TOOL 2A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This document provides brief explanations of frequently used sustainability term and acronyms, organisations working in the sustainable tourism field and a summary of key milestones such as international agreements and agendas.

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1. Glossary of frequently used sustainability terms and acronyms

Agenda 21	The original framework for sustainable development worldwide, springing from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Rio Earth Summit)
Brundtland Report	Also titled 'Our Common Future', a publication released in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) that introduced the concept of sustainable development and described how it could be achieved.
Carbon Neutral	Making, or resulting in, no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere; most commonly achieved through carbon offsetting.
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)	A global climate change reporting system designed to be used as a method of showing investors which companies have a reduced risk.
Circular Economy	Looking beyond the current 'take-make-waste' extractive industrial model, a circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. A circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.
Climate Positive	Climate positive means that an activity goes beyond achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions to actually create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Also sometimes described as 'carbon negative'.
Community-Based Tourism (CBT)	Tourism owned and/or managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefit.
CORSIA	Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) is an emission mitigation approach for the global airline industry, developed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and adopted in October 2016.
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Corporate Responsibility	The steps a company takes to address its social and environmental impacts.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and often also involves interpretation and education.
Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)	A comprehensive sustainability reporting framework, adopted by large hotel groups, airlines and tour operators amongst other large companies in other industrial sectors.
Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC	The global umbrella body assessing the credibility of sustainable tourism certification schemes and promoting sustainable tourism internationally.
Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria	The global baseline standard for sustainability in travel and tourism, developed and managed by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	An intergovernmental organisation established to improve the interface between science and policy on issues of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It is intended to serve a similar role to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (below)
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	An intergovernmental body of the United Nations dedicated to providing objective, scientific information relevant to human-induced climate change, its natural, political and economic impacts and risks and possible response options.
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	Eight international development goals for the year 2015 that had been established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Sustainable Development Goals succeeded the MDGs in 2016.
NECSTouR	The Network of European Destinations for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism
Overtourism	Destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably.
People, Profit, Planet	(The 3 P's) - These are the social, economic and environmental pillars that form the triple bottom line underpinning the concept of sustainability.
Responsible Tourism (RT)	A key point of difference with sustainable tourism (see below) is obviously the use of the word "responsible", focusing it on people taking responsibility for tourism – and for the impacts it creates. It puts the responsibility onto those who take the decisions in tourism which make the impacts. It makes it clear there are active choices with consequences, alternatives, and, by implication, opportunity costs, and that tourism isn't a passive activity that just 'happens'. In this way, 'Responsible Tourism' is seen as the dynamic process, the journey, to the more 'sustainable tourism' destination.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs, set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by the year 2030.
Slow Travel	Offers the opportunity to connect to a place and its people, to become part of local life. It is also thus about connection to culture: One of the tenets of the Slow Movement is to preserve cultural heritage. And, by taking a more leisurely approach to travel visitors enjoy a more deeply authentic experience.
Sustainable Tourism (ST)	Tourism which meets the needs of tourists, the tourism industry, and host communities today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
Triple Bottom Line (TBL)	The corporate measurement of People, Profit and Planet

UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Rio Earth Summit) held in Brazil in 1992
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Organisation

2. Key organisations working in sustainable tourism
Trade Associations

Trade Associations Active in Sustainability	
ABTA	The UK travel trade association (www.abta.com) has championed sustainable practices amongst UK outbound travel companies, setting up a Sustainable Tourism Committee (which requires members to sign agreement to undertake sustainability improvements in their business) as well as creating the Travelife Sustainability Scheme for Tourism Accommodations and developing widely adopted, Global Guidelines on Animal Welfare in Tourism. ABTA continues to play a role in discussions on various aspects of sustainability worldwide - specifically where they intersect with the UK market.
ANVR	The Dutch travel trade association (www.anvr.nl) have also been active in promoting sustainability amongst members and played a leading role in the project to develop Carmacal (a carbon emissions calculator for tour operators), with experts from Breda University, before handing this to Travelife for Tour Operators to manage.
Futouris	Futouris (www.futouris.org) is a trade association championing sustainability amongst its members in the German market and investing in tools and projects to support sustainable activities in destinations, (for example plastics reduction in tourism in the Balearics)
WTTC	The World Travel and Tourism Council (www.wttc.org) is primarily a lobby organisation promoting the economic benefits of tourism, though also showcase examples of tourism sustainability.

