



TRANSFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

FOR
PEOPLE
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SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM





This publication was commissioned by the Blue Climate Initiative (BCI), which accelerates ocean-related strategies, collaborating across a multidisciplinary global community towards a restored and healthy climate; an understood and protected ocean; and resilient, thriving and equitable communities. In 2020 the BCI initiated a holistic process to identify transformational opportunities at the intersection of people, ocean and planet, engaging over sixty world-class scientists and academics. These contributors compiled recommendations across six thematic areas: Health & Well-Being, Food & Nutrition, Marine Energy & Transportation, Mineral & Genetic Resources, Biodiversity & Nature-Based Solutions, and Sustainable Tourism. This publication is part of that series. The BCI is deeply grateful to its authors for their insights and collaboration.

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Transformational Opportunities in Sustainable Tourism

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Executive Summary

A large percentage of travel and tourism takes place in coastal and marine areas around the world; according to World Wildlife Fund, 80% of all tourism takes place in coastal areas, with beaches and coral reefs amongst the most popular destinations¹. And as with most human endeavors, the consequences of these tourism activities also impact the environment, the culture, and the well-being of the local communities hosting these visitors. So, the question is, can the travel industry rise to the challenge of improving tourism practices, and incorporate the principles of sustainable tourism as the new normal?

Over the past decades, growth in the tourism and travel industry exploded, despite natural disasters, epidemics, terrorist attacks and political instability. In 2019, for example, its growth surpassed such economic sectors as financial services, healthcare, retail, and wholesale, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council². If the past is any indication, tourism will continue its steady march forward beyond the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. But this also presents an opportunity to reset and rethink the way tourism evolves. This strong industry, which includes a wide variety of services, has proven to be both an opportunity and a threat to marine and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as to people and cultures in tourism-based economies.

As a force for good, tourism can be a catalyst to protect biodiversity, alleviate poverty, and support cultural diversity, if it moves faster and goes bolder. That means responding to the criticism that the industry has not done enough to reduce its carbon footprint and taking bigger steps to correct the mistakes of the past by realigning towards a more sustainable and inclusive future. Sustainable tourism must be the road map for tourism companies' responsible operations going forward.

The seven transformational Opportunities described in brief below and further detailed in this paper are designed to take travel and tourism to the next level of sustainability, based on the industry's reliance on nature, cul-

1 World Wildlife Fund (n.d.). Beautiful coastlines disappearing under concrete. https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/our_focus/oceans_practice/problems/tourism/

2 World Travel and Tourism Council (2019, August 17). Benchmarking Research Trends 2019. <https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact/Benchmarking>

ture, and local communities, especially in coastal and marine areas, to address the global climate crisis and protect the planet's natural and cultural heritage now and for future generations:

1. **Establish a Blue Climate Travel and Tourism Industry Partnership** to scale sustainable tourism practices to thousands of travel companies around the world, with a specific focus on coastal and marine-based tourism sectors, making sustainability the rule and not the exception, and an integral part of how companies operate according to the triple bottom-line of people, planet, and profit.
2. **Launch a Global Traveler Education Campaign**, understanding that most travelers, when given the choice, will choose to make purchases that also have a positive impact for people and the environment. Local communities will become active partners in protecting natural and cultural heritage, while travel companies will see a growing demand for sustainable tourism services.
3. **Establish a Global Sustainable Tourism Best Practice Web Portal** that provides resources and innovations for travel companies seeking to adopt sustainable tourism practices.
4. **Create a Global Sustainable Tourism Impact Report** that illustrates the potential for sustainable tourism to be a catalyst to preserve the environment, protect fragile marine and island ecosystems, and improve the well-being of local communities.
5. **Create a post-COVID-19 pandemic Blueprint For Global Tourism Reset** that specifically identifies the tourism industry's reliance on nature and culture as its core products, promoting the understanding and recognition that the viability of tourism for economic development and business success is directly dependent on its commitment to protecting nature, the environment, and cultural heritage and diversity.
6. **Establish Sustainable Tourism Investment Criteria** to be adopted as a general framework by travel destinations and governments to incentivize investment opportunities aligned with sustainable tourism.

7. **Establish a Global Travel and Tourism Conservation Rescue Fund** as a mechanism for companies to pledge annual contributions, in relation to the hundreds of millions of dollars generated by the global tourism industry, that can be collectively utilized to bring positive high-impact returns on saving biodiversity.

Scope

To identify strategies and opportunities for scaling sustainable tourism principles and practices to realign the global travel and tourism industry towards a more climate-friendly future. This includes advancing efforts in the tourism sector to mitigate climate change impacts, benefit local economies, protect biodiversity, and support cultural heritage preservation while delivering positive environmental and social impact through best practices, education, and inspiration.

Introduction

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, nature-based tourism became a major growth sector in the global travel industry. However, concerns began to arise as popular places faced with an increasing number of travelers were unprepared to manage visitation responsibly and equitably. Early problems associated with rapidly increasing visitation, particularly in coastal regions and among fragile marine ecosystems such as the Galápagos Islands, made it clear that a new and better model for tourism to natural areas was needed. Within a decade, the ideas that first started with ecotourism - officially defined in 1991 as “*Responsible travel to natural areas that protects nature and sustains the well-being of local people*”³ - had evolved amid calls that all forms of tourism - whether urban or rural, on land or at sea - should be centered on principles of sustainability, incorporating fundamental respect for local communities and the conservation of natural resources.

This became known as sustainable tourism, based on three key overarching pillars:

- ***Environmentally-friendly Practices***

This includes efforts to reduce demand for natural resources, especially those that are non-renewable; maintain a clean environment free from trash and litter, proper disposal of waste; promoting clean energy to reduce carbon emissions; sourcing supplies as locally as possible; eliminating single-use plastics; and support for tracking and monitoring of environmental impacts and establishing benchmarks for improvements.

