



SDG, NDCs, Climate Change, Sustainable Tourism and Tourism Certification.

1. UN Objective of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. There are 17 interconnected goals, each addressing critical areas such as health, education, equality, climate action, sustainable economic growth, and environmental protection. SDG 13, "Climate Action," specifically aims to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by integrating climate change measures into national policies, improving resilience to climate-related hazards, and increasing awareness and capacity for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2. Paris Agreement on Climate Change

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels. The agreement emphasizes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change. Countries are required to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that outline their efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change, reviewed every five years to increase ambition over time.

3. Global Adoption of the Paris Agreement

A total of 196 parties, including 195 countries and the European Union, have adopted the Paris Agreement, making it a nearly universal accord for climate action. As of 2024, 193 countries have ratified the agreement, reflecting a global consensus on the need to address climate change urgently.

Climate change **adaptation and mitigation** initiatives involve both global and national efforts. Adaptation focuses on adjusting systems and practices to minimize the negative impacts of climate change, while mitigation aims to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases. Key initiatives include:

- **International Initiatives:** The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) support countries in their efforts.
- **National Initiatives:** Many countries have developed climate action plans, implemented renewable energy projects, promoted sustainable agriculture, and encouraged the use of energy-efficient technologies.



4. Methodology for Implementation of the Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is implemented through:

- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** Countries set their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and outline strategies for adaptation and resilience.
- **Global Stock take:** A periodic assessment every five years to measure progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Climate Finance:** Developed countries are committed to mobilizing \$100 billion annually to support climate action in developing countries.
- **Transparency Framework:** Countries are required to report their emissions and progress towards NDCs, ensuring accountability and facilitating global cooperation.

5. Importance of the Paris Agreement to Sri Lanka as an Island Country

As a small island nation, Sri Lanka is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and disruptions to agriculture and fisheries. The Paris Agreement provides a framework for international cooperation and support, allowing Sri Lanka to access climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives to build resilience against these challenges.

6. Sri Lanka's Government Commitment to Climate Change

Sri Lanka is committed to achieving climate resilience and low-carbon development, aligning with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs. The government aims to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in key sectors, including energy, transportation, waste management, and forestry.
- Enhance resilience to climate impacts through integrated coastal zone management, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable water management.
- Promote renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and sustainable agricultural practices.

7. Initiatives for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

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Methodologies of Action;

- **National Adaptation Plan (NAP):** Focuses on adapting to climate impacts in agriculture, water, health, biodiversity, and infrastructure sectors.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** Sri Lanka's NDCs outline its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 14.5% by 2030, mainly through energy sector reforms and sustainable land use practices.
- **Renewable Energy Targets:** Aim to generate 70% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030.
- **Green Building Codes:** Encourage energy-efficient construction practices and promote sustainable urban development.

7.1 NDCs for Countries and Sectors

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are climate action plans submitted by each country under the Paris Agreement. These plans outline specific targets and measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts, reflecting the country's unique circumstances and capacities. NDCs typically cover various sectors, including energy, transport, agriculture, and forestry, and emphasize cross-sectoral integration to achieve a low-carbon, resilient economy.

8. Role of the Tourism Sector in Achieving NDC Targets

Tourism, a major economic contributor in Sri Lanka, plays a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions and enhancing climate resilience. By adopting sustainable practices, such as reducing energy and water consumption, minimizing waste, and conserving biodiversity, the tourism sector can help achieve NDC targets. Promoting eco-friendly accommodations, low-carbon transportation options, and sustainable tour operations directly contributes to climate action goals.

9. Why Tourism in Sri Lanka Should Work Towards NDC Goals

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Tourism is vital to Sri Lanka's economy, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. Sustainable tourism can:



- Mitigate negative environmental impacts while enhancing the destination's attractiveness.
- Support community development and conservation efforts.
- Align with global market trends where tourists prefer eco-friendly and socially responsible travel options.

10. Connection Between SDGs and GSTC Criteria

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria align closely with the 17 SDGs. For example:

- **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production):** GSTC criteria promote efficient resource use, waste management, and pollution reduction.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Encourage the tourism sector to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** Emphasize biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use in tourism operations.