Standards and Certification Bodies

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Numerous certifications and standards exist around the world. A selection of the most accessible and robust options are provided below. Others can be found on the website of the GSTC (see below).	
The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)	The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (www.gstcouncil.org) developed the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria) which are used for education and policy-making for businesses, government agencies and other organisations for measurement and evaluation of sustainable activities, and as a basis for certification. The GSTC is the result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism and form quality standards for the hundreds of green tourism certifications that exist. Certification schemes can apply to be both recognised and accredited by the GSTC (with accredited being the higher standard). These give an assurance of quality which strengthens the credibility of schemes significantly. Tour operators, (such as Tui), impose a contractual obligation on its suppliers that they must achieve sustainability certification with a scheme recognised by GSTC.

Green Destinations	Green Destinations (www.greendestinations.org) is a destination certification scheme, accredited by GSTC since 2018 and gaining influence globally, as tourism destinations increasingly seek to promote their sustainability credentials.
Travelife for Accommodations	Run by ABTA in London, Travelife (www.travelife.org) focuses on sustainability certifications for hotels and tourism accommodations. The scheme has a higher level of influence than most because it is supported by the British and Dutch members of ABTA and ANVR respectively.
Travelife for Tour Operators	Run by Exeat, based in The Netherlands. This strand of the Travelife Scheme (www.travelife.info) focuses on certifications for both outbound and inbound tour operators.

Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs), Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) and Others

NGOs, IGOs and Others	
Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)	The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions brings together more than 150 Regions from 24 States from the European Union and beyond. It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies, blue growth and accessibility. European governance, energy and climate change, neighbourhood and development also represent important areas of activity for the association (www.cpmr.org).
European Tourism Futures Institute (EFTI)	The European institute for future studies and scenario planning in leisure, recreation and tourism (www.etfi.nl).
GoodPlace Slovenia	An expert organisation working closely with the Government of Slovenia to design and implement a national sustainable tourism programme. Good Place now works across Europe in cooperation with various governmental and non-governmental organisations, destinations, and other stakeholders in tourism (www.goodplace.si).
Green Case Consulting	UK based sustainable tourism experts specialising in sustainable tourism strategy and practical implementation at government, industry and community level (www.greencaseconsulting.com).
ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability	A global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, the organisation influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Members and a team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability (www.iclei.org).
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) -	An intergovernmental organisation established to improve the interface between science and policy on issues of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It is intended to serve a similar role to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (below)

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	An intergovernmental body of the United Nations dedicated to providing objective, scientific information relevant to human-induced climate change, its natural, political, and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options
The Network of European Destinations for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR)	is the voice of European regions committed to economic, social and environmental sustainability through tourism. Since 2007, it has provided an integrated approach to tourism governance and acted as an important link between regional and wider European levels of government, while developing interregional cooperation through European Projects (www.necstour.eu).
One Planet Network	A collaborative platform organised by the UN as part of the 10 year Framework Programme on Sustainable Development, to bring together existing initiatives and partnerships and facilitate new projects to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in tourism (and other areas) to support the new SDGs.
Tourism Cares	Self-described as the philanthropic arm of the travel industry. Based in North America, Tourism Cares undertakes a programme of tourism related charitable initiatives, particularly in the developing world (www.tourismcares.org).
Tourism Declares	Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency is a coalition of travel companies lobbying for greater action to address climate change. It was established by Much Better Adventures in 2019 and includes a number of large travel brands and other organisations as signatories (www.tourismdeclares.com).
Travel Foundation	The Travel Foundation is a charity working in partnership with businesses and governments to ensure tourism brings greater benefits for people and the environment in destinations. Working on global sustainable tourism initiatives from its base in the UK, the organisation is independent from the travel industry but works closely with industry partners (www.travelfoundation.org).
Turismo Reset	A collaboration between various organisations, including the University of Alicante bringing together a wide variety of professionals from the tourism sector, under the common goal of rethinking and working for a new tourism model which is truly sustainable and responsible (www.turismoreset.org).
United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)	Based in Madrid, UNWTO aims to encourage sustainable forms of tourism to international governments, They also manage the One Planet tourism programme (www.unwto.org).

Universities

Universities
Some of the most influential universities for sustainable tourism in Europe are University of Surrey in the UK, The Universities of Girona and Alicante in Spain and Wageningen and Breda Universities in The Netherlands. Globally, Griffith University in Australia and George Washington and Cornell Universities in the US.

