

TOURISM TRANSFORMATION INTO RESPONSIBLE FORM TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

Tourism is a cross-cutting economic activity with a wide-ranging impact on the environment, climate and economy, in particular on the regions' economic growth, employment and social and sustainable development.

For quite a long time, the development of tourism was based on economic goals – income generation, export of services, job creation. However, with the emergence of tourism monoculture and the negative consequences of tourism development in highly visited regions, **increasing attention has been paid to integrating sustainable and responsible tourism concepts** into tourism development programs.

According to UNWTO/ITF research (2019), CO2 emissions from tourism are forecasted to increase by 25% by 2030 from 2016 levels. Therefore, **the need to scale up climate action in tourism remains urgent** as emissions could rapidly rebound once operations restart and, ultimately, the cost of inaction with regards to climate will be in the long run larger than the cost of any other crisis.

The tourism sector is highly vulnerable to climate change and at the same time contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG), which cause global warming. **Accelerating climate action in tourism is therefore of utmost importance for the resilience of the sector.** Climate action is understood as the efforts to measure and reduce GHG emissions and strengthen adaptive capacity to climate induced impacts.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research is to evaluate tourism transformation into responsible form towards the sustainable development.

The research methods of scientific literature analysis and synthesis, logical analysis, data analysis, situation modelling, logical conclusions are applied.

TOURISM COMMON TRENDS.

OVERTOURISM

Tourism creates new employment opportunities, generates income, stimulates economic activity and attracts investment in tourism-related business. However, rapidly growing tourism means that some tourist destinations may no longer be able to accommodate such tourist volumes.

Overtourism, which describes the maximum number of people who can visit a tourist destination at the same time without damaging physical, economic and socio-cultural environment, **can cause significant damage to the quality of the landscape, air and water, as well as to the living conditions of the population, leading to economic inequality and social exclusion and environmental degradation.**

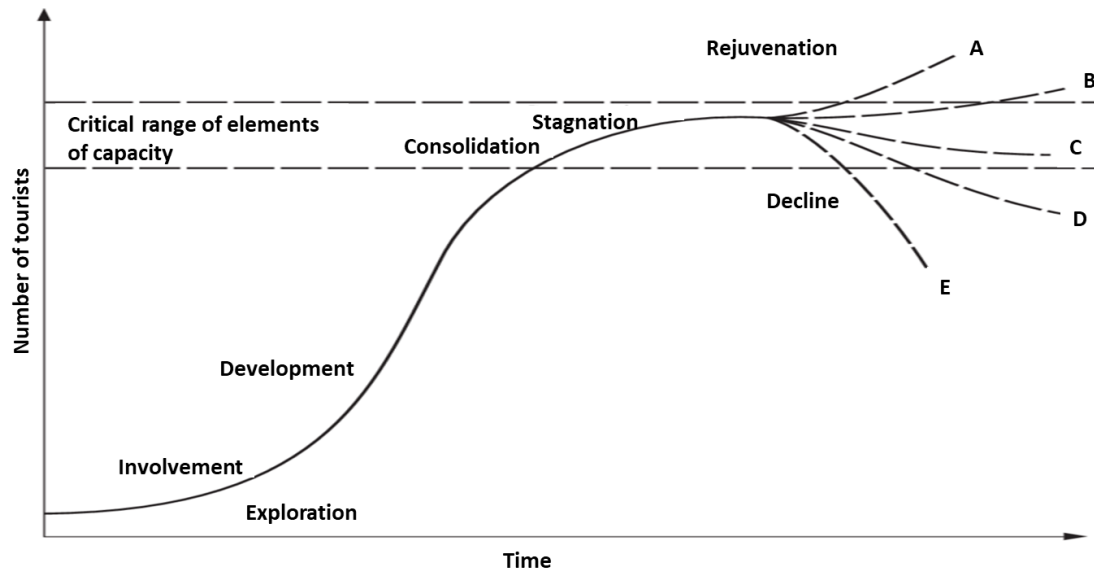


Figure 1. R. Butler tourism cycle model.

Source: Butler, 1980.

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Tourism Transformation into Responsible Form towards the Sustainable Development



Figure 2. The number of international tourists in the world 1960-2018, million.

Source: World Tourism Organization, 2019.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION. MULTIPLE TOURISM CONSEQUENCES

Tourism is a significant part of economic development, which can have multiple consequences if tourism industry is not given enough attention or can bring added value if solutions are to be found to properly manage the tourism phenomenon.