- ***Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage***

This includes biodiversity conservation initiatives and programs, as well as helping to restore, regenerate and protect natural habitat, which also serves as an important way to sequester carbon linked to reducing the negative impacts of climate change. Similarly, support for protecting cultural diversity includes preservation of sites of archeological significance; embracing local cultural vernacular in building design; and supporting

living cultural heritage as it is represented through local artistic expression such as music, dance, art, and handicrafts, among others.

- ***Support for the Economic and Social Well-Being of Local Communities***

This includes tourism-related policies, programs and initiatives that tangibly benefit the people in the local area, including hiring locally according to fair wages, benefits, and non-discrimination policies that meet or exceed legal requirements; supporting local community-owned businesses to the greatest degree possible; and ensuring inclusivity so that local communities have direct and equal input on decision-making related to tourism that will affect their lives.

In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg, South Africa and the launch of the “Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty” initiative was announced by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Sustainable tourism global criteria were developed at the United Nations Foundation by a team of international experts, including one of the lead authors of this paper, Costas Christ, to “represent the minimum requirements tourism businesses should observe in order to ensure preservation and respect of natural and cultural resources and make sure at the same time that tourism’s potential as a tool for poverty alleviation is enforced.”⁴

The global criteria was officially announced at the 2008 IUCN World Conservation Congress in a call to action for the travel and tourism industry to mitigate the negative effects of tourism’s expansion and chart a positive impact model for one of the world’s largest industries.

In the following years, particularly among island economies and coastal regions that are almost entirely dependent on tourism for their economic survival, tourism grew faster than the global gross domestic product. By 2019, the travel and tourism economy accounted for 1 in 10 jobs globally, with predictions that internation-

³ The International Ecotourism Society. <https://ecotourism.org/ties-overview/>

⁴ sm Organization (n.d.). Sustainable tourism. 2008 Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabletourism>

al tourist arrivals will reach 1.8 billion by 2030⁵. As the Prime Minister of Aruba said during the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit, “*Tourism is not one of our top economic opportunities for island nations like ours; it is the only economic opportunity.*”

Despite natural disasters, public health emergencies, terrorist attacks and political instability throughout the decades, tourism has maintained its steady growth curve over time. And so too has a growing volume of evidence revealing that tourism can be both an opportunity and a threat to marine and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as to people and cultures in tourism-based economies.

As a result, sustainable tourism criteria grew in importance and was endorsed by the nearly 200 member nations of the Convention for Biological Diversity, incorporated into the 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and became part of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Despite these efforts to encourage the global tourism industry to become a catalyst to protect biodiversity, alleviate poverty, and support cultural diversity, the travel industry needs to move faster and go bolder. In September 2020, The United Nations World Tourism Organization issued the Tbilisi Declaration, recognizing

that the tourism industry is one of the economic sectors most significantly and negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and calling for the travel industry to realign towards a more sustainable and inclusive future⁶. As climate change continues to be a major threat to the future of life on Earth, the travel industry in particular has come under criticism for not doing enough to reduce its carbon footprint. Sustainable tourism represents a road map for helping to reduce carbon footprint and for realigning the global tourism industry to make sustainability a core value for how tourism companies operate, while also playing a major role in the protection of natural habitat to aid in sequestering carbon.

Aviation linked to tourism accounts for approximately 3-5 percent of human-induced CO₂ emissions, while deforestation contributes upwards of 14-18 percent – about as much as all forms of transportation on the planet combined⁷. If we want to truly take a clean sweep at reducing global carbon emissions, then we must stop clear-cutting the world’s forests. Tourism has played an important role to that effect by directly helping to put millions of acres of tropical forest under protection, from the jungles of South America to the tropical forests of Asia. Similarly, in Africa, the roughly 7000 squares miles of grasslands known as the Seren-



5 World Tourism Organization (2017). UNWTO tourism highlights. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419029>

6 Pololikashvili, Z. (2020, September 27). Tourism can help lead the world to recovery. UN Chronicle. <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/tourism-can-help-lead-world-recovery>

7 Christ, C. (2019, November 19). What if all that flying is good for the planet? The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/19/opinion/climate-change-travel.html?ref=oembed>

geti – home to the last great land migration of wildlife on Earth – serve as a major sequestration of carbon, with protection of the Serengeti a direct result of tourism. In 2019, some 1.5 million tourists visited Tanzania, the majority headed to the Serengeti, where they paid a minimum of US\$60 dollars per day in entrance fees⁸. Take that income away, and the vast plains would be transformed from a real-life animal kingdom into fenced cattle ranches, which are already pushing up against its borders.

And neither is this only about terrestrial ecosystems. As The Nature Conservancy notes, “It’s clear that the tourism industry depends on coral reefs. But now, more than ever, coral reefs are depending on the tourism industry.”⁹ For example, the Coral Triangle in South East Asia contains seventy-five percent of the world’s coral species and represents a biodiversity bonanza of marine life, extending from the Philippines across Indonesia, Malaysia, and the island of New Guinea. One of the most successful strategies conservation groups have used to convince governments and local villagers to protect the region from over fishing and the dynamiting of its reefs is that tourists will come from around the world to snorkel and scuba dive in this marine wonderland. The result has been a succession of marine protected areas established in places like Raja Ampat, in the heart of the Coral Triangle, with ten times more species of hard corals than are found in the Caribbean. Today, 350 million tourists travel to coral reefs across the globe each year, generating over \$36 billion in revenue annually¹⁰.

Challenge in Focus

The combination of protecting millions of acres of seascapes and landscapes through sustainable tourism has clearly revealed that the biggest question is no longer whether sustainable tourism can be effective in

mitigating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and supporting economic and social equality and justice, but rather, will the travel industry rise to the challenge to make sustainable tourism the norm, rather than the exception. We know that “destination competitiveness without sustainability is illusory”¹¹, and the global COVID-19 pandemic that has devastated the travel industry has also revealed a fundamental truth: There can be no personal health and well-being without planetary health and well-being. Infectious disease specialists and scientific experts have repeatedly sounded the alarm over the direct connection between the destruction of biodiversity and the growing risk of global pandemics.

