

Tourism is a major driver of economic growth and plays a key role in stimulating economic activity, creating jobs, promoting regional development and supporting local communities. As demand continues to rise, its impacts on communities and the environment are becoming more pronounced, intensifying the need for more strategic tourism policy. Countries are increasingly shifting from growth-led approaches towards managing tourism in ways that deliver long-term, resilient economic prosperity. This shift reflects growing recognition that traditional models have produced uneven outcomes.

Tourism success is now being redefined with stronger emphasis on the social and environmental impacts, crisis preparedness and adaptive capacity. Many countries are renewing national tourism strategies to embed these priorities, even as performance diverges across destinations and pressures from rapid or unplanned growth re-emerge alongside heightened geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

Governance is also evolving. While national frameworks remain stable, local and regional actors are playing a larger role in destination management, highlighting the need for close vertical co-ordination and community engagement. Better data and digital tools underpin these changes. There is growing evidence that countries are investing in more granular, integrated data and are increasingly exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support evidence-based decision making. However, adoption levels remain uneven, and many initiatives are still emerging.

This chapter examines how tourism policies and priorities are evolving as governments seek to address long-standing challenges while strengthening the sector's capacity to navigate uncertainty and positioning the sector for a more competitive, sustainable, and resilient future.

Strengthening governance for improved tourism management

The tourism sector is in the process of great change, emerging strongly from consecutive crises including health events, geopolitical tensions, and natural disasters. The sector is also navigating shifting policy priorities as countries move away from recovery strategies and volume-based growth targets, towards more responsive, digital and balanced tourism models that enrich local communities and protect the environment, while growing the economy overall. Linked with this, strategies increasingly seek to integrate tourism policy with broader economic, local and regional development plans and policy agendas.

Rethinking tourism governance is increasingly necessary as policymaking becomes more complex, interconnected and dynamic. The accelerating pace of change requires governance models that are more agile, integrated and capable of addressing cross-cutting challenges. Action at the destination level has a particularly important role to play in driving momentum for change, supported by an overarching national vision that is responsive to local needs and priorities, and anchored in broad stakeholder engagement. To deliver on these ambitions, more co-ordinated, adaptive governance models and management structures are needed, coupled with adequate institutional capacity at all levels of government to plan, implement and monitor effective tourism policy and destination management.

Designing strategies to support shifting priorities and maximise tourism value

Tourism strategies are evolving to reflect changing dynamics and local perceptions of tourism, with a greater emphasis on maintaining economic value while addressing the environment and community impacts, including by promoting a more balanced spread of tourism activity across regions and seasons. This is reflected across OECD countries, where many national tourism strategies have been recently updated or are currently being developed or revised, including in Austria, Chile, France, Germany, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Launched in 2025, Spain's Strategy for Tourism 2030 redefines tourism success as that which benefits residents, workers and visitors alike, preserves identity, ensures well-being and promotes sustainability.

Japan's Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan launched earlier this year is structured around three key pillars: balancing inbound tourism with the needs of local residents, promoting domestic and outbound tourism, and building resilient tourism destinations and a resilient tourism sector. The Plan sets out key directions to develop sustainable tourism, increase consumer spending, promote tourism in regional areas, strengthen transportation networks and urban development through tourism, and leverage new technologies.

At European level, the European Union's first Sustainable Tourism Strategy, which will be launched in 2026, aims to support a competitive, sustainable, and community-based tourism model. The Strategy will shift the focus away from tourism volume to value, prioritising support for tourism destinations to balance tourism flows, empower tourism small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and build the skills of the sector, and create better data and indicators for evidence-based policymaking.

