



Summary Reports of

**Policy Dialogue and Workshop on Sustainable Tourism:
Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism
Policies in South Asia
22-23 November 2016
Male', Maldives**

And

**Maldives National Dialogue
on Sustainable Consumption and Production
24 November 2016
Male', Maldives**



**Policy Dialogue and Workshop on Sustainable Tourism:
Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism Policies in South Asia
22-23 November 2016
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Introduction

Tourism is a growing sector in the South Asian Region, and a potential driver for a broad spectrum of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) applications such as sustainable buildings, sustainable procurement, sustainable transport, sustainable food systems, and sustainable livelihoods.

The 'Post 2015 South Asia Development Agenda' report indicated tourism as one of the key priorities in South Asia in addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges and opportunities. Sustainable tourism was also identified as a priority issue in several meetings of SCP held in South Asia region including pre-meetings of establishing the South Asia Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

Following on the implementation of the 2013 SACEP Governing Council Decision 10.2.2 to promote SCP within policy-making mechanisms of South Asian countries, as well as the Asia–Pacific Road map on SCP 2016-2018, the South Asia Forum on SCP has been established under the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) with support from the UN Environment through the EU SWITCH Asia Regional Policy Support Component (RPSC). The Forum has recommended a number of activities/project to promote SCP in the region particularly the Sub-Regional Policy Dialogue on sustainable tourism held on 22-23 November 2016.

Main Objective

The main objective of the Dialogue and Workshop on Tourism in South Asia was to promote dissemination of good practices and successful sustainable tourism projects through sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in other parts of South Asia through adaptation, scaling up and replication. It will provide the platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building in sustainable tourism policy development and implementation tools including areas of specific interest such as green hotel guidelines and awareness raising campaigns.

Specific Objectives

- To share experiences on best practices and knowledge exchange among Ministries to strengthen capacities to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the tourism sector.
- To provide credible knowledge on SCP towards sustainable tourism to governments and other stakeholders in the tourism industry through cases of best practices and successful tourism projects in the sub-region.
- To increase the understanding of the need for - and challenges to - implementation of SCP in the tourism sector promoting sustainable production patterns in the tourism value chain and encouraging sustainable consumption through increasing demand for 'sustainable tourism services' in partnership with stakeholders.

Output

- Recommendations for regional collaboration and cooperation on SCP Tourism.
- Development of a statement supporting mainstreaming of SCP in Tourism that can be presented to the SACEP Governing Council for adoption under the South Asia Forum on SCP.

Specific outcomes are as follows:

- *Increased coordination and efficiency* on sustainable tourism initiatives in various programmes through the South Asia Forum on SCP among the major sub-regional and national tourism industry stakeholders (e.g. SWITCH-Asia projects, private and public sector organizations, SMEs, UN and other international agencies, social and environmental NGOs, academia, etc.);
- *Stakeholder Networking*: knowledge sharing and cooperation among the stakeholders to develop and disseminate new and existing tools, strengthen and integrate sustainability priorities into policies and national tourism sector development plans, through results-based training for implementing sustainable tourism approaches across the tourism sector.

Highlights of Day 1

The policy dialogue and Workshop on Sustainable Tourism in South Asia was commenced with a brief opening session with the opening remarks of Dr. Muhammad Khurshid, Director General of SACEP, Hon. Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Environment and Energy, Republic of Maldives and Dr. Subrata Sinha, Regional Environmental Affairs Officer of UN Environment, Asia Pacific Office.

The first session consisted of presentations which gave an overview on the 2030 SDGs, the importance of mainstreaming SCP in the Tourism Sector and the available SCP policy tools on sustainable tourism. In the beginning of the session, Dr. Subrata Sinha, Regional Environmental Affairs Officer of UN Environment, Asia Pacific Office provided the context for mainstreaming SCP with some remarks on the relevance of Goal 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production to tourism sector.

Ms. Loraine Gatlabayan, UN Environment, Asia Pacific Office presented 'Mainstreaming SCP in Tourism Sector in South Asia' which included an overview on tourism, the importance of mainstreaming SCP in the Tourism Sector, challenges and opportunities with the regional Sustainable Tourism Situation analysis, policy options towards Sustainable Tourism and indicators for sustainable tourism.

Guidelines for transforming tourism value chains to accelerate more resource efficient and low carbon development were presented by Mr. CB Ramkumar, Board Member & Regional Director South Asia, Chair – Education & Training Working Group, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

Session 2 focused on 'Country Presentations on Sustainable Tourism and Roundtable Discussion' to provide an overview on country experience on mainstreaming SCP in Tourism policies and implementation. In this session, all participated countries made presentation and country presentations were made based on following guide questions:

- How has the country's tourism policies and strategies adjusted to the requirement of SDG #12 and specifically #12.b on mainstreaming sustainability in tourism policies and strategies in light of the SDGs?
- What are the challenges and opportunities on mainstreaming sustainability in the tourism sector in the country?