Please refer to website <www.gstc.com> for more detail

11. How Sustainable Certification Promotes Best Practices

Sustainable tourism certifications, like the National Sustainable Tourism Certification (NSTC), provide a framework for tourism operators to implement best practices. Certifications encourage:

- Efficient use of energy, water, and other resources.
- Waste reduction and recycling.
- Community engagement and support for local economies.
- Protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage.

12. Role of NSTC in Promoting Responsible Tourism Practices

NSTC sets standards for sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka, ensuring that tourism services operate responsibly by:

- Adopting environmentally friendly practices, such as using renewable energy sources and reducing plastic waste.
- Ensuring fair treatment and benefits for local communities and workers.
- Promoting local culture and conserving natural resources.

13. Importance of Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka

Tourism in Sri Lanka contributes significantly to the national economy, but it also poses risks to natural resources and biodiversity if not managed sustainably. The National Sustainable Tourism Certification (NSTC) initiative helps the country balance



growth in tourism with environmental and social responsibility. By implementing sustainable practices, Sri Lanka can:

- **Enhance Resilience to Climate Change:** Through the conservation of natural ecosystems that provide essential services.
- **Promote Green Growth:** By attracting environmentally conscious tourists and investors.
- **Demonstrate Global Leadership:** In integrating sustainable tourism into climate adaptation strategies.

14. How Sustainable Tourism Certification Protects Tourism Resources

Sustainable tourism certification helps protect resources by:

- Encouraging sustainable management of natural and cultural sites.
- Reducing negative impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Promoting practices that enhance resilience to climate impacts, such as coastal zone management and sustainable waste practices.

15. Market Size and Growth for Sustainable Products and Destinations

The global sustainable tourism market is growing rapidly, driven by increasing awareness of environmental and social issues. In 2022, sustainable tourism was estimated to be worth over \$200 billion, with an annual growth rate of 10-15%. Travelers are increasingly choosing destinations and products that minimize their environmental footprint and provide social and economic benefits to local communities. Sri Lanka's emphasis on sustainable tourism positions it to tap into this expanding market.

Sri Lanka's commitment to climate action, combined with sustainable tourism practices, not only enhances its appeal as a tourist destination but also contributes to global efforts to combat climate change. By aligning with international standards and frameworks, the country is well-placed to achieve both its climate and development goals

16. Sustainable Tourism Certifications and Future Market Opportunities

Sustainable Tourism certifications enhance the credibility and attractiveness of destinations by assuring travelers of responsible practices. This can lead to:

- Increased market share among environmentally conscious travelers.
- Access to niche markets that prioritize sustainability, such as eco-tourism and adventure tourism.
- Opportunities for partnerships with international organizations and investors focusing on sustainable development.



Sustainable tourism certifications also create opportunities for market growth by:

- **Attracting Green Consumers:** Increasing demand for eco-friendly travel options among environmentally conscious tourists.
- **Enhancing Destination Image:** Building a reputation for sustainability, which can differentiate destinations in a competitive market.
- **Accessing Green Financing:** Facilitating access to climate finance and investment opportunities tied to sustainability criteria.

17. Protecting Tourism Resources through Sustainable Certification

Sustainable tourism certifications help protect tourism resources by:

- **Encouraging Conservation Efforts:** Promoting the protection of ecosystems, cultural heritage, and biodiversity.
- **Implementing Carrying Capacity Limits:** Ensuring tourism activities do not exceed the environment's ability to regenerate and sustain itself.
- **Promoting Education and Awareness:** Raising awareness among tourists and operators about the importance of preserving natural and cultural resources.

Summary

The integration of climate action and sustainable tourism practices, aligned with international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, is crucial for countries like Sri Lanka. Sustainable tourism certifications, such as NSTC, support this integration by encouraging responsible practices, fostering market opportunities, and protecting vital tourism resources. Moving forward, it is essential to continue developing innovative strategies and partnerships to enhance the role of tourism in achieving climate goals and promoting sustainable development