While national tourism strategies continue to provide overarching frameworks for the sector, countries are increasingly complementing them with sub-strategies and action plans to better target policy outcomes and engage stakeholders. Multi-phase action plans in particular help to translate high-level policy priorities into more practical, targeted and action-oriented measures, often tailored to specific authorities. The development of these plans typically involves participatory processes and broad consultation to reflect the needs of various stakeholders. Although such processes can extend development timelines, they tend to foster stronger public-private co-operation and result in more cohesive and co-ordinated implementation. In parallel, dedicated sub-strategies in areas such as adaptation, digitalisation and accessibility further support targeted policy delivery, particularly where co-ordination across multiple levels of government, agencies, and the private sector is required (Box 2.1).

Co-ordinating action across all levels for tourism policy design and implementation

Horizontal co-ordination across policy domains remains important for tourism development, reflecting the sector's strong interdependencies with domains such as transport, housing, labour markets, environmental management, digitalisation and regional development. For example, a strategic priority of Canada's Federal Tourism Growth Strategy is to improve co-ordination to support a whole-of-government approach to tourism. A Ministerial Tourism Council engages ministers whose mandates and departments include essential policy and programme instruments that impact tourism, such as employment and skills, transportation, border services, and housing.

Effective tourism policy implementation also requires input and participation of wider stakeholders, including the private sector. Many countries continue to develop effective mechanisms and approaches to maintain an active and consistent voice for the private sector in government fora as well as ensuring the private sector is engaged and plays its part implementing actions and plans to deliver on a common vision for tourism. However, this can be challenging due to the fragmented nature of the sector. Tourism industry associations can provide opportunities for the private sector to combine resources to tackle issues through industry-led initiatives, as well as to amplify common concerns or challenges to national tourism authorities (OECD, 2024^[1]).

Many countries are actively leveraging established co-ordination mechanisms to engage across government and with the private sector to monitor and respond to the tourism impact of the conflict in the Middle East, building on the lessons from response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks on the importance of co-ordinated communication, risk assessment and data sharing. For example, Greece and Türkiye are working closely with airlines and tour operators to track demand shifts, adapt market diversification strategies and provide (near) real time travel guidance.

At the same time, countries are strengthening consultation approaches to shape longer-term policy, using various mechanisms to involve the private sector and other stakeholders in the design and delivery of national tourism strategies. In the United States, the private sector is closely engaged in developing the

establishment of standardised sustainability indicators addressing economic, environmental, and social impacts. The Act empowers local authorities to define their destination identity and manage tourism growth based on local carrying capacities. Croatia also provides detailed guidelines, templates, and support services to ensure consistent implementation.

Czechia has revised its tourism governance system under the Action Plan 2024-2025, including the revision and update of the national categorisation of DMOs, strengthening multi-source financing, providing methodological support for destination management, and improving horizontal and vertical co-ordination. The local and regional tourism management systems and tourism infrastructure are supported through subsidies, co-financed by regional governments. Czechia is creating tourism development strategies for all 14 regions, which align with national objectives while addressing specific regional contexts. Further development of categorisation and certification of DMOs is expected to continue in the current Action Plan 2026-2027.

Building the capacity and resources to support strong tourism governance

As the roles and responsibilities associated with tourism management continue to evolve and expand, there is a growing need for enhanced skills, institutional capacity, and financial resources across all levels of governance. However, human and financial capacity constraints remain a challenge, within national tourism administrations and at destination level. In this context, national governments have an important role to play in strengthening system-wide capabilities, supporting destinations to develop these new competences, and ensuring that adequate resources and expertise are in place to deliver increasingly complex tourism policies (OECD, 2025^[3]).

Targeted training and capacity-building programmes can empower stakeholders at all levels, equipping local governments and DMOs with the knowledge and expertise needed to respond to evolving industry trends and manage tourism more effectively. Priority areas include strategic destination planning, balanced tourism development, digital capabilities and crisis preparedness. In parallel, investments in analytical tools and data systems can further enhance these efforts. For example, Colombia's Territorial Tourism Development Level Platform is a methodological tool that determines a destination's current tourism development level and identifies gaps, progress, institutional capacities, territorial conditions, and critical factors influencing performance. This tool enables comparative analysis among municipalities, tourism progress tracking, and the prioritisation of strategic actions, thereby strengthening planning, inter-institutional co-ordination, and evidence-based decision making. Scaling such approaches can help governments build more resilient, responsive, and data-driven tourism systems.

