



International Institute of Tourism Studies

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SUSTAINABILITY AS A CORE BUSINESS: RESETTING TOURISM *in the* GREATER CARIBBEAN

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WHERE ARE *we* TODAY?

- What is destination sustainability
- What do we know about the sustainability of destinations in the Greater Caribbean
- How are destinations and travel companies in the Americas thinking about sustainability during and post Covid-19
- What are the evolving priorities of destination organizations and private sector





"IN THE END IT'S ALL ABOUT PROTECTING OUR PRODUCT. IF THE PRODUCT—OUR DESTINATIONS—AREN'T PROTECTED IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL TERMS THEN PEOPLE WON'T WANT TO VISIT THEM, IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT."


**--JOHN DE VIAL, HEAD OF FINANCIAL PROTECTION
ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH TRAVEL AGENTS**

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DESTINATIONS *are* PLACES...

- UNIQUE
- EVOLVE OVER TIME
- DEFINED BY THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE
- HAVE STORIES
- CAN BE NURTURED, SHAPED AND SHARED

A wide-angle photograph of a tropical beach. The foreground shows the shallow, turquoise water of the ocean. The middle ground features a wide, sandy beach with numerous people relaxing. Many people are sitting on lounge chairs under large, thatched palm-leaf umbrellas. The background is filled with a dense line of tall palm trees. Behind the trees, a multi-story resort building with a blue roof is visible. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds.

DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY INVOLVES **BALANCING THE
EXPECTATIONS OF VISITORS, WITH THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY,
COMMUNITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Global Sustainable Tourism Council Standard for Destinations v2.0

(Released January 2020)

MAINSTREAMING 4 PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Management structure and frameworkb) Stakeholder engagementc) Managing pressure and change	SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Delivering local economic benefitsb) Social well-being and impacts
CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Protecting cultural heritageb) Visiting cultural sites	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Conservation of natural heritageb) Resource managementc) Management of waste and emissions

Destination sustainability before Covid-19

Poorly managed
tourism
development



Fast
growing tourism
industry



Negative
impacts on
the environment;
local communities
at risk

HEALTH OF 16 DESTINATIONS IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

Resource Efficiency, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change

- Protection of natural and cultural assets
- Coastal management
- Monitoring tourism's footprint at attractions
- Climate change adaptation & mitigation
- Disaster and emergency management
- Renewable energy sources and energy conservation
- Solid waste management
- Water conservation and management
- Wastewater management
- Water quality monitoring
- Regulations for light and noise pollution
- Air quality monitoring
- Green transportation

Cultural Values, Diversity and Heritage

- Management of cultural (and natural) heritage
- Sustainable tourism products and experiences
- Visitor education and management
- Interpretation of cultural (and natural) heritage

Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth

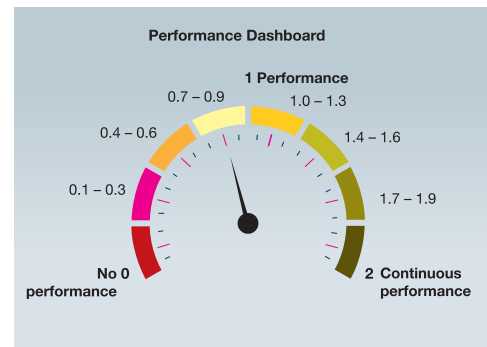
- Planning for sustainable tourism
- Physical planning guidelines
- Destination management
- Monitoring holistic impacts of tourism
- Economic monitoring
- Monitoring visitor satisfaction with destination

Social Inclusiveness, Employment, and Poverty Reduction

- Equitable employment and fair wages
- Supporting local entrepreneurs
- Community engagement
- Preventing exploitation of children, women and and marginalized groups
- Local access to tourism attractions
- Resident satisfaction with tourism
- Tourism awareness and education for residents

Mutual Understanding, Peace and Security

- Safety and security
- Travelers philanthropy



CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS



1. Financial consideration



2. Time



3. Human Resources



4. Technical expertise to implement



5. Stakeholder collaboration



6. Criteria/indicators



7. Political will

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IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN COVID-19 TOURISM RECOVERY PLANNING

Research Questions

Is the tourism industry going to restart more sustainably?

Does the idea of sustainability encompass community support?

Region

The Americas

Research Methods

Survey, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Groups

Participants

Public Sector: Destination Marketing Organizations; National, State & Local Tourism Offices

Private Sector: Industry Associations, Travel Trade, Accommodation Providers

Third Sector: Non-governmental Organizations

SURVEY RESULTS – PRIORITIES IN RECOVERY PLANNING

1

DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

47% of survey respondents

**VISITOR MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM TO ENSURE
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1

PRIVATE SECTOR

50% of survey respondents

**UNDERSTANDING
CHANGES IN THE
MARKET**



“We have to ensure that there’s an industry to keep sustainable.

So the first priority has to be getting the industry to survive and then ensuring that we put the checks and balances in place to ensure that in its new shape, whatever that new shape looks like, that it is a more sustainable shape.”