For a long time, the focus has been on the positive impact of tourism growth on economic development (creating GDP, job places, attracting investments, improving infrastructure, etc.), **leaving aside the negative effects** (use of resources, negative impact on natural environment, locals, etc.).

Today, in the face of environmental problems, the concept of sustainable development is receiving more attention. Interpretation of the impact of tourism can no longer be only positive.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION. COVID-19 PANDEMIC (1)

When COVID-19 pandemic struck the world, T&T sector was the first to feel the effects. **Traditional tourism business models have stopped working.** Travel restrictions and lockdowns hit hard to the sector, that significantly contributes to the global economic development. Tourism numbers have dropped sharply, together responding in economic indicators.

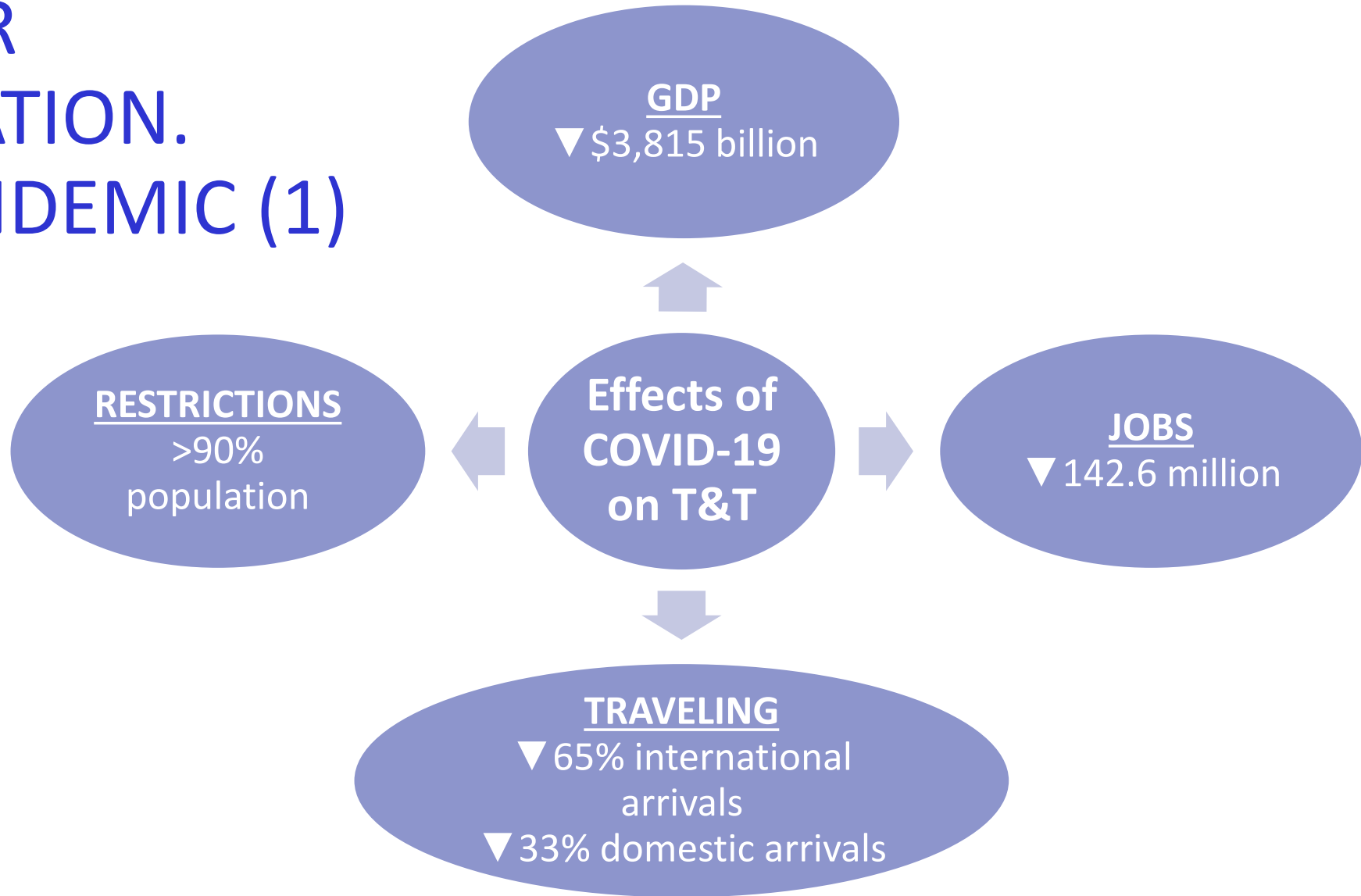


Figure 3. The main effects of the COVID-19 on tourism in 2020 in numbers.