Countries are also strengthening strategic planning and co-ordination mechanisms at national level to ensure that available resources are aligned around shared priorities. Whole-of-government strategies and co-ordination play a role in improving coherence, avoiding duplication and enhancing the impact of limited resources. Finally, financing and investment at national level remain important for the resourcing of tourism governance and management. This is discussed in more detail at the end of the chapter.

Harnessing data for informed tourism decision making

Governments at all levels need robust, timely and relevant data to better understand the impacts of tourism on economies, destinations and local communities, to in turn design targeted and concrete actions, and manage the trade-offs to achieve better outcomes (OECD, 2024^[1]). The well-documented shortcomings of existing tourism data include a lack of granularity, timeliness, comparability and availability. Countries are taking steps to make improvements in these areas.

The need for timely, granular data to support a strong evidence-base for tourism policymaking has been emphasised by recent shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently the conflict in the

informal tourism activities. Montenegro has allocated budget for the Tourist Information System's development, testing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.

Data spaces can be effective tools to share data, when well-structured and managed. The European Commission is developing the European Tourism Data Space to support the tourism sector to exchange data, and improve decision making, operations and the visitor experience by promoting more personalised and efficient tourism services. Ongoing initiatives support the continued evolution of the Data Space, allowing real-time data sharing that benefits SMEs and larger tourism operators alike. Specified collaborative networks were introduced to ensure standardised, secure, data exchange across sectors, and transport and mobility data were integrated to create a unified tourism data ecosystem.

Deploying new technologies to boost tourism innovation

Rapid technological change and digital adoption is fundamentally reshaping tourism. OECD Tourism Committee work for the G7 and APEC highlights the transformative role of AI in particular as a key driver of innovation, operational efficiency and personalised services, while also offering significant potential to help address pressing challenges in the sector (OECD, 2024^[12]; OECD, 2026, forthcoming^[13]). AI applications are being deployed, with more and more destinations and businesses looking to use these technologies to enhance the visitor experience through more interactive and personalised experiences, streamlined travel processes, strengthened market intelligence and data-driven decision making.

The G7/OECD Policy Paper on Artificial Intelligence and Tourism marked the first sector-specific contribution to global AI policy discussions, highlighting opportunities and challenges for tourism stakeholders (OECD, 2024^[12]). Since its endorsement by G7 Tourism Ministers in November 2024, the focus of the global debate has shifted from AI's potential towards practical implementation challenges and risks, including questions around deployment and the reliability of AI-generated content, a shift also reflected in the APEC and G20 tourism agendas under Korea's 2025 APEC host year and South Africa's 2025 Presidency (OECD, 2026, forthcoming^[13]).

AI has implications for tourism marketing and product development, opening up opportunities to engage audiences and match visitor expectations more precisely, including through AI-driven insights. Integrating AI into the marketing ecosystem provides opportunities to modernise communication and create more personalised, efficient, and engaging interactions with travellers. However, it also poses a growing challenge for destinations and tourism businesses to ensure that their information is accurately captured, visible and prioritised within AI-powered applications and platforms that travellers increasingly rely on for trip planning.

Lithuania launched an AI-powered travel assistant on the Lithuania Travel website. The tool supports visitors with personalised recommendations, from top attractions and hidden gems to cultural etiquette, seasonal highlights, and local experiences. Similarly, Indonesia is integrating AI into the indonesia.travel platform as part of its Tourism 5.0 strategy, to generate personalised travel plan recommendations, provide rapid access to information while offering a richer, more responsive, and human-centric user experience, supporting data-driven decision making to optimise tourism destinations and visitor experiences. In Korea, the *Korea Guseok Guseok* ("Every corner of Korea") domestic travel information platform uses AI to innovate the entire travel process from travel exploration to dissemination of information (Box 2.3).