A decade ago, sustainable tourism practices were still largely considered an experiment to determine whether the criteria for best practices could help save biodiversity, support cultural heritage, and improve the social and economic well-being of people, particularly in developing nations, and become a catalyst to protect and regenerate some of the world’s last great wild areas on land and sea. Multiple case studies and research have since documented the success of sustainable tourism in action to deliver on its promise. The principles and practices that transform tourism into a positive force for people and the planet already exist today; and since the long term sustainability of tourism development relies on local communities receiving more benefits than costs from its presence, sustainable tourism should be regarded as an adaptive paradigm that addresses destination-specific factors and environments - including marine ecosystems¹². The question now is whether the tourism sector will reset to fully embrace sustainability across the entire travel industry. What is needed is bold action to scale positive impact globally.

The purpose of this paper is to identify Transformational Opportunities to accelerate sustainable tourism practices into action throughout the global travel and

8 Tanzania Invest (2019, April 8). Tanzania tourism revenues & arrivals up in 2018. <https://www.tanzaniainvest.com/tourism/tanzania-tourism-revenues-and-arrivals-up-in-2018>

9 The Nature Conservancy (2017, April 25). How tourism can be good for coral reefs. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/how-tourism-can-be-good-for-coral-reefs/>

10 Mapping Ocean Wealth: Recreation and Tourism. <https://oceanwealth.org/ecosystem-services/recreation-tourism/>

11 Ritchie, J.R. & Crouch, G.I. (2003). The competitive destination: a sustainable tourism perspective. Cambridge, Massachusetts: CABI Publishing.

12 Hunter, C. (1997). Sustainable tourism as an adaptive paradigm. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(4), 850-867.

tourism industry, particularly in and around marine environments as a way to help address the global climate crisis and protect the planet's natural and cultural heritage now and for future generations.

Transformational Opportunities

Each of the following transformational opportunities are interconnected, building upon one another to accelerate a global reset to move sustainable tourism criteria and best practices beyond successful individual case studies to a new paradigm. In this new paradigm, the very definition of tourism becomes synonymous with holistic sustainable practices that embrace cultural diversity, address poverty alleviation, and protect, restore, and regenerate our planet's ecosystems, with a particular focus on oceans and coastal regions.

1. Establish a Blue Climate Travel and Tourism Industry Partnership

This transformational opportunity seeks to take successful sustainable tourism initiatives backed by science and research into the tourism mainstream by creating a Blue Climate Travel and Tourism Industry Partnership, in possible collaboration with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to scale sustainable tourism practices, with a specific focus on coastal and marine-based tourism sectors. Such a global partnership will align with the September 2020 UNWTO Tbilisi Declaration, already endorsed by 24 countries, to realign the tourism industry towards a more sustainable and inclusive future, and WTTC's goal to advance sustainable tourism globally based upon the 17 Sustainable Development Goals¹³.

With more than 60 percent of the global travel industry made up of small and medium business enterprises, such a partnership will ensure the inclusion of smaller businesses alongside larger travel corporations, bring-

ing a broad diversity of representation from the tourism sector to take positive sustainable tourism impact to the next level.

A preliminary blueprint for this initiative has been mapped out, with companies to be vetted through a detailed criteria survey backed by onsite inspections of their sustainability practices to become part of the "Blue Climate Travel and Tourism Industry Partnership." The initiative will build on the model of success established by the former National Geographic World Legacy Awards, which recognized global leadership in sustainable tourism among 15 travel companies annually. This new initiative will scale it to thousands of travel companies around the world, making sustainability the rule and not the exception, and an integral part of how companies operate according to the triple bottom-line of people, planet, and profit. The management of this initiative could sit within the newly established executive-level Sustainable Tourism Committee of the World Travel and Tourism Council, with representation on that committee from the Blue Climate Initiative. Alternatively, and based upon operational capacity, the initiative could sit within an ongoing sustainable tourism working group of the Blue Climate Initiative, with representation from WTTC and/or other partners.

Benefits:

This initiative will bring sustainable tourism into the global tourism mainstream at a scale that will take innovation beyond the realm of a handful of committed companies. It will help to fast track the travel industry into a sustainable business model that recognizes the reliance of the travel and tourism economy on natural resources and ecosystems. With a business imperative to protect the environment, based on the understanding that by ensuring tourism directly benefits local communities, it will build grassroots community support to advance marine conservation and habitat regeneration, while encouraging carbon sequestration as well as biodiversity protection. The relatively low funding required to launch a Blue Climate Travel and Tourism Industry Partnership will have substantial

¹³ United Nations World Tourism Organization (2020, September 17). UNWTO Executive Council Backs Strong, United Plan for Global Tourism. <https://www.unwto.org/news/unwto-executive-council-backs-strong-united-plan-for-global-tourism>

ROI to accelerate sustainable tourism principles and practices worldwide in how the tourism industry operates. These principles and practices will include the advancement of renewable energy use to reduce the industry's carbon footprint, as well as establishing sustainability as part of the investment criteria for new tourism projects and developments to ensure they align and support carbon reduction goals. Furthermore, this transformational opportunity also complements and supports other aspects of the Blue Climate Initiative represented by working groups such as Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions to address climate change, and Human Health and Well-being, focused on communities and enhancing their resilience.

