotel businesses Tour operators – international and incoming Suppliers to the sector, e.g. food producers Investors – international and domestic	Representation of, and influence on, the tourism sector Operation of tourism services Link to domestic and international markets Product development, investment and improvement Employment creation and generating local income Reflecting economic, social and environmental sustainability issues in development and operations

Participation is the ‘coal face’ of tourism - this is the critical moment when a visitor meets and interacts with locals, both in the tourism business and broader community.

PARTICIPATION	
Local community Community councils and representative bodies Traditional structures e.g. tribal chiefs/bodies Organized groups, e.g. women, youth Local formal and informal traders Individual households	Engaging in planning and decisions on tourism at a local level Representing and communicating local community interests Pursuing equitable benefit sharing within communities Interacting with tourists to mutual benefit Receiving income from tourist spending
Consumers/tourists Individual tourists Consumer networks, clubs and societies Travel media and social media users	Providing the main source of income to the sector Behaving responsibly towards the environment and local communities in travel choice and actions Communicating information and opinions on destinations and sustainability issues accurately and fairly represented

Support and training are key to providing services and ensuring that all stakeholders are included in the tourism industry.

SUPPORT & TRAINING	
Employees and related bodies Labor unions Individual workers in the sector Education and training bodies Universities, colleges and teaching bodies Research institutions Technical experts and advisory bodies	Representing interests of employees Human resources planning and development Provision of a reliable service in return for income Knowledge gathering and dissemination Supporting policy and strategy development Capacity building and training Specific advice and expertise
NGOs – International, national and local Sustainable development NGOs Environment, conservation and cultural NGOs Social and community NGOs	Representing different stakeholder interests Engaging in strategic planning and development Stakeholder coordination and supporting implementation Capacity building and provision of expertise

**Example #1:**  
 State of Kerela, India. Local communities driving government policy.

**Example #2:**  
 Machu Pichhu, Peru. Balancing high growth and local benefits.

**Example #3:**  
 Kilimanjaro National Park, Tanzania. Sustainable tourism can really work!

Communication is key to attracting customers and building partnerships...

So developing an effective digital platform is essential!

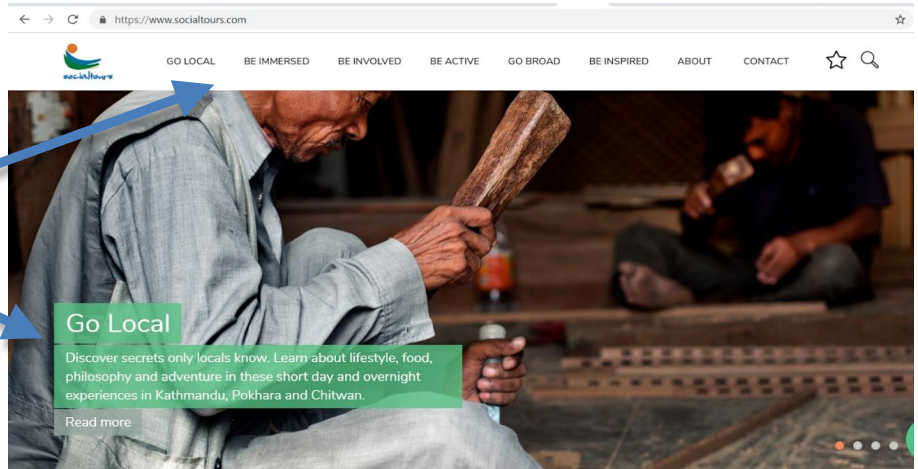
“Being digital ready is both an attitude and a set of leadership and business capabilities.”  
 Pearl Zhu

Here are some tips and ideas for transforming your website into an effective sustainable tourism communication tool:

Have a clear menu that reflects both your branding and products.

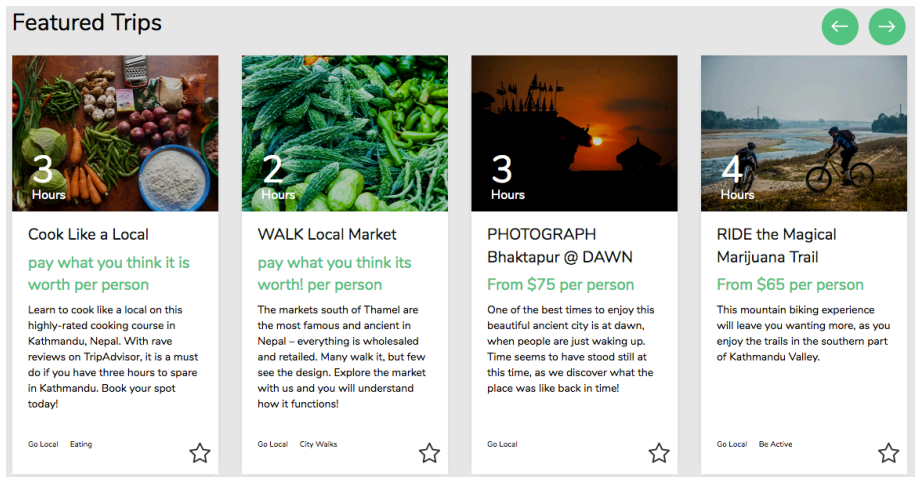
Brand your sustainable activities and support with clear, powerful images.