Source: Compiled by the authors, based on the WTTC (2020) and Gossling et. al. (2020).

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION. COVID-19 PANDEMIC (2)

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	INTERNAL FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven resilience of tourism in past crises Domestic tourism can be a buffer Adaptation capacity: safety and hygiene protocols, trips closer to home, value for money, responsible consumer behaviour Government support to the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Segments potentially affected are also high spenders: international, long haul, business travel and events Major disruption in airline industry with airline failures and concentration Lack of references in previous downturns Perception of travel as a risk Low levels of demand when restarting tourism due to social distancing 	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-think business model Innovation and digitalization Sustainability and sustainable-oriented segments (rural, nature, health) De-escalation phases initiated by several countries toward the 'new normal' Progress in adaptation plans in destinations & companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic environment: world recession, rising unemployment and jobs at risk, closure of business mainly SMEs, disposable income, uncertainty weighing on consumer and business confidence Uncertain length of pandemic (including resurgence) and vaccine unavailability Extent of lockdowns and travel restrictions Unknown form of the "new normal" 	

Table 1. SWOT analysis of T&T sector in the face of the COVID-19.

Source: UNTWO, 2020.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION. COVID-19 PANDEMIC (3)

The COVID-19 pandemic has been also an incentive for tourism transformation. As tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, **to build back better, a new thinking and new framing of tourism is needed. This crisis is an opportunity to transform the relationship of tourism with nature, climate and the economy** (United Nations, 2020).

To survive, the transformation in T&T sector is essential. The crisis situation is the moment for the long-needed change to rethink the tourism, considering more sustainable approach.



Figure 4. The framework of the changes in the face of the COVID-19, towards sustainable development.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION. GLOBAL FORCES

However, tourism transformation had been under the discussions even before the challenging pandemic times came. **The transition to responsible tourism and the practical application of its principles is driven by both global forces, including the elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (2018), European Green Deal (2019) and the search for the optimal balance of tourism at national and local level – cities, protected areas, businesses, or communities, as well as the growing awareness of travellers.**

Tourism is in challenging times, and it is the moment that it may be restarted in a new, more sustainable and responsible form and be one of the key elements towards the sustainable development.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TOURISM. TOURISM DIMENSIONS (1)

The scientific literature highlights **the positive and negative effects of tourism**, which can be classified into **three main dimensions**:

- **Economic**
- **Socio-cultural**
- **Environmental**

In order to preserve healthy economic, socio-cultural and natural environment, mitigate the negative impact of tourism and promote the benefits, it is necessary to find sustainable and responsible solutions for future tourism.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TOURISM. TOURISM DIMENSIONS (2)

Table 2. Impact of tourism on economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects.

Source: Compiled by authors based on analysis of scientific literature.

	Aspects of the positive impact of tourism	Aspects of the negative impact of tourism
Economic aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employability • Employment and income from work in the tourism sector • Raising incomes and living standards • Expenditure of inbound tourists (tax revenue, business income, etc.) • Tax revenue growth • Boosting the local economy • Investment in tourism related option • Promoting local entrepreneurs • New business opportunities • Improvement of financial infrastructure • Improvement of the community's investment image • Increased investment, faster development • Better transport infrastructure • Improvement of water and energy infrastructure • Improvement of utilities infrastructure • Improvement of connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased land and building prices • Increased prices of goods and services • Price inflation • Increased cost of living • Increased road maintenance and transport system costs • Additional infrastructure costs (water, energy, fuel, medical, etc.) • Higher prevention costs to curb increased crime rates • Fewer funds remain for other activities, with the bulk of them being spent on tourism • Economic benefits for businesses, but not for individuals • Owners can export profits • Increased potential of imported labour, outflow of local labour • Low salaries may be paid • Seasonal tourism increases the risk of unemployment • Outbound tourism is shifting costs abroad, leaving less to the local economy • Competition for non-farm land use
Socio-cultural aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising living standards • The rise of quality of life • Wider range of leisure activities • Development of recreational facilities (parks, etc.) • Better shopping opportunities • Better service quality (in restaurants, shops, etc.) • Revitalization of traditional arts • Preservation of cultural heritage • Cultural exchanges between tourists and locals • The pride of locals living in the visited area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption of socio-cultural provision capacity • Overcrowding tourist destinations • Socio-cultural conflict between locals and tourists • Traffic congestion, increased pollution, increased noise levels • The loss of peace • Exploitation of the natives • The loss of authenticity, traditions, cultural expression, distortion of local culture, non-validation of history, neglect of values • Demonstration effect (representation of tourist appearance and behaviour) • Deviations in moral norms, increased crime rates • Social problems (alcoholism, prostitution, drugs, etc.) • Social change in local communities
Environmental aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better environmental protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption of environmental supply capacity • Changing cityscape • Excessive burden on infrastructure • Improper use of land • Improper use of premises • Replacement of hydrological models • Water and air pollution • Flora and fauna breeding problems, damage to vegetation, loss of species • Soil erosion, river bank damage, muddy landscape • Water depletion, likelihood of fires • Destruction of the local ecosystem