Feasibility/Risks:

The travel industry is at a key turning point, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to urgent and mounting calls for a global sustainability reset for the travel industry moving forward. Growing support exists within the travel and tourism sector for a bold initiative to scale sustainable tourism best practices as a fundamental core value for how the tourism industry must operate. An early version of this transformational opportunity has been presented to the World Travel and Tourism Council. However, the authors of this paper believe it would be ideal for the Blue Climate Initiative to lead and anchor this partnership, ensuring its ongoing viability and independence, noting that organizations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization and The World Travel and Tourism Council can undergo changes in administrations and priorities.

2. Launch a Global Traveler Education Campaign

Consumer research has shown that most people, when given the choice, will opt whenever possible to make purchases that also have a positive impact for people

and the environment. This has been evident in the growth of the Fair Trade movement, as well as with other consumer products and services that assure customers of environmental integrity, as well as fair wages and benefits for employees, non-discrimination in the workplace, etc. This campaign will also help address a fundamental misunderstanding among many travel consumers, who may believe that the choice is between having an enjoyable personal holiday or taking a vacation that is good for the environment. Sustainable tourism has shown that this is a false choice – that the proverbial “vacation of a lifetime” can go hand in hand with making the world a better place. In addition, with the emergence of the “flightshame” movement, travelers have been led to believe that by not traveling, they will help save the planet, when empirical evidence around the world has shown that sustainable tourism has helped to put millions of acres of marine and terrestrial ecosystems under protection¹⁴. This protection has served to provide vitally important carbon sequestration, brought back rare and endangered species from the brink of extinction, such as Mountain Gorillas in Africa¹⁵ and Manatees in Belize, while simultaneously improving local peoples' lives. Over 3 billion people rely on marine resources for their livelihoods globally¹⁶, and improved livelihoods connected to tourism fosters grassroots support for local communities to become active partners in protecting natural and cultural heritage.

Information technology and social media has revolutionized how communications now take place around the world. This transformational opportunity focuses on a global consumer educational awareness campaign emphasizing that each of our choices can make a significant difference, by choosing to travel with the companies and destinations that are committed to sustainable tourism. According to National Geographic, *“When travel is done the right way – the sustainable way – then local people and visitors alike benefit from the power and promise of tourism to alleviate pover-*

14 &Beyond (n.d.) Impact. <https://www.andbeyond.com/impact/>; Wilderness Safaris (n.d.) Our purpose. <https://wilderness-safaris.com/our-purpose>; TreadRight Foundation (n.d.) WCS – Big Cat Fund. <https://www.treadright.org/projects/wcs-big-cat-fund/>

15 McCarthy, J. (2018, November 15). Mountain gorillas come back from edge of extinction in major conservation win. Global Citizen. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/gorillas-conservation-recovery/>

16 Mapping Ocean Wealth: Recreation and Tourism. <https://oceanwealth.org/ecosystem-services/recreation-tourism/>

ty, protect nature, and safeguard cultural heritage for future generations."¹⁷ Yet, despite this evidence, and apart from the United Nations 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism, there has not been a sustained campaign to help educate travelers on how their travel choice can make a meaningful and substantial difference. With companies increasingly responding to what consumers demand, this initiative can help grow demand for travel companies that embrace a business model based upon sustainable tourism practices. In so doing, it will advance a market shift to more sustainable products and services, further accelerating a travel industry transformation. This is particularly important in high impact regions of the world in coastal areas and marine environments, such as the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, representing two of the largest tourism destinations on the planet, as well as for regions such as Polynesia, which are almost entirely dependent on tourism for their economy.

Benefits:

To scale sustainable tourism best practices globally requires a multi-pronged approach, as presented across the transformational opportunities in this paper. In almost every instance, driving transformation in the tourism sector are consumer market trends. For example, the early success of making ecotourism a mainstream component of nature and adventure travel was the launch of a global campaign in the 1990s to help consumers better understand how their travel choice contributed to protecting the very places they were choosing to visit on holiday, ranging from the Galápagos Islands to the rainforests of Asia and beyond. This helped convince Ecuador to establish new guidelines for the Galápagos, limiting the size and number of cruise ships permitted to operate within the biodiversity rich island archipelago made famous by Charles Darwin, and the country of Colombia in 2020 to introduce legislation to create a national sustainable tourism policy. Similarly, the 2018 National Geographic consumer educational campaign, "Planet or Plastics,"¹⁸

led to an accelerated global movement to reduce and eliminate single use plastics among travel companies worldwide, spurred on by travelers who began to question company policies regarding the use of plastic water bottles and other single use plastics. Within 24 months, the "Planet or Plastics" awareness campaign had a massive impact across the entire travel industry to eliminate plastic waste¹⁹.

A similar education campaign to raise awareness about sustainable tourism benefits, from protecting millions of acres of endangered species habitat around the world to the conservation, restoration and regeneration of marine ecosystems, ideally spearheaded by the Blue Climate Initiative in partnership with other public and private organizations, will help to expand sustainable tourism impact globally and usher in a new paradigm for how the travel industry operates across all of its sectors – from airlines to cruise ships to hospitality companies and tour operators globally.

Feasibility/Risks:

The COVID-19 pandemic has called for new thinking about how we live in all of its manifestations, coupled with a growing awareness of the impact humans are having on the planet, from climate-change-related natural disasters to the transmission of infectious diseases through disruption and damage to natural ecosystems. This has led to growing discussion on the need to rethink the connection between a healthy planet and healthy societies. In the travel industry, numerous media stories have been published about the need to reset the tourism sector based upon the key pillars of sustainable tourism, as previously noted. The post-pandemic reality provides a timely opportunity to launch this transformational opportunity to greater success than similar initiatives in the past and, in so doing, have a larger, more direct, and immediate positive transformational impact. With a relatively small financial investment, the ROI on such an initiative is made even greater by the fact that communication campaigns are able to benefit from reaching massive

17 National Geographic (2016). Unique lodges of the world sustainable impact report. https://issuu.com/nationalgeographicexpeditions/docs/unique_lodges_impact_report_cc_v2a

18 National Geographic (n.d.) Planet or plastic? <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/planetorplastic/>

19 Global Data (2020, January 7). Eradicating single-use plastics a key trend that will shape sustainable tourism in 2020. <https://www.globaldata.com/eradicating-single-use-plastics-a-key-trend-that-will-shape-sustainable-tourism-in-2020/>

global audiences with relatively minimal financial investment in social media and digital information sharing. Such a campaign could also link back to the Blue Climate Initiative website, where more information can be found on “How Your Travel Choice Makes a Difference”, and further drive interest and support for the Blue Climate initiative as a catalyst for positive change in travel as a priority. Through Instagram and other social media tools, benefiting from the input of the sustainable tourism workgroup and other experts to create effective educational content, this transformational opportunity represents low hanging fruit for a high impact result.