Emerging technologies are also helping to engage tourists with cultural heritage destinations and attractions by creating immersive experiences that preserve authenticity while making traditions accessible and meaningful to digital-native travellers (World Economic Forum, 2025^[14]). The "AI Local Guides" programme in Switzerland brought together major destinations like Basel, Graubünden, Lucerne, and Zurich to develop interactive digital tour guides using AI. The AI-powered guides personalise experiences in real-time, combining local knowledge, historical anecdotes and current data. The digital guides can be

As a major employer of all population groups, the tourism sector builds social capital and supports broader economic and community outcomes, including in rural and remote areas. In Belgium, the region of Wallonia launched a workforce development programme to encourage the recruitment of young people, women, and other target groups. Australia's 'Choose Tourism' programme was designed to attract people to work in the sector across 2022-24, with a communications campaign delivered to encourage employers to consider employing young and more mature people, First Nations Australians, and people living with a disability. The Tourism Local Navigator Pilot, undertaken in 2023-24, supported tourism businesses to employ people with a disability, with the pilot engaging around 1 600 businesses and delivering more than 160 employment outcomes.

Mobilising financing and investment for tourism development

Financing and investment are needed to build a competitive and resilient tourism sector that keeps pace with the digital transition, reduces environmental pressures, and maximises benefits for local communities, while supporting long-term economic growth. Continued growth in tourism demand will require sustained investment in infrastructure and services to better manage rising visitor volumes, deliver seamless experiences, and respond to evolving consumer preferences, while limiting pressures on host destinations. A co-ordinated approach that mobilises the private sector investment, supported by enabling public policies and funding mechanisms can help strengthen destination resilience and competitiveness, while generating broader economic benefits.

New and alternate funding streams, beyond traditional public budgets, are increasingly needed to finance the infrastructure and services required to accommodate growing tourism demand while reducing pressures on communities and the natural environment. In 2025, Norway adopted an Act on Visitor Fees enabling municipalities experiencing high tourism pressure to levy visitor fees to help finance tourism-related public goods. Revenues are earmarked for local use, with the municipalities required to prepare and submit plans for how the funds will be allocated, for approval by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries. Iceland plans to introduce a resource and infrastructure fee at publicly owned nature sites. The fee is intended to support the development, maintenance and conservation of destinations, while also contributing, in part, to research and destination marketing at the national level. To support conservation and development of tourism infrastructure, New Zealand collects an International Visitor levy from most international arrivals. Chile has introduced a 1.25% accommodation tax for inbound tourists that will finance the new International Tourism Promotion Fund under its Tourism Reactivation and Audiovisual Industry Promotion Bill. Colombia and Japan collect an international passenger tax which is used to fund tourism-related programmes. In Japan, plans are underway to effectively triple the departure tax for all travellers leaving Japan from JPY 1 000 to JPY 3 000 as part of efforts to create a more balanced tourism model.

Attracting private investment is fundamental to delivering a high-quality and competitive tourism offer. Tax incentives, favourable development regulations and the promotion of specific investment opportunities are strategies being used by countries to attract high-value investment from private companies. Stimulating private investment to mobilise tourism development and support the efficient use of resources is a key priority of many national tourism strategies, including Denmark's Pathways to Sustainable Tourism Growth, Hungary's National Active Tourism Strategy, and the Strategy of Slovenian Tourism 2022-28.

Montenegro introduced a range of fiscal, tax and regulatory reforms to streamline pre-investment procedures to obtain permits and facilitate project development. To incentivise investment in high-quality accommodation, investors are exempt from paying import VAT on goods and services used in the construction of five-star hotels, while property taxes are reduced by 30% for four-star hotels and 70% for five-star hotels operating year-round. Egypt is also pursuing an ambitious investment strategy to expand its tourism capacity, with a target to increase the number of hotel rooms from approximately 228 000 rooms in 2024 to nearly 500 000 rooms by 2030. As part of this effort, Egypt is also launching a flagship Tourism