See: socialtours.com



Present your trips in a clear way, with your most popular product first. Make it easy for the customer to understand the difference between trips and use images to ‘sell’ sustainability and uniqueness.

See: socialtours.com



Use highly respected endorsements with impact.

Present your Unique Selling Points (USPs) in a clear way on your homepage. Use icons to add clarity.

See: pavilionshotels.com/himalaya.com

“...staying here is just so damn cool.” The Telegraph UK

Whether adventurous or contemplative, our guests welcome the reassurance of the resort’s deep commitment to the sustainability of its natural environment and the welfare of the people of Nepal.

Join us at The Pavilions Himalayas, where the promise is the ultimate refreshment for the body and soul.



Want to do more or need more information? Then contact: Guido van de Graaf, Email: guidonepal@gmail.com

# So you want to become sustainable? Where do you start, what are the first steps?

Whether a tourism body, business or individual, here's a simple step by step guide to begin...

## Step 1

### **Adopting Sustainability.**

The first step is to adopt the principle that we are custodians and guardians of the world around us. Then describe your sustainable philosophy in simple terms, while making sure you are including the 4-pillars. Nominate someone in your organization as the sustainability coordinator and provide them with the authority and resources to start your sustainability journey.

## Step 2

### **Become a Travelife Partner**

Commitment to sustainable certification is the best way to improve all that you and your business is doing. The process also helps you to build your sustainable activity portfolio of photos, videos and stories that you can use for promotions and marketing.

## Step 3

### **Develop a Digital Platform**

Communicating with the world about your sustainability journey is a key part of attracting new customers, identifying partners, developing collaborations and reaching out to international business partners. Begin connecting through The Guardian Sustainability Blog, CSRwire, Triple Pundit and the CSR Blog in Forbes Magazine.

## Step 4

### **Achieve Certification**

Now you have the credentials to build strong, long-lasting international relationships and domestic partnerships. Your customers are becoming your advocates both in-person and on social media, your products are unique and are used as examples of best practice.

## Step 5

### **Help Build Industry Sustainability**

The ripple effects you have created through building trust and understanding about the benefits of sustainability bring you recognition, strengthen your brand image and create lasting loyalty with your customers, suppliers and staff. Congratulations!



Would you like more information?

Here's some contact and ideas to help you!

“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”  
Native American Proverb

#### Travelife.



Travelife is dedicated to making holidays more sustainable. We work with travel businesses around the world to help them improve their social, economic and environmental impacts. Businesses that prove they meet the Travelife sustainability criteria become Travelife certified, helping them easily promote their achievements to others.

Contact: Marianne Heredge, Email: [info@travelife.info](mailto:info@travelife.info)

#### Sustainable Tourism Network



The Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) is an informal network of individuals and organizations that have keen interest in promoting sustainable tourism practices in Nepal. Driven by the vision of Nepal as a wholesome sustainable tourism destination, STN aims to promote and facilitate knowledge sharing, skills transfer, compilation and distribution of best practices models, and through marketing support for sustainable tourism products.

Contact: Gobinda Oli, Email: [gobinda@ntb.org.np](mailto:gobinda@ntb.org.np)

#### IPD



IPD, the initiative for import promotion in Germany, supports sustainable and responsible tourism. We promote suppliers which are committed to fair and sustainable tourism practices and offer high quality products. Our aim is to assist the tourism sector of Nepal to grow and link up with European markets, create jobs and thus make a contribution to sustainable economic development.

Contact: Nora Eichkorn, Email: [eichkorn@importpromotiondesk.de](mailto:eichkorn@importpromotiondesk.de)

#### Himalayan Travel Mart



June 7-9, 2019. Himalaya Travel Mart (HTM) is Nepal's premier international travel and tourism trade show facilitating unparalleled networking and business opportunities and valuable industry insights among the global tourism and hospitality organizations, and individuals engaged in different aspects of tourism in the Himalayan region.

Contact: PATA Nepal, Email: [office@PATA.org.np](mailto:office@PATA.org.np)

# Sustainable Tourism How-to-Kit

---

How to take the first steps towards becoming a profitable, sustainable and successful tourism company.

CBI & Nepal Tourism Board

Bhrikuti Mandap  
Kathmandu, Nepal

[www.welcomenepal.com](http://www.welcomenepal.com)