3. Establish a Global Sustainable Tourism Best Practice Web Portal

One of the most frequent questions that comes up among travel companies interested in adopting sustainable tourism practices is where they can get information on practical solutions that will help them to reduce their environmental footprint and move more quickly towards carbon reduction goals. Companies want to know how they can avoid recreating the wheel by benefiting from successful implementable solutions that currently exist, and from lessons already learned. This is even more urgent with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on how businesses can operate - many companies feel that they must abandon previous sustainability goals because of needing to embrace environmentally toxic cleaning products to ensure customer safety and well-being in order for the tourism industry to recover economically. For example, there are growing reports of hotels returning to single use plastic water bottles and other single use plastic products that are harmful to the environment in order to meet improved standards of cleaning, health, and safety for guests.

Yet, a clean environment and a healthy clean hotel are not mutually exclusive. In fact, there is a strong case to be made that a healthy environment and a healthy clean hotel can and should go hand in glove. The green

technology exists for cleaning without harmful chemicals²⁰. For example, Premium Purity, a scientifically tested, proven non-toxic and environmentally-friendly product that kills viruses and bacteria is one product being used as a sustainable alternative to harmful chemicals. Similarly, there are biodegradable disposable products - cups, plates, spoons, forks, knives, etc. - made from potato starch and corn starch that can be utilized for single-use to increase guest safety and then disposed of without harming the environment the way plastic does. There is a wealth of such innovations, from information on advanced flow-through solar energy batteries, to recyclable glass bottled purified water systems that provide clean sterilized purified drinking water for guests, and more. All travel companies can benefit from the sharing of information on best practice solutions that advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, lower carbon emissions and are non-toxic to the natural environment.

This transformational opportunity seeks to create an international real-time web portal on best practices specifically focused on coastal, island and marine environments. The information can be stored and made accessible, and on-going and new ideas and solutions to unique challenges can continuously be updated through the sharing of innovative sustainability technologies, science-based research, and data. This could be done in partnership between the Blue Climate Initiative together with a university, such as the Cornell School of Hospitality Management or the Harvard School of Public Health, among others, that are active in promoting and advancing sustainable tourism best practices. Alternatively, this could be explored as a Blue Climate Initiative partnership, joining with The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the United Nations World Tourism Organization to further strengthen and expand their Green Technology Selector to incorporate a wider range of sustainable tourism best practice technologies, including a particular focus on coastal and marine environments, that will help to further expand the tourism industry's net positive sustainability footprint linked to a reduction in carbon emissions.

20 https://act.global/premium_purity_introduction/ ; Jelski, Christina (2020, February 25). Antimicrobial surface coating said to show promise for ships, hotels. Travel Weekly. <https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Hotel-News/Antimicrobial-surface-coating-for-ships-hotels>

Benefits:

There is a pressing need for a readily available centralized source of information on sustainable tourism best practices that travel and tourism companies can easily turn to for information on sustainability innovations that can advance and improve their environmentally-friendly operations. This crosses every sector in travel and tourism, from cruise lines, to hotels, to aviation and transportation, both on land and sea.

Feasibility/Risks:

To date there have been informal attempts at sharing best practices across internal groups of hotels and tour operators. For example, Intrepid, a global tour operator, shared their new “Ten-Step Quick Start Guide to Decarbonize your Travel Business,” released in 2020 as part of a press announcement²¹. Other smaller sites, such as the Green Hotel Newsletter, offer similar information, but there remains no one-stop website where travel and tourism businesses can share their best practices and showcase their sustainability innovations across all travel sectors so that other travel companies can benefit without having to recreate the wheel.

Contributing to such a best practice web portal could also be a source of pride for travel companies to share their successes in sustainability, knowing that “a rising tide of sustainable best practices lifts all boats” – meaning the entire global industry benefits for the better.

The risks are in the visibility of such a web portal, as its success will depend on travel and tourism companies knowing it is there and available as a source of information to improve their sustainability goals. Creation and management of the portal could also be done in partnership with other organizations such as Greenview, a company currently active in French Polynesia at The Brando that provides sustainability monitoring systems for hotel properties to set goals and benchmark their sustainability progress. Such a partnership could expand beyond the hospitality sector to destination-level best practice sharing among tourism in-

dustry stakeholders. It can also represent an example of public-private partnership to speak more directly to actual technological innovation rather than policy, which is more the purview of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

4. Create a Global Sustainable Tourism Impact Report

In 2016, National Geographic conducted a pilot project in which a team of researchers assessed the sustainable tourism collective impact among 50 hotels and lodges around the world that were committed to implementing sustainable tourism practices as a core value of their business model. The results were grouped according to the key pillars of sustainable tourism, and reported that this group of 50 hotels and lodges during the prior 24 months had collectively:

