# THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TO PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND BIODIVERSITY

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**Abstract:** The article reveals the theoretical foundations of the sustainable development of the tourism industry and its role in the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity.

It examines a topical issue that raises public awareness of the interaction between man and nature through the field of tourism. One of the main goals of sustainable tourism is to minimize the negative impact on nature and preserve biodiversity.

Attention is paid to the 10 principles of sustainable tourism development based on the study and monitoring of the environmental impacts of tourism. Compliance with the principles of rational use of natural resources by all interested parties involved and maintaining a balance between economic interests and nature protection through tourism activities.

Emphasizes the significant role of the tourism industry as the main source of the global carbon footprint and the increased consumption of resources, especially water, given its irrational use by tourists. Water literacy, which includes tourist education and communication campaigns, is proposed as a strategy for sustainable water resources management and combating climate challenges.

Key words: biodiversity, concept of sustainable tourism, environment, Living Planet Index, natural resources, political ecology, SDG, sustainable tourism, UN Tourism, water literacy, World Wildlife Fund.

**Аннотация:** Статья раскрывает теоретические основы устойчивого развития туристической отрасли и её роль в сохранения природных ресурсов и биоразнообразия.

В ней рассматривается актуальная тема, которая повышает осведомленность общества о взаимодействии человека и природы, через сферу туризма. Одной из главных целей устойчивого туризма является минимизация отрицательного воздействия на природу и сохранение биоразнообразия.

Уделяется внимание для широкой осведомленности 10-принципам развития устойчивого туризма сделанных на основе изучения и мониторинга экологических влияний туризма. Соблюдению принципов рационального

использования природных ресурсов всеми заинтересованными, участвующими сторонами и поддержание баланса между экономическими интересами и охраной природы через туристическую деятельность.

Подчеркивает значительную роль индустрии туризма как основного источника глобального углеродного следа и увеличения потребления ресурсов, особенно воды, с учетом ее нерационального использования туристами. Водная грамотность, включающая обучение туристов и коммуникационные кампании, предлагается как стратегия устойчивого управления водными ресурсами и борьбы с климатическими вызовами.

**Ключевые слова:** биоразнообразие, водная грамотность, Всемирный фонд дикой природы, Индекс живой планеты, окружающая среда, политическая экология, природные ресурсы, устойчивый туризм, ЦУР, концепция устойчивого туризма, UN Tourism.

#### INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism is aimed at meeting the needs of both tourists and host communities, it protects, expands and develops the possibilities of tourist regions in the present and in the future<sup>6</sup>. The approach of sustainable tourism promotes the rational use of all resources on Earth, ensuring the economic, social, natural, ethical and aesthetic needs of humanity, preserving historical and cultural heritage, biological diversity and maintaining a balance of the most important environmental processes<sup>7</sup>, fostering a thrifty attitude towards natural resources for everyone.

Natural resources include all living and inanimate objects of nature that make up the natural environment that humanity uses in the course of its life and to meet the material, social and cultural needs of society<sup>8</sup>.

Biological diversity represents all forms of life on Earth and is an indicator of the complexity of biological systems<sup>9</sup>. The issue of conservation and maintenance of biodiversity is quite complex and requires special attention. For tourism, climate change and loss of biodiversity are not abstract theories, but real environmental challenges that affect the industry, especially in mountainous and coastal regions that can be seen with the naked eye.

Humanity has recently significantly increased its consumption of natural resources, due to population growth, which, as of June 2025, amounts to 8.21 billion people <sup>10</sup>. The Earth has a limited amount of natural resources available to both humans and other living beings. It does not have time to satisfy the ever-growing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Принципы устойчивого туризма. Официальный сайт [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://hospitality-kazakhstan.kz/principy-ustojchivogo-turizma/#.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Nur Sulistyo Budi Ambarini; Edra Satmaidi; Rahma Fitri. Cooperative Law Agency in Development of Tourism Based on Rural Communities // III. Findings and discussion // Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research, volume 140 // International Conference on Law, Economics and Health (ICLEH 2020). - С. 678-682. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125940517.pdf.

