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Tourism and related services — Sustainable tourism — Principles, terminology and Model

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228/WG 13, *Tourism and related services. Sustainable tourism*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

In the past 10 years sustainability has become more than a tendency for the tourism sector. Numerous factors have been contributing to the fast growth of sustainability as a need. Accommodation establishments, tour operators, restaurants, tourist attractions and other actors have been applying strategies, communications processes, standards and certifications schemes. The global interest for environmental and socio-cultural themes increases the desire of tourists to experience more sustainable services and products.

Sustainability has been addressed in tourism, almost always under a perspective of environmental protection, CO₂ emissions reduction and care in the consumption of energy and water. Sometimes there is also a concern with social issues, involving local communities or economic aspects, which basically involve the viability of the businesses.

However, despite this increasing interest, today most of the organizations understand sustainability in different ways. Different approaches have been adopted by the organizations and the digital platforms help to spread all type of information about sustainable tourism.

Today it is possible to identify more than a hundred references which are private, public, international, regional and national that naturally present many different concepts and understanding about sustainable tourism.

Additionally, ISO/TC 228 published recently ISO 21401:2018 — *Tourism and related services — Sustainable Management system for accommodation establishment — Requirements* and ISO 20611:2018 *Adventure tourism — Sustainability good practices — Requirements and recommendations* which contain concepts about sustainable tourism.

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with it the Sustainable Development Goals, a framework comprising 17 goals. Tourism is an economic powerhouse and can play a significant role in delivering sustainable solutions for people, the planet, prosperity and peace.

Therefore, it is acknowledged that there are a lot of challenges for sustainable development but one of them is critical. It is the recognition of the minimal principles for sustainable tourism and a definition of a common understanding.

These principles are the basis for the sustainable development of tourism and should be taken into account as much as possible by tourism interested parties.

Worldwide it's recognized that tourist destinations select development models that can respond to either supply or demand. Both of them have their attributes, and the destinations choose them according to the interests, tastes, preferences and strategies.

Some characteristics of the demand model are spontaneous growth, emphasis on natural attractions, and a single-minded focus on wealth generation (mostly but not limited to) by tourism businesses accompanied by an intensive use of the resources (natural and human), large investment, quicker return of the investment and low spillover effect. The destination is normally designed and based on icons as attractors.

On the other hand, the supply model is characterized by controlled growth, emphasis not just in protecting the environment, but also making the processes fully sustainable. The businesses are concerned about profitability, but also they care about improving the quality of life in their communities. In addition, the tourist's experience is enhanced by high quality services throughout the visit, the spillover effect is higher, the investment is smaller and regarding that, there is a slower return of the investment. Finally, the destination designs products rather than attractions.

No matter which of the models is been applied, both should seek for recognition as the "archetype" of a sustainable destination. In addition, destinations should look for the highest spillover effect so that; the local and national economy is benefited directly, which means that a high percentage of the tourism

spenditure remains in the surrounding communities, with a direct positive impact on improving the quality of life of people and relieving poverty.

In summary, to motivate businesses to demonstrate their commitment, not only to the environment, but also to sustainability in general, they should commit themselves to identify, assess, and mitigate any negative impacts they may cause to the environment, the social fabric, and local culture, while maintaining a high quality of service and protecting their workers. Sustainability should be incorporated as a transversal axis in all business policies and those of the country, and innovation and competitiveness have to be the key to maintaining leadership. Sustainable tourism should be seen as a way of being and living, not a way of doing.

This document was prepared by TC 228/WG 13 *Sustainable tourism* to provide a common and sound basis to the process of sustainable development, contributing with all interested parties and increasing the expected potential benefits for the tourism sector.

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Tourism and related services — Sustainable tourism — Principles, terminology and Model

1 Scope

This document specifies the fundamental concepts, principles and model of sustainable tourism, which are applicable to private and public organizations and destinations, regardless their size and location, including others interested parties engaged with sustainable tourism development.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 Terms related to sustainability ISO/DIS 23405

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3.1.1 sustainability

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of *sustainable development* (3.1.2).

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 82:2014, 3.1]

3.1.2 sustainable development

organizing principle for achieving human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend

Note 1 to entry: The desired result is a state of society where living conditions and resources are used to continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural system.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainable development can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.1.3 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

[SOURCE: World Tourism Organization]

3.1.4

sustainability aspect

activities, elements, practices, products or services of organizations and other providers in the tourism sector which can interact with the dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social and economic)

Note 1 to entry: A significant aspect of sustainability is one that has or can have a significant impact.

Note 2 to entry: Some examples of sustainability aspects are energy consumption, solid waste generation, recyclable packaging and water consumption.

3.1.5

sustainability objective

intent to achieve global sustainability, resulting from the sustainability policy that an enterprise or destination sets itself to achieve, being quantified whenever possible

3.2 Terms related to the environmental dimension of sustainability

3.2.1

climate change adaptation

seeking to reduce the vulnerability of biological or socio-ecological systems to climate change effects

3.2.2

climate change mitigation

Seeking to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases

3.2.3

impact on sustainability

any modification to the environmental, socio-cultural or economic environment, adverse or beneficial, that results in all or part of the activities, products or services of an organization

3.2.4

environment

surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships

Note 1 to entry: Surroundings can extend from within an organization to the local, regional and global system.

Note 2 to entry: Surroundings can be described in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, climate or other characteristics.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.2.1]

3.2.5

environmental impact

change to the *environment* (3.2.4) whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's environmental aspects

3.2.6

natural protected area

NPA

clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed through legal means or other types of efficient means to achieve the long- term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values

[SOURCE: ISO 18065:2015, 3.6]

3.2.7

biodiversity conservation

active management of the ecosystem to ensure the survival of the maximum diversity of species and the maintenance of genetic variability within species

3.2.8**carrying capacity**

maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and social-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitor satisfaction

[SOURCE: World Tourism Organization]

3.3 Terms related to the economic dimension of sustainability**3.3.1****corporate responsibilities**

way an organization takes responsibility for its actions and their impact on employees, stakeholders and communities

3.3.2**economic impact**

impact to the economy, wholly or partially resulting from economic aspects

[SOURCE: ISO 15392:2008, 3.13.1]

3.3.3**safety and security measures**

< accommodation establishments and tourist operations > conditions and factors related to the level of control and minimization of risks affecting workers, guests or others in accommodation establishments or tourist operations

3.4 Terms related to the social dimension of sustainability**3.4.1****accessibility**

provision of conditions that enable products, systems, services, environments and facilities to be used everywhere by people from a population with the widest range of user needs, characteristics and capabilities, with safety, comfort and autonomy

[SOURCE: ISO/DIS 21902, 3.1]

3.4.2**local community**

people living in the geographical area of the tourism destination.

3.4.3**native population**

people born and grown in the destination in which they live, using natural resources for subsistence

3.4.4**traditional population**

native population which maintain an ancestral and cultural relation with the region in which they live, using natural resources and depending on them for their survival

EXAMPLE Indigenous, caiçaras, quilombolas, ribeirinhos, jangadeiros, seringueiros (Brazil) and bribri (Costa Rica).

3.4.5**cultural heritage**

legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations

[SOURCE: Global Sustainable Tourism Council]