- *Directly engaged in habitat restoration and protection of 3,755,819 acres of terrestrial and marine environments across 27 countries and six continents.*
- *Contributed US\$76 million dollars in direct contributions to historic and cultural heritage site preservation, and living cultural heritage, in the form of music, art, dance, and traditional crafts.*
- *Provided US\$3 million to fund community development initiatives, including education, health and micro-enterprise projects including a focus on empowering women as community leaders and innovators.*
- *Diverted 3.4 million pounds of waste from landfills to reduce carbon impacts through innovative reduce, reuse, and recycle initiatives.*

In addition to the specific impacts noted above, there were dozens of other successful impacts at a smaller scale, including 62% of the hotels and lodges using renewable energy including solar, wind, and hydro; 76% employing at least 70% of their staff from local communities; 42% using culturally traditional design and

21 Intrepid Travel (2020). A 10-step quick start guide to decarbonise your travel business. https://www.intrepidtravel.com/sites/intrepid/files/basic_page/files/Intrepid%20Travel%20-%2010-Step%20Quick%20Start%20Guide%20to%20Decarbonise%20Your%20Travel%20Business.pdf

construction techniques (for example, one property in Mongolia was constructed according to ancient Mongolian Buddhist architecture without any nails or iron work); and 62% were directly engaged in helping to protect critically endangered and endangered species on the IUCN Red List²².

This transformational opportunity proposes a similar inventory of sustainable tourism collective impact at a global level in the marine and coastal environments where tourism is a key economic driver to demonstrate both the current and future potential for tourism to play a critical role in conservation, climate change mitigation, heritage preservation, and improving the well-being of coastal and island communities.

Benefits:

In sync with Transformational Opportunities #1 and #2 above, there is an urgent need to make sustainability a key value in how people choose to travel and go on holiday. In 2018, Virtuoso Travel Network, one of the world's largest travel organizations, issued a White Paper entitled, "*Sustainable Tourism: From Trend to Transformative Movement*,"²³ with a focus on making sustainability a greater factor in consumer choice, so that achievements in sustainable tourism best practices also translate to business success. One of the ways to achieve that goal is by providing more impact results about how the travel industry is actively involved in benefitting local communities and protecting the planet in tangible ways. The National Geographic "*Sustainable Tourism Impact Report*" noted above was used solely as a tool to demonstrate to travelers that when they stay at a hotel committed to sustainable tourism in action, they are having a positive impact on our planet.

This bold transformational opportunity calls for the same, but to take it beyond the realm of a handful of hotels and to expand to the global level across tourism sectors. Most people are surprised to hear that even just one travel company, such as AndBeyond, is

involved in protecting more than a million hectares (2.47 million acres) of marine habitat²⁴, or to learn that The Brando resort is helping to support the regeneration and restoration of Tetiaroa Atoll in partnership with the Tetiaroa Society²⁵. By cataloging sustainable tourism impact globally, with a particular focus on marine and coastal destinations, and based upon the three pillars noted above, it can bring a powerful sense of the potential for sustainable tourism to be a catalyst to help save the environment. In the process, it will also help the tourism industry to rebound in a post pandemic period. It recognizes global calls currently underway for the travel industry to "reset" based upon fully embracing sustainability best practices and illustrates what that impact means in tangible ways, from coral reef restoration and expansion of marine protected areas to supporting cultural heritage and alleviating poverty in coastal communities around the world.

Feasibility/Risks:

Given the size and scale of the global tourism industry (employing 1 out of every 10 people on the planet, pre-COVID-19 pandemic) there is yet to be a global sustainable tourism impact analysis simply due to the massive task involved in researching, surveying and compiling the data involved at a global scale. But a focus on coastal and island tourism destination presents a more tangible goal to carry out a sustainable tourism impact survey, modeled on the work that was conducted in 2016 and 2019 by National Geographic to create a sustainable tourism impact analysis for 50 hotels around the world (Note: that project was conducted by two of the authors of this paper). Such a goal to create an impact report for coastal and marine environments would be a powerful way to showcase how tourism done the right way - the sustainable way - can help to save and protect fragile marine and island ecosystems, and improve the well-being of local communities who rely on marine resources for their livelihoods.

22 National Geographic (2016). Unique lodges of the world sustainable impact report. https://issuu.com/nationalgeographicexpeditions/docs/unique_lodges_impact_report_cc_v2a

23 https://www.virtuoso.com/getmedia/741afb1d-cf23-4592-89d2-70fd23d7bb8e/Virtuoso_Sustainability_WhitePaper.aspx

24 <https://www.andbeyond.com/impact/>

25 <https://www.tetiaroasociety.org/programs/conservation/tetiaroa-habitat-restoration-program>

5. Create a post COVID-19 pandemic Blueprint For Global Tourism Reset that specifically identifies the tourism industry's reliance on nature and culture as its core products.

The travel and tourism industry ranks as one of the top five industries on the planet, in terms of its outsized contribution to global GDP. As with all industries, it is governed by supply and demand, as well as “product” inventory. Over the past two decades, nature-based tourism - both land and sea - has emerged as one of the fastest growing sectors of the global tourism industry. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic and in a post-pandemic world, current tourism market research indicates a further growing focus on domestic and international nature travel destinations, as people seek out places to visit with less crowds, more natural habitat, wide open spaces, and the opportunity to rejuvenate and enjoy nature.

The global tourism industry is one of the sectors hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, and is projected to be among the last to fully recover²⁶. This disruption of the global travel economy presents an immediate opportunity for the tourism industry to “reset” based on an understanding and recognition that the current and future viability of tourism as an economic development and business opportunity is directly dependent upon the industry’s commitment to also protect the very “product” it relies upon - nature and a clean environment. There is a reason that sun-and-sea tourism brochures never advertise a great beach vacation with images of plastic trash covering white sands, or pictures of snorkeling on a dead coral reef. Nor do travel companies promote a rainforest holiday with images of clear cut, smoldering jungles. Likewise, places of ancient cultural heritage, such as Machu Picchu, are routinely depicted as unspoiled, untouched, and uncrowded, while destinations ranging from Africa to French Polynesia routinely promote images of indigenous cultures and traditional ways of life. And yet, while the travel and tourism industry has been quick to promote and market such images to entice visitors

to experience authentic cultures and pristine beaches, they have been slow to invest in tangible ways to protect these very attributes that are the essence of the product the sell - natural and cultural heritage.

