Blue Tourism Initiative
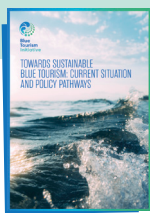
▸ The Blue Tourism Initiative is a global multi-stakeholder innovation program promoting the environmental management, inclusive governance and integrated policies of coastal and maritime tourism in three marine regions: the Mediterranean, the Western Indian Ocean and the Caribbean.

▸ bluetourisminitiative.org

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Full global report
Executive summary

GREENING BLUE TOURISM
Trends, challenges and policy pathways

Blue tourism–or coastal and maritime tourism –encompasses beach–, land and water-based tourism activities in the coastal areas. As one of the largest and growing sectors of the blue economy, blue tourism is having a high ecological and climate impact that is not well addressed in the current policy and governance frameworks.

The Blue Tourism in numbers
Sources: UNTW, Ocean Planet, OCDE.

GLOBAL TOURISM
1,5 billions $ 2019

BLUE TOURISM
50% OF GLOBAL TOURISM

BLUE TOURISM
26% OF BLUE ECONOMY IN 2030

Blue Tourism impacts

ENVIRONMENTAL
➕ Conservation of natural resources. Creation of Marine Protected Areas
➖ Biodiversity loss. Environmental pollution

SOCIAL
➕ Skills development. Preservation of (marine) cultural heritage
➖ Alteration of local communities

ECONOMIC
➕ Income and employment. Infrastructure development
➖ Economic fluctuation and dependency. Benefits inequity

Main challenges and opportunities for sustainable blue tourism

CHALLENGES
▸ **Inconsistent policies** causing **uncertainties** and resistances among blue tourism stakeholders.
▸ Limited collaboration between stakeholders **hinders engagement** for sustainable blue tourism.
▸ Emerging new actors are **disrupting the governance** mechanisms.
▸ High costs, limited financial incentives and **funding options.**

OPPORTUNITIES
▸ **Climate risks** and COVID-19 are **driving the reshape** tourism strategies towards **sustainability** and **digitalization**.
▸ Emerging **nature-based and circular economy solutions** can provide opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation.
▸ **Management and monitoring tools** for tourism are increasingly adopted in coastal areas, which can drive towards **green measures and investments** for infrastructure.
▸ **Spatial planning tools** are increasingly adopted to **optimize ocean space use**, allocate activities and foster sector synergies.

Suggested policy actions

FOSTERING INTEGRATED POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
▸ Foster **policy cohesion** and **collaboration among marine** regions to enhance synergies at different levels.
▸ Endorse a **blue tourism strategy** to consolidate strategic sustainability directions for the sector.
▸ Encourage **networks** and partnerships to enhance participation of destination stakeholders in decision making.

ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY PRACTICES
▸ Promote **sustainable production and consumption practices** throughout the tourism value chain.
▸ Support tourism businesses in **overcoming barriers** to change through tailored technical support (e.g. capacity building, innovation and technology support)
▸ Minimize **tourism seasonality** and concentration, and associated pressures, by diversifying and extending the tourism offer.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PRACTICES
▸ Enhance **climate resilience** in tourism through capacity building (e.g. risk assessment); financial measures; and awareness raising (e.g. climate risks, adaptation practices) for tourists, businesses, communities.
▸ Promote **responsible visitor management** in sensitive areas (MPAs, cultural heritage sites) to minimize tourism impacts.
▸ Endorse **nature-based solutions** and circular **economy practices** to adapt to climate change and minimize blue tourism pressures.

PROMOTING SMART TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
▸ Strengthen policies for **digital and smart tourism** including digital infrastructure development, digital equality, digital skills.
▸ Develop innovative **indicators** to **analyze blue tourism impacts** and inform action plans at the environment, economic and social levels.
▸ Increasing awareness among the private sector of long-term benefits of **digital solutions** to increase green investments.

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