<sup>8 4.</sup> Природные ресурсы и природопользование. Классификация природных ресурсов. Основные законы рационального природопользования. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://studfile.net/preview/3915451/page;3/.

<sup>9</sup> Biodiversity. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Биоразнообразие.

<sup>10</sup> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Население\_Земли

consumer desires of mankind. It must be remembered that future generations also have the right to use natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being.

UN Tourism (General Assembly) declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development<sup>11</sup>. The objectives of sustainable development for the period up to 2030 are: "by 2030, ensure the development and implementation of strategies to promote sustainable tourism, which contributes to job creation, the development of local culture and the production of local products"<sup>12</sup>.

### THE MAIN PART

Currently, the "Concept of sustainable tourism" is recognized in the field of tourism management, which is reflected in the development of national strategies for sustainable tourism and the introduction of world practices for responsible use of resources and conservation of biodiversity in various countries.

At the regulatory and legal level on tourism, there should be specific provisions on sustainability and elements of sustainable tourism, covering more pressing issues of ecology, economics and social aspects of society.

The decisions made should be practically applicable to all types, types of destinations and to all participants in tourism, the value chain, while establishing an appropriate balance between the various aspects that ensure their positive results<sup>13</sup>.

Currently, there is general agreement on the need to develop and implement strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change, with international organizations, national Governments, and the tourism industry playing an important role in this process.

Tourism can have a positive impact on the conservation of vulnerable and valuable ecosystems by contributing to their protection in various ways. With excessive, reckless exploitation of natural resources and insufficient control over the development of tourism infrastructure, tourism can also damage biodiversity and the environment. Therefore, the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of natural resources should become priorities for all participants in the tourism industry. Planning, coordination, implementation of initiatives and development of sustainable tourism should be based on scientific and rational methods of environmental management and accompanied by appropriate measures to preserve and restore the environment. Monitoring should be carried out on an ongoing basis in order to protect natural resources, biodiversity and the value of tourist sites in their destinations 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> 2017 год провозглашен Международным годом туризма. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://news.un.org/ru/story/2015/12/1276571.

<sup>12</sup> Достойный труд и повестка дня в области устойчивого развития на период до 2030 года. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@europe/@ro-geneva/@sro-moscow/documents/publication/wcms\_554824.pdf.

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Tourism Law, Sustainability and Universal Accessibility // 2nd International Seminar on Tourism Law "Tourism Law: Sustainability and Universal Accessibility"

Organized by UN Tourism, in collaboration with Agencia Córdoba Turismo, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba and Universidad Siglo 21, in Córdoba, Argentina, on 2628 November 2024. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - http://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-10/, 5 p.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> World Tourism Organization (2018), UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development - Final Report, Nadi, Fiji, 18–20 June 2018, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420155//, published: November 2018, 64 p // eISBN: 978-92-844-2015-5 | ISBN: 978-92-844-2014-8. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development - Final Report, Nadi, Fiji, 18 - 20 June 2018 | World Tourism Organization.

Due to the increasing need to develop sustainable tourism for the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, the Tourism Concern, together with the World Wildlife Fund, proposed 10 principles of sustainable tourism:

- 1. For a successful and long-lasting business, it is important to preserve and rationally use natural, social and cultural resources.
- 2. Reducing excessive consumption and waste helps to avoid the cost of repairing environmental damage in the long term and contributes to improving the quality of tourism.
  - 3. Conservation of biodiversity.
- 4. The development of tourism, integrated into strategic planning at the national and local levels, taking into account environmental impacts, contributes to the sustainability and long-term viability of the industry.
- 5. Tourism, which supports diverse forms of the local economy and takes into account environmental costs and values, protects the economy and helps to avoid damage to the environment and biodiversity.
- 6. The active involvement of local communities in tourism activities benefits both them and the environment, as well as improves the quality of the tourist experience.
- 7. Consultations between the tourism industry and local communities, organizations and institutions are necessary for successful cooperation and resolution of possible conflicts of interest.
- 8. Staff training in sustainable tourism practices and the involvement of qualified professionals at all levels of activity contributes to improving the quality of tourism services.
- 9. Responsible tourism marketing, which provides tourists with complete and honest information, promotes respect for the natural, social and cultural environment of destinations, as well as increases customer satisfaction.
- 10. Regular research and monitoring based on effective data collection and analysis is necessary to promptly solve problems and ensure benefits for tourism destinations, industries and consumers<sup>15</sup>. The following is an illustration of the 10 principles of sustainable tourism (Fig. 1).