From a business standpoint, it is a fundamental premise that a business cannot succeed in the long term without ample supply to meet ongoing demand. There is a great need to raise awareness in the travel industry about the connection between their business model and the natural and cultural heritage resources they depend on for business success. This idea takes the scientific concepts around payment for ecosystem services and expands it to tourism in a direct way. To put this into starker context, no one is flying from Paris to The Brando just to enjoy a nice dinner with a bottle of champagne; they are flying from Paris to Tahiti to enjoy a nice dinner and champagne in one of the most spectacular tropical island atolls on the planet - Tetiaroa - where travelers can experience firsthand what the late Marlon Brando exclaimed as, “Beautiful beyond what my capacity to describe...Tetiaroa is the tincture of the South Seas.”²⁷ Similarly, does anyone really think that people are flying to Africa to enjoy a sunset gin and tonic on the veranda of a lodge, no matter how famous or well-known, in the Serengeti? People will fly to Africa to enjoy a sunset gin and tonic - but while watching the last great land migration left on the planet, with more than 2 million animals migrating across the vast Serengeti plains²⁸. The equation is simple: The travel industry needs to invest in protecting and benefitting the very resources it depends upon for its business model.

This transformational opportunity is to create a “Blueprint for New Tourism” that specifically identifies the tourism industry’s reliance on nature and culture as its core “products.” As such, it makes the business case for travel companies and corporations - in this instance, those that operate in and around marine and coastal areas - to provide funding to protect cultural heritage and natural heritage now and for future generations. This is particularly urgent as the travel and tourism industry emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, when

26 UNWTO (2020). Tourism and COVID-19. <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-covid-19>

27 The Brando (n.d.) <https://thebrando.com/>

28 National Geographic (n.d.) Wildebeest migration. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/wildebeest-migration/>

there is a pressing need to fund projects and programs to help communities in travel destinations, supporting protected area management and advancing the restoration and regeneration of degraded and damaged marine and terrestrial ecosystems that are also of immense importance for carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change.

Benefits:

For most of its history, the travel and tourism industry has been able to build itself economically through the exploitation of nature and, to a certain extent, cultural assets as well. And yet, historically, it has done little to invest in protecting cultural heritage, saving biodiversity, and protecting and restoring marine environments and wilderness areas. A new global tourism reset, as put forward in this transformational opportunity, provides for a paradigm shift in the way the travel industry operates. By establishing the connection in business terms between supply and demand, and investing in the three pillars of sustainable tourism, the business case for doing well by doing good underscores and recognizes that without nature, and without cultural diversity, the very essence of travel as a future business opportunity is further diminished. In short, this transformational opportunity is about making the case that good business means saving the environment and celebrating and protecting cultural diversity and heritage.

Feasibility/Risks:

In certain respects, the travel industry has already begun to face the consequences of years of unprecedented ongoing growth in travel. The advent of over-tourism, and its related damage to nature and negative impact on local communities and culture, has led to entire destinations being closed to visitors. In the Philippines, the island of Boracay, which graced the cover of travel magazines for having the world's most beautiful beach, was closed in 2018 because of damage to the environment from tourism. More than \$18 million dollars was spent on repairing the island's infrastruc-

ture before it re-opened to tourists with strict rules to guide future tourism development and activities²⁹. In 2019, local residents in Venice began to protest the degrading of their cultural heritage from a non-stop barrage of mega-cruise ships offloading hordes of international travelers into the ancient pedestrian city center.

Notwithstanding the above, and other examples as well, there is a risk that, with the COVID-19 pandemic sending the travel industry into economic freefall, there will be a more pronounced lack of willingness from the mainstream tourism industry to embrace a recognition that it also needs to invest more proactively in protecting natural and cultural heritage. As one industry leader commented off-the-record during an interview for this paper, "Why should we have to protect nature? Isn't that the job of World Wildlife Fund and other conservation groups?" Despite such sentiments, a growing number of members of the travel industry community have recognized that embracing the pillars of sustainable tourism represents the only bright hope for the future of the travel industry. This transformational opportunity can also explore collaboration with the World Economic Forum, which has been active in advancing sustainable tourism policies and frameworks and/or through the Blue Climate Initiative, with a call to action for a reset specifically focused on marine and coastal tourism³⁰.

6. Establish Sustainable Tourism Investment Criteria

As emerging travel destinations around the world, particularly in developing regions, seek to attract tourism investment to support their economies, some are now seeking to attract investment that will align with sustainable tourism criteria and the SDGs. For example, following years of civil war and as it emerges onto the world stage as a travel destination, Colombia is seeking to create investment incentives for travel companies that adhere to sustainable tourism best practices. Similarly, in other regions of the world, including the

29 McKirdy, E. (2018, October 15). Philippines island Boracay reopens for test run following huge cleanup. <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/boracay-philippines-reopen-trial-run-intl/index.html>

30 Coffey, H. (2019, November 25). Venice residents protest against cruise ships after severe floods. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/venice-protest-cruise-ships-flooding-italy-overtourism-a9216956.html>

Caribbean, South East Asia, Central America, Africa, and others, countries are seeking to establish a investment criteria that also give preference to those companies that will commit to sustainable tourism principles and practices. This transformational opportunity seeks to create a global set of investment criteria that can be adopted by countries as a general framework for incentivizing investment opportunities that align with sustainable tourism criteria and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Benefits:

A framework for establishing investment criteria that is aligned with global sustainable tourism criteria and that drives economic development opportunities, particularly in developing nations, will help enable Ministries of Tourism and Tourism Boards as well as national investment promotion agencies to have a major impact on how to attract companies to invest that will advance national sustainability objectives, including carbon emission reduction goals outlined as part of the Paris Climate Accords. The idea behind this transformational opportunity is that tourism companies seeking to invest in a particular country will be fast tracked for development permits and licensing to operate if they meet key sustainability practices in their business operations based upon the three pillars of sustainable tourism outlined previously in this paper. Such sustainable tourism investment criteria could also be focused as a transformational opportunity specifically on island nations and coastal regions, as part of the Blue Climate Initiative.