TOURISM TRANSFORMATION. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (1)

Responsible tourism aimed at maximising benefits (economic, social, and environmental) **and minimizing costs to destination** (Amin, 2016). It is about making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.

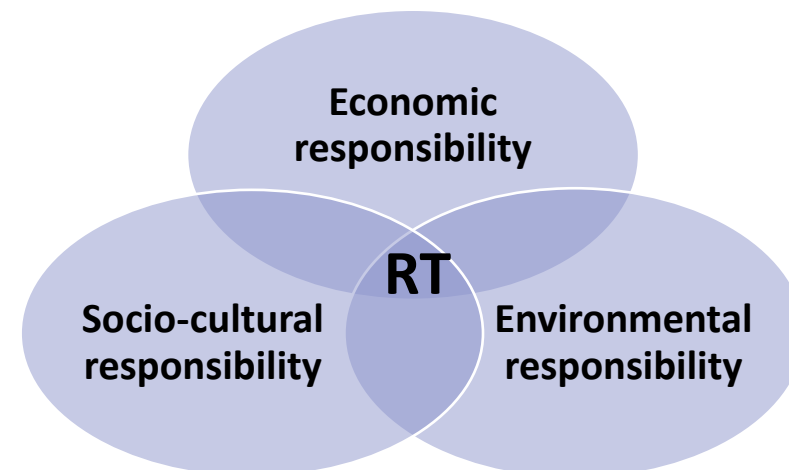
Responsible tourism (The Cape Town Declaration, 2002):

- minimizes negative social, economic and environmental impacts
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities
- improves working conditions and access to the industry
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage embracing diversity
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- provides access for physically challenged people
- is culturally sensitive, encourages respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence

TOURISM TRANSFORMATION. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (2)

Main dimensions of responsible tourism (Mathew, Sreejesh, 2017):

- **Economic** responsibility. It refers to the role of tourism in local economic development, especially through sustainable livelihood opportunities
- **Social** responsibility. It captures the responsibility exhibits by the destination in empowering and involving local communities in development
- **Cultural** responsibility. It covers the contribution of tourism towards preservation and promotion of local art, culture and traditions
- **Environmental** responsibility. It captures the perception concerning endeavours of tourism to ensure that negative impacts are minimum development, especially through sustainable livelihood opportunities



TOURISM TRANSFORMATION. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (3)

To achieve the results of tourism transformation into responsible form towards the sustainable development, **the involvement and unity of the actors of the tourism system and complex initiatives and actions are needed.**