3. Background to and Key Milestones in Sustainable Tourism

While long discussed by academics and scientists, the concept of sustainability first came to prominence on the world stage at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which is also referred to as the Rio Earth Summit. Held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the summit focused on helping governments rethink economic development and find solutions for avoiding the destruction of natural resources and pollution of the planet. The conference resulted in the **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** (UNEP 1992)[1]. This ground breaking summit also led to the creation of **Agenda 21** (the original framework for sustainable development worldwide) and urged early action on climate change.

The concept of sustainable tourism arose from these initial discussions of sustainable development and expresses the need to undertake efforts to manage tourism in such a way to avoid threats to social, cultural, natural and economic resources worldwide. In 1995 the **Charter for Sustainable Tourism** was adopted during the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism of Lanzarote, Spain, organised by UNESCO, UNWTO and UNEP, the UN Man and Biosphere Programme, The World Heritage Centre, the European Commission and the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development[2].

Two years later, in 1997, the **Berlin Declaration on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism** recognised that all stakeholders should cooperate locally, nationally and internationally to achieve. The declaration also acknowledged that common understanding on the requirements, concepts and criteria of sustainable tourism should be developed and incorporated in education and training programs for tourism professionals.

The importance of promoting sustainable tourism development to increase the benefits from tourism for host communities was highlighted in the Plan of Implementation from the **World Summit on Sustainable Development** (UNCED) in Johannesburg in 2002. Besides the need to maintain the cultural and environmental integrity of host communities, the plan refers to the need for capacity-building to enhance application of sustainable development. The World Summit on Sustainable Development also launched the initiative **Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty** (STEP), as inaugurated by the World Tourism Organisation, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to develop sustainable tourism for poverty alleviation. Additionally in 2002 The **Earth Dialogues Forum** held in Lyon, France, acknowledged the importance of ethics in sustainable development.

In 2005 the UNWTO Declaration entitled **Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals** reiterated the effective contribution of the tourism industry in helping achieve several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those relating to poverty alleviation, environmental conservation and creation of employment opportunities for women, indigenous communities and young people.

In 2008 the **Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria** were developed by the organisation that eventually became the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which now serves as the international body promoting the adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles.

The **UNWTO Madrid Declaration of 2010** provided recommendations and guidelines on tourism and biodiversity, titled **Achieving Common Goals Towards Sustainability**. The report is directed towards actions for governments at national and destination level, as well as the tourism private sector, international organisations and NGOs operating in vulnerable ecosystems and protected areas.

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[1] http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/RIO_E.PDF

[2] This supported the development of AGENDA 21, when the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), convinced that uncontrolled tourism development could provoke negative impacts on the local environment and society, launched an action plan entitled "Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development" (WTTC, 1995).

Also in 2010, the European Commission Communication entitled **Europe, the World's Number 1 Tourist Destination - A New Political Framework for Tourism in Europe** defined an ambitious framework for building and promoting European tourism as a competitive, modern, sustainable and responsible industry with specific initiatives to give the European tourism sector the means to adapt and develop.

In 2012, at the **Rio +20 United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development**[3] UNEP and UNWTO agreed on a standard definition of sustainable tourism and made clear that sustainable tourism is not a special form of tourism; rather, that all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable.

In 2015 the **World Summit on Sustainable Tourism** marked the 20th Anniversary of the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain. At this event the new **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, were recognised by world leaders and endorsed by the UNWTO to reinforce the role of sustainable tourism as a driver for job creation, innovation, protection of natural and cultural heritage and able to bringing benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries.

Also in 2015, **The Paris Agreement** at the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) brought all nations together in a historic agreement to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. This charted a new course in the global climate effort and had major implications for governments and the corporations acting within their jurisdiction.

In 2016 the **10 Year Framework Programme** now known as the **One Planet Network**, was launched by the United Nations. The programme included a specific Sustainable Tourism Programme to bring together existing initiatives and partnerships and facilitate new projects to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

Also in 2016, the **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation** (CORSIA) was developed by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) and agreed by 192 countries. With the global aspirational goal of carbon-neutral growth from 2020 onwards, the agreement requires that airlines address (through reduction and/or carbon offsetting) emissions from international air travel that exceed the baseline from 2020 onwards.

In line with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, UNWTO designated 2017 as the **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**[4] to emphasise the benefits of operational strategies and projects in sustainable tourism.

In 2019 The European Commission announced its plans for a **European Green Deal.** In which it outlined a €100 Billion fund to invest in the ambition to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, develop a circular economy, create a sustainable transport network and make drastic improvements to biodiversity. In January 2020 the European Parliament voted to support the deal, with requests for higher ambition.

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[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20

[4] http://www.tourism4development2017.org/