—Focus Group Participant

CHALLENGES

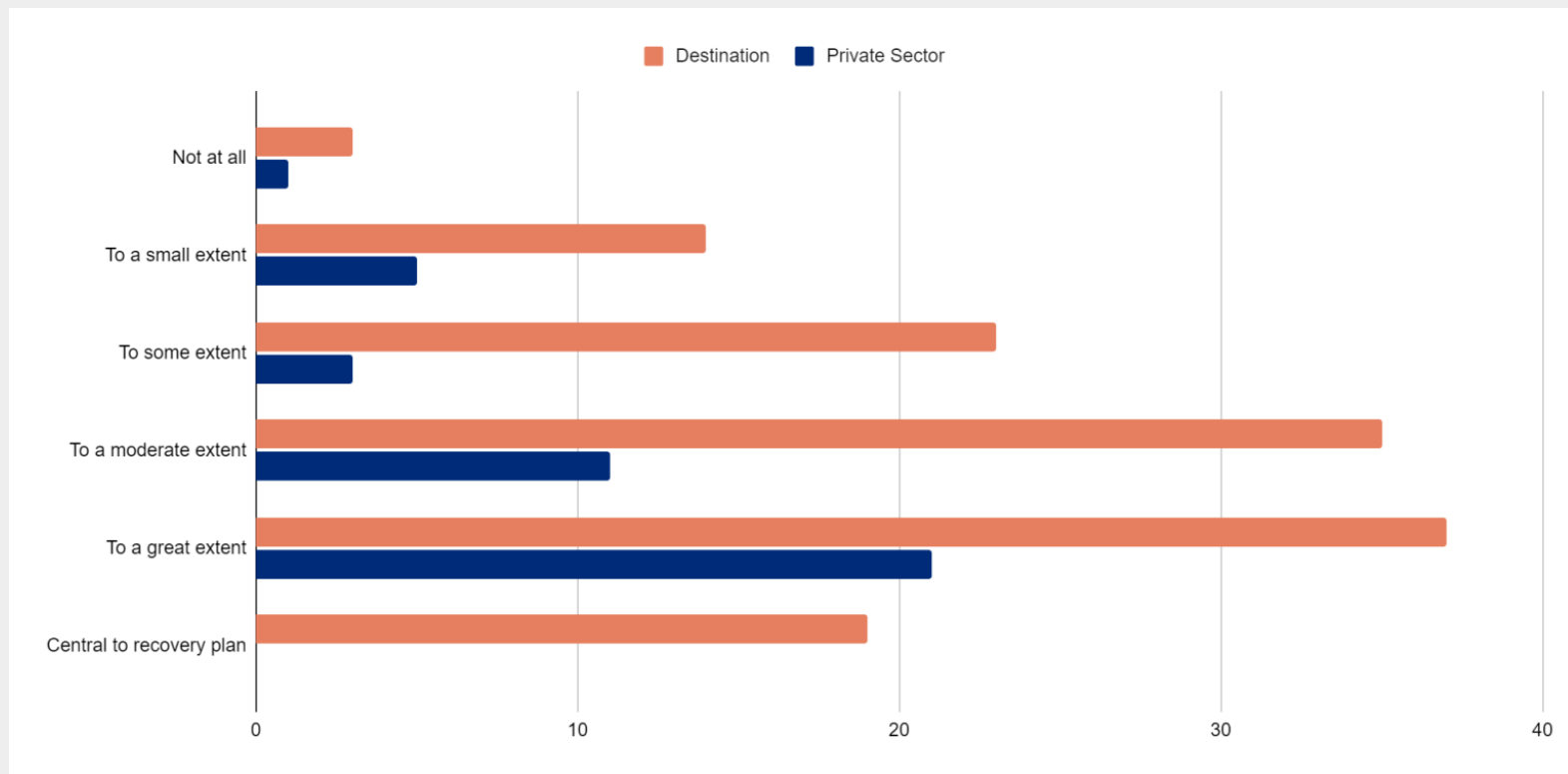
- **FUNDING**
- **VISITOR DEMAND/LOSS OF MARKETS**
- **CONSUMER CONFIDENCE**
- **GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

SURVEY RESULTS – PRIORITIES IN RECOVERY PLANNING

- **SUSTAINABILITY DOES NOT MAKE THE TOP 5 PRIORITIES FOR ANY GROUP OF RESPONDENTS**
- **SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS IS...**
 - #2 PRIORITY FOR NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL TOURISM OFFICES
 - #3 PRIORITY FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR
 - NOT A TOP PRIORITY FOR DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

COLLABORATION WAS A RECURRING THEME IN INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS

DO YOU SEE ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES AND/OR INITIATIVES INTO YOUR RECOVERY PLAN?



WHERE DOES THE INDUSTRY SEE OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY?



ENVIRONMENT

Reduce plastics, sustainable health and safety protocols, conservation



MARKETING

Local tourism, promote sustainability, promote COVID-19 good practices



BUSINESS & PLANNING

Prioritize sustainability in operations, planning & decisions



COMMUNITY

Donations, promoting local businesses, localizing supply chains



COMMUNICATIONS & EDUCATION

Communicate sustainability practices, train staff

PLAN TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMUNITY

DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

63%

During the crisis

63%

During recovery

PRIVATE SECTOR

57%

During the crisis

72%

During recovery

OPPORTUNITIES

- NEW MARKETS
- COLLABORATION
 - ESPECIALLY PUBLIC/PRIVATE
- NEW PRODUCTS, INCLUDING COMMUNITY TOURISM
- COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTION
 - DESTINATION MARKETING, BUILD CONSUMER CONFIDENCE, DEMONSTRATE TOURISM'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION



An aerial photograph of a tropical island. In the foreground, there's a small beach with a few people. A small resort building with a green roof is visible. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and the sky is blue with some white clouds. In the top right corner, there are two overlapping orange rectangular shapes.

“Opportunities to change the way tourism is governed on island, to develop actual frameworks and policies to truly guide the industry along a sustainable manner;

Opportunities to focus on products beyond our beach that set us apart from other destinations;

Opportunities to spread the economic benefits among our local populace by incorporating more local businesses with focus on health and wellness.”

—Focus Group Participant



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THANK YOU

QUESTIONS *and* ANSWERS

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