Some excerpts from the country presentations as follows:

Country	Summery points
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government strongly encourages and offers its fullest support to the private sector to invest in the Tourism Industry • Has tremendous potential to develop further • Strategy of tourism management is in place
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Tourism Policy in 2010 • Protected Areas of Tourism and Special Tourism Zone Act -2010 • Government has decided to withdraw all duties from solar energy equipment to encourage use of solar energy, especially in the remote and economically backward locations • To explore the benefits of community-based rural tourism Government initiated 'Tourism Awareness Program 2013 • sustainable development is one of the main policy objectives of Seventh Five Year Plan
Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote High value, Low impact tourism • Created an enabling environment for a vibrant tourism industry; and • Promoted a year round destination and foster regional spread of tourism • Green elements incorporated into STAR ratings of Hotels • Green Hotel Guidelines were introduced • Initiated community-based sustainable tourism programme
Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Master Plan 2013-2017 • Waste Regulation 2014 • National solid waste management policy 2015 • Encourage companies, to adopt sustainable practices • Promote Green public procurement practice • Sustainable Management and efficient use of natural resources • Foster and Promote awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles • Tourism shares One-fourth of the GDP
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on New Tourism Products with Sustainability • Encourage public-private partnership in large scale tourism industries • High priority to Environment conservation • Improving Livelihoods and Spreading benefits at the grass root levels • Challenges: poor Infrastructure, less consideration on sustainability, • high risks, poor management, decreasing trend, less focus area, weak institutional capacity, threats from big markets, weak promotional activities
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge Potential for Religious tourism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan's tourism industry attracted an estimated of 1.1 million foreign tourists annually in 2011 and 966,000 in 2012 contributing 3USD 51 million and USD 369 million respectively • Pakistan's domestic tourism industry is estimated at 50 million domestic tourists who travel within the country on short trips usually between May to August • Climate Change induced GLOF is a major threat to sustainable tourism in Pakistan • Imperative of a fair and balanced growth and increased consumer awareness has contributed to the rise of environmentally-aware tourism • Sustainable tourism development, including the potential of the sector to facilitate intercultural understanding and tolerance. Also requires the engagement and respect of all relevant stakeholders, in particular of local communities, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Development Strategy 2011- 2016 • Sri Lanka Tourism Vision 2025 - (Policy Document) • Integrating SCP Patterns in tourism related policies and framework • Collaboration among stakeholders for the improvement of the tourism sector's SCP performance • Fostering the application of guidelines, instruments and technical solutions to prevent and mitigate tourism impacts and mainstream SCP patterns among tourism stakeholders • Enhancing sustainable tourism investment and financing • Adjustment of tourism and recreation industry to altered conditions of the destinations. • Increase the preparedness of tourism and recreation operation to extreme weather conditions. • Assess the current promotional strategies with connection to emerging scenarios of climate change; beach tourism and nature destinations. • Improve energy efficiency in tourism establishments by using available best alternative environmental friendly energy sources, solar and wind power, biomass. • Introduce resources management mechanism into tourism in order to minimize damage to the existing ecosystem by contributing in waste management, solid and waste water, in tourism areas which could affect the ecosystem.

Highlights of Day 2

Day two was dedicated to give some basic information on SCP applications in tourism sector. It was conducted as a workshop on Sustainable Tourism in South Asia and facilitated by Mr. CB Ramkumar, Board Member & Regional Director South Asia, Chair – Education & Training Working Group, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and UN Environment Regional Office in Asia Pacific.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To understand and share knowledge on the role of tourism in addressing the impacts of climate change and the opportunities for transforming the tourism industry through sustainable consumption and production patterns (SCP).
- To understand the requirements for mainstreaming SCP in the tourism sector through the use of the available guidelines such as GSTC Criteria to guide policy making and implementation.

Expected Output:

Greater understanding of SCP and recommendations on how GSTC guidelines can guide South Asian countries in mainstreaming SCP in the tourism sector.

Session 1: Climate Change & Tourism

In this session Mr. Ramkumar provided an insight to:

- Overview of the main Climate Risks in South Asia and the responses required to address these challenges.
- Impact of tourism to the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Asia and the Pacific countries – priorities and required responses

At the end of the presentations, a group discussion was held to share challenges and opportunities to address climate change in the Tourism sector in South Asia. During the discussion each country asked to list down climate change risks for its tourism activities and the established NDC priorities and also recommendations on the responses and methods (e.g. life cycle thinking) needed in the tourism sector to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Session 2: Preserving tourism destinations by using measurement instruments on SCP as a to guide policy makers

Number of topics were discussed to provide an overview on sustainable destinations and cases on preserving destinations by institutionalizing standards. Those topics included:

- Protecting destinations
- Examples of tourism operations and practices that contribute to destination degradation and decline.
- The need for supporting monitoring and measuring tools and instruments to measure SDG and climate-relevant indicators, aided by appraisal methods and certification schemes.
- Institutional requirements for adoption of standards and eco-labels
- The need for a common minimum standard to bring together disparate views & understandings of standards.
- Details of the GSTC criteria for hotels, tour operators & destinations

In the afternoon, participants were taken to guided field visit to one of the resort Island to give them first-hand experience on SCP applications used in Tourism Sector.