<sup>15</sup> Принципы устойчивого туризма. Официальный сайт [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://hospitality-kazakhstan.kz/principy-ustojchivogo-turizma/#.

Figure 1. 10 principles of sustainable tourism<sup>16</sup>

Government authorities, together with the tourism industry, play a key role in coordinating the sustainable development of tourism, in preserving natural assets and biodiversity. The State is responsible for developing national policy and strategic planning, and the tourism industry contributes, creates and implements sustainable innovative tourism products.

Protecting biodiversity requires a responsible approach to coordinating actions within the tourism sector and in other sectors of the economy, as biodiversity is an important asset for the development of tourism<sup>17</sup>.

WWF's Living Planet 2024 report highlights the global crisis, which indicates a catastrophic decline in wildlife populations by 73% over the past 50 years, according to the Living Planet Index. This decline, which was observed between 1970 and 2020, is clear evidence that the biological diversity of our planet is under enormous threat, with serious consequences for ecosystems and human survival. The LPI, developed by the Zoological Society of London, tracks nearly 35,000 population trends across 5,495 species, revealing a grim reality: "Our natural world is in danger" 18.

Research by many scientists shows that the tourism industry is the main source of the global carbon footprint and the reason for the increased consumption of resources 19. Irrational water consumption is of particular concern in the tourism sector, as tourists often consume disproportionately large amounts of fresh water<sup>20</sup>. In tourism, water consumption has indirect indicators, it is used for daily room cleaning, laundry, kitchen, irrigation of parks, gardens, fountains, pools and golf courses, for local food production, many of which are consumed from local water sources<sup>21</sup>.

The close relationship between the tourism industry and water resources is becoming problematic, given the growing severity of the problem of freshwater scarcity worldwide. Science has proven that the total volume of water on the planet does not change, but there is a growing discrepancy between supply and demand due to various environmental, economic and social factors<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Составлено автором на основе Принципы устойчивого туризма. Официальный сайт [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - https://hospitality-

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<sup>17</sup> World Tourism Organization (2018), UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development - Final Report, Nadi, Fiji, 18–20 June 2018, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420155//, published: November 2018, 64 p // eISBN: 978-92-844-2015-5 | ISBN: 978-92-844-2014-8. - [Электр. ресурс]. Режим доступа: - UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development - Final Report, Nadi, Fiji, 18 - 20 June 2018 | World Tourism Organization.

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<sup>19</sup> Bekun, F. V., Gyamfi, B. A., Bamidele, R. O., & Udemba, E. N. (2022). Tourism-induced emission in sub-Saharan Africa: A panel study for oil-producing and nonoilproducing countries. Environmental Science and Pollution Research, 29, 41725-41741. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11356-021-18262-Z/TABLES/10

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Becken, S. (2014). Water equity - contrasting tourism water use with that of the local community. Water Resources and Industry, 7-8, 9-22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Dolnicar, S. (2022). Tourist behaviour change for sustainable consumption (SDG goal 12): Tourism agenda 2030 perspective article. Tourism Review. https://doi.org/ 10.1108/TR-11-2022-0563

Gossling, "S., Peeters, P., Hall, C. M., Ceron, J. P., Dubois, G., Lehmann, L. V., & Scott, D. (2012). Tourism and water use: Supply, demand, and security. An

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Gleick, P. (2018). Transitions to freshwater sustainability. PNAS, 115(36), 8863–8871.

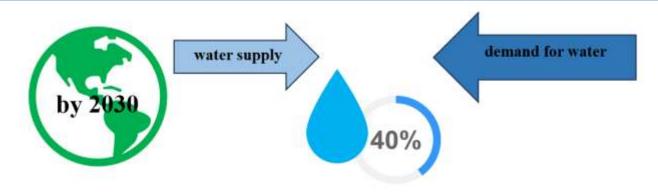


Figure 2. By 2030: 40% gap between water supply and demand for water<sup>23</sup>

According to the forecasts of the World Economic Forum 2023, by 2030, humanity may face a 40% gap between water supply and demand for water. The demand for water inherent in the tourism industry should be planned and regulated from the perspective of sustainable and equitable water resources management<sup>24</sup>. The above illustration shows a 40% gap between water supply and demand by 2030 (Fig. 2).