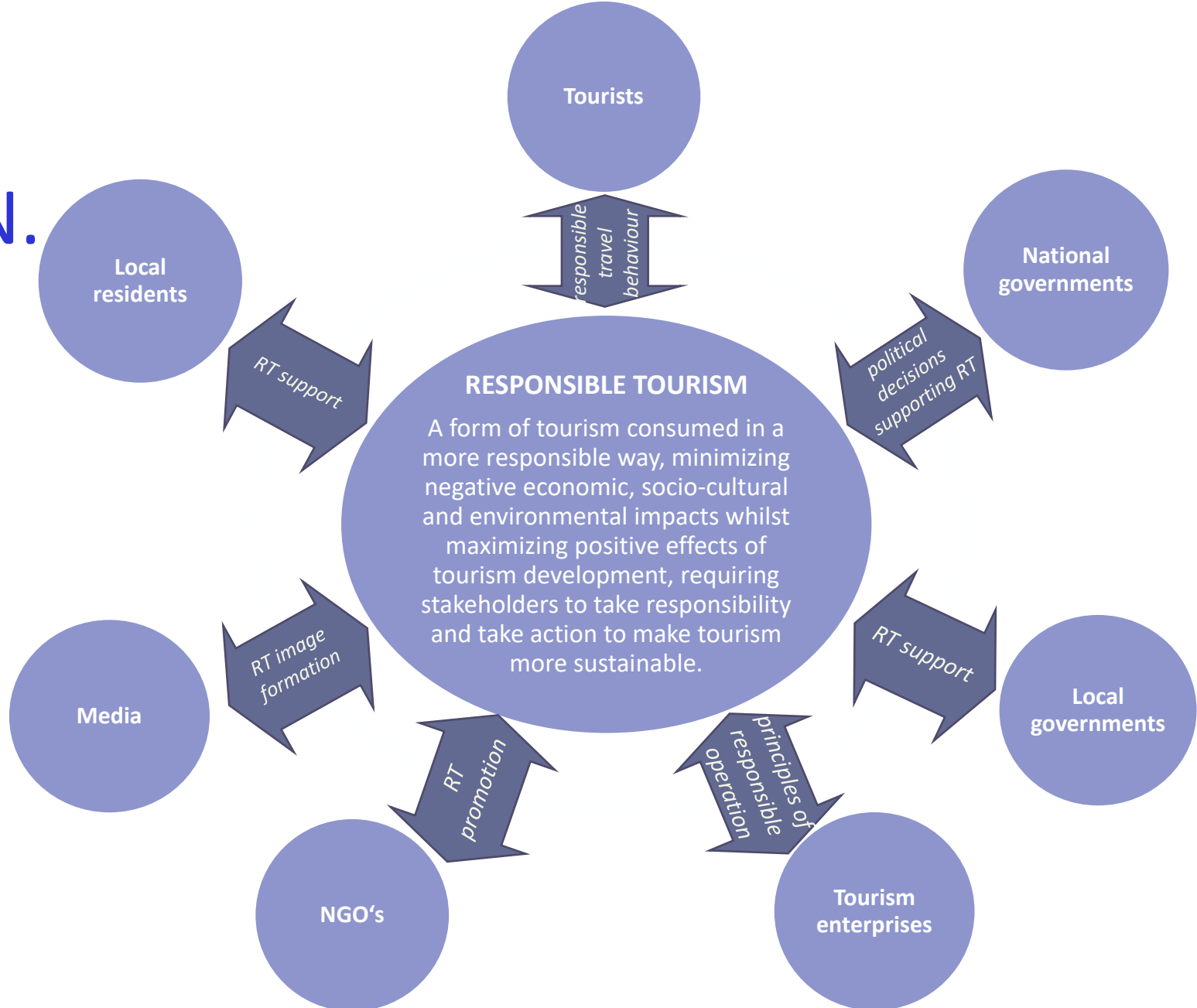


Figure 1. The concept of responsible tourism at the level of the actors of the tourism system. 14

Source: compiled by the author, based on the scientific literature.

POSSIBLE TRANSFORMATION DIRECTION

UNWTO is committed to accelerate progress towards low carbon tourism development and the contribution of the sector to international climate goals, in line with the recommendations for a responsible recovery of the Tourism Sector from COVID-19 to:

- Strengthen the measurement and disclosure of CO2 emissions in tourism
- Accelerate the decarbonization of tourism operations
- Engage the tourism sector in carbon removal

CONCLUSIONS (1)

The rapidly growing scale of tourism and the growing consumer consumption have contributed to the rapid onset of the negative effects of tourism, especially in the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions.

The analysis revealed that the current tourism situation, due to the circumstances (exacerbation of the negative effects of tourism and the sector has experienced a stagnation in recent years) may be the opportunity to transform the pre-existing form of operation of the sector into more responsible and sustainable tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put tourism at a crossroads where transformation has become essential. It could be a great opportunity to move towards a more sustainable and responsible future for tourism.

CONCLUSIONS (2)

The transition to responsible tourism is also supported by organizations of global significance, including the **Sustainable Development Goals (2018)** and the **European Green Course (2021)**.

Responsible tourism has been shown to be a more responsible form of tourism that seeks to minimize the negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts while maximizing the positive effects of tourism.

To achieve the results of tourism transformation into responsible form towards the sustainable development, the involvement and unity of the actors of the tourism system and complex initiatives and actions are needed.

Tourism has an obligation to use its unique power to lead the response to the climate emergency and ensure responsible growth.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION

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