Session 4: Country level infrastructure development

After the 2 hrs. field visit, participants were back and continued with the remaining session. In this session, following areas were discussed.

- Need to develop a sustainable tourism country infrastructure
- Strategic framework planning for sustainable tourism initiatives to be a success
- Fundraising and financing for sustainable tourism

At the final session, participants were able to finalized proposed Summary Statement which will be submitted to the Governing Council of SACEP at its next sitting (see Annex).

Highlights of Day 3 – Maldives National Dialogue on SCP

Maldives National Dialogue on SCP was held back to back with Policy Dialogue and Workshop on Sustainable Tourism: Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism Policies in South Asia in Male', Maldives on 24th November 2016. The event was commenced with a brief opening session where many dignitaries, including Deputy Minister of Environment and Energy participated. The representatives from various institutions, NGOs participated in this national dialogue. Throughout the day, they discussed many items which needs to be included into their National SCP policy and strategy. The discussion was held in local language to maximize the understanding for all local participants. This event was facilitated by SACEP with the financial assistance from UNEP.

Summary Statement
Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Tourism:
Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism Policies in South Asia
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Male', Maldives

1. We, the representatives from Ministries of Environment and Tourism from South Asian Countries and being member countries of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) that participated in the Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Tourism: Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism Policies and Practices in South Asia held on 22-23 November 2016 at Male', Maldives;
2. *Acknowledge* the importance of the tourism sector, as one of the drivers of economic growth, and the role of sustainable tourism in addressing sustainable management, the environmental and socio-cultural challenges and opportunities faced to ensure the countries' ability to realize their development aspirations and alleviate poverty;
3. *Conscious* that climate change is taking place and affecting tourism through its impacts to the natural environment, and on humans, and economic activities and that the tourism sector has a role to play through their mitigation and adaptation actions, including protecting, maintaining and conserving natural resources and biodiversity;
4. *Cognizant* of the need for tourism development to ensure respect for socio-cultural authenticity by conserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, traditional, and spiritual values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding, mutual respect, and harmony;
5. *Aware* of the importance of adhering to the principles of sustainable tourism that takes into account resource efficiency as a policy area, that ensures optimal use of natural resources through sustainable consumption and production (SCP);
6. *Emphasizing the need* to promote resource efficiency, including minimizing the pollution of air, water, land, to reduce, reuse, and recycle (3R) of waste, and through actions towards lowcarbon economies;
7. *Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of September 2015, entitled, 'Transforming our world, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development' and acknowledging goal 12 on 'ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns' also considering that the objective of SCP is related to other goals and targets such as achieving sustainable tourism;
8. *Recognizing* the commitment of the Governing Council of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) in considering to promote SCP within policymaking mechanisms of South Asian countries as contained in the 13 Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP (Decision 10.2.2), which guided in establishment of South Asia Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SAF SCP), to serve as a regional platform, hosted by the SACEP, to encourage and support SCP related policies, knowledge and networks in South Asia, including sustainable tourism;
9. *Express appreciation* for the technical and financial support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Support Component Programme funded by the European Commission and through UNEP's partners such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), in line with the implementation of the Asia-Pacific SCP

Roadmap 2016-2018 as well as the importance of the continuity of this support for achieving the objectives of the South Asia Forum on SCP;

10. *Welcome* the initiative of establishing South Asia Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production in line with the decision of the SACEP Governing Council and its activities in providing a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building in sustainable tourism policy development and application of SCP tools and approaches to address climate change and achieve the SDGs;

Therefore, We

11. *Recommend* to the SACEP Governing Council to continue supporting regional cooperation to strengthen their capacities through research, trainings, and networking focusing on SCP application in the tourism policy development and implementation such as sustainable buildings, sustainable procurement, sustainable transport, sustainable food systems, and sustainable livelihoods;
12. *Encourage* countries to identify key relevant stakeholders, including governments, private sector and civil society in the tourism sector, and build multi-stakeholder partnerships towards sustainable consumption and production in tourism with the support from the South Asia Forum on SCP;
13. *Encourage* development organizations (international, regional, national and local) and private sector to provide technical and financial assistance for the South Asia Forum on SCP activities in mainstreaming SCP towards sustainable tourism in South Asia; and
14. Request, in particular, the United Nations Environment Programme, SACEP, and other international organizations to assist with resource mobilization in implementing SCP and resource efficiency related activities in South Asia.

Male', Maldives
23 November 2016