Demand management strategies aimed at knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of tourists related to water are referred to as water literacy<sup>25</sup>.

Political ecology is an established research base for analyzing complex socionatural relationships within the framework of environmental conflicts<sup>26</sup>.

Natural resource management is a political act influenced by economic and cultural forces<sup>27</sup>. Solving environmental problems begins with understanding the inner workings of government structures and how they affect the availability of natural resources and their consumption. Access to water and water equality in tourism hotspots are influenced by political, economic, and cultural factors.

Collectively, the researchers' research demonstrates how the tourism industry can stimulate or exacerbate water scarcity, especially in developing countries. Demand for water from tourism may limit the achievement of SDG  $6^{28}$ .

Water literacy training for tourists will be a way to deal with climate shocks. Together, communication and marketing activities on water literacy of tourists are combined with knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to water. It is often used to raise awareness about water systems and shape water-oriented behavior<sup>29</sup>.

Srinivasan, V., Lambin, E. F., Gorelick, S. M., Thompson, B. H., & Rozelle, S. (2012). The nature and causes of the global water crisis: Syndromes from a meta-analysis of coupled human-water studies. Water Resources Research, 48(10), Article W10516.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Составлено автором на основе World Economic Forum. (2023). Retrieved from Weforum.org/agenda/2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> World Economic Forum. (2023). Retrieved from Weforum.org/agenda/2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> McCarroll, M., & Hamann, H. (2020). What we know about water: A water literacy review. Water (Switzerland), 12(10), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.3390/w12102803

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Blaikie, P. (2008). Epilogue: Towards a future for political ecology that works. Geoforum, 39(2), 765–772. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.GEOFORUM.2007.07.004 Robbins, P. (2012). Political ecology: A critical introduction (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Cole, S. (2012). A political ecology of water equity and tourism. A case study from Bali. Annals of Tourism Research, 39(2), 1221–1241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. annals.2012.01.003

Islar, M., & Boda, C. (2014). Political ecology of inter-basin water transfers in Turkish water governance. Ecology and Society, 19(4). https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-06885-190415

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> UN. (2023). Tourism and SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation fact sheet.. https://tourism4s.dgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SDG-6

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Climate change cannot be completely stopped in the near future, but its pace can be slowed down and its consequences mitigated by taking appropriate practical measures, taking into account the scientifically sound advice of experts from the tourism and other industries. Such actions include the use of renewable energy sources, minimizing the carbon footprint, and improving waste recycling efficiency, which are aimed at conserving natural resources and protecting biodiversity based on scientific research and the implementation of their results in practice. It is necessary to expand the ongoing dialogues between scientists and subjects of the tourism and other industries in order to make scientifically sound reasonable decisions based on common sense.

#### CONCLUSION

The development of the tourism industry should be based on the principles of sustainable development and reflected in the policy, planning and implementation of sustainable international tourism practices. The strategy of sustainable tourism is aimed at preserving biodiversity while contributing to the protection and restoration of natural resources and the education of "eco-active citizens."

UN Tourism has developed and is improving methods for assessing the impact of tourism on sustainability, creating a reliable "statistical base" for monitoring sustainable tourism from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Research by scientists shows that the tourism industry significantly contributes to the formation of a global carbon footprint and increased consumption of resources, especially freshwater, which poses a significant environmental threat worldwide. The unjustified use of water in the tourism sector is exacerbating the global problem of water scarcity. Political ecology points to the impact of economic, cultural, and administrative factors on water resource management, especially in emerging economies where tourism hinders the achievement of SDG 6.

Sustainable tourism is the driving force behind positive changes in improving people's well-being, improving their living conditions and developing the local economy. Raises awareness of sustainable tourism for the wise use of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity for future generations.

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