Feasibility/Risks:

An increasing number of countries and travel destinations are now actively trying to attract tourism and hospitality development investment opportunities that will also help to advance national sustainability goals, as part of a new wave of tourism based upon Destination Stewardship, defined as “a process by which local communities, governmental agencies, NGOs, and the tourism industry take a multi-stakeholder approach to maintaining the cultural, envi-

ronmental, economic, and aesthetic integrity of their country, region, or town.³¹” Economic growth and sustainable best practices can and should go hand in hand, and yet guidelines on how to establish sustainable tourism investment criteria remain hard to find, apart from a handful of consulting companies. While there is always a risk that a country or a travel destination will not adopt such sustainability investment standards, it is clear that the trend for economic development in many countries is to seek out ways to reduce their carbon footprint, address poverty alleviation through local capacity building of the workforce, achieve waste-to-landfill reduction goals, and embrace environmentally-friendly operations throughout the travel industry supply chain. This transformational opportunity can be designed as a digital guidebook on sustainable tourism investment criteria, potentially published in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and/or with organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which are all active in efforts to advance sustainable tourism best practices. A focus specifically on marine and coastal regions could also be spearheaded by the Blue Climate Initiative in partnership with one or more of the above organizations or with a consulting firm like Beyond Green Travel³² that have expertise in developing sustainable tourism investment criteria.

7. A Global Travel and Tourism Conservation Rescue Fund

As has been noted in this paper, the tourism industry relies heavily on nature as its core product, and nature-based tourism has continued to be among the fastest growing sectors of the global travel and tourism industry. Mounting evidence has firmly established that sustainable tourism practices have been a positive force for conservation worldwide. For years, the travel industry has justifiably touted the positive power of travel to protect nature, from bringing the Mountain Gorilla population back from the brink of

31 Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2020). GSTC Criteria Overview. <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-criteria/>

32 <https://www.beyondgreentravel.com/>

extinction through ecotourism³³, to being the catalyst for establishing the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve in Belize, the largest known congregation site for whale sharks in the western hemisphere. Biodiversity protection requires ecosystem management and conservation of large tracts of connected habitat, such as marine biodiversity corridors like those found on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef or protection of entire landscapes like the Okavango Delta, home to some of the largest elephant herds in Africa. In all these examples and more, the tourism industry has profited and prospered, while being able to support robust conservation projects and initiatives. Enter the global COVID-19 pandemic and the near total collapse of the travel industry in its wake, and a sudden unintended consequence has emerged: the halt in ecotourism has led to a global conservation crisis. In the absence of nature-based tourism, with its direct economic and social benefits to governments and communities to support conservation goals that tourism depends upon both land and sea, the conservation of those very natural areas and the biodiversity they represent, is being compromised³⁴. This transformational opportunity proposes to create a global tourism conservation rescue fund to address this urgent crisis.

Benefits:

The economic scale of the tourism industry (Africa, including its coastal regions, is projected to generate more than US\$260 billion annually from tourism by 2030³⁵), with its heavy reliance on nature and wildlife - both marine and terrestrial - puts it in a position to play a more direct role in funding conservation in a crisis management situation, whether that is the result of natural disasters such as the California and Australia wildfires, which disrupted and damaged entire natural ecosystems, or a global pandemic such as COVID-19, which has effectively shut down global tourism, with devastating impacts for conservation work. In the absence of a rescue fund to help conservation on the ground, activities including illegal fishing,

habitat destruction, poaching of endangered species, illicit trade in rare wildlife have risen, with reports from around the world of conservation initiatives and programs facing the threat of collapse. A Global Travel and Tourism Rescue Fund, with companies making relatively small annual contributions in relation to the hundreds of millions of dollars generated by the global tourism industry, would be a dynamic way for travel and tourism to support the ongoing protection of the very resources it depends on, as well as for the industry to show a united stance in tackling major conservation needs, particularly in a time of international crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feasibility/Risks:

The global travel and tourism industry, through private sector organizations such as the World Travel and Tourism Council and policy groups like the United Nations World Tourism Organization, has sought for decades to show that it is in fact a single industry, made up of different sectors, but when taken together making it among the largest industries on the planet, generating more than 10% of global GDP in the pre-COVID 19 pandemic economy. A Global Travel and Tourism Rescue Fund would advance the collective conservation impact of the travel industry in dynamic ways and also establish the travel industry as a major player in supporting global conservation goals, from protecting vast tracts of forests that provide a global carbon reduction benefit, to protecting biodiversity hotspots such as the Coral Triangle, which is home to the largest number of marine species on Earth, and an important way to further mitigate climate change impacts on the planet through ocean-based conservation solutions.

Such a fund could be established as an independent non-profit foundation or organization to facilitate donations and membership fees from the travel and tourism private sector, as a model of public-private partnership. There is the risk that not every travel

33 McCarthy, Joe (2018, November 15). Mountain gorillas come back from edge of extinction in major conservation win. Global Citizen. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/gorillas-conservation-recovery/>

34 Reinstein, D. (2020, April 23). Pandemic poses a threat to Africa's conservation efforts. Travel Weekly. <https://www.travelweekly.com/Middle-East-Africa-Travel/Insights/Pandemic-poses-a-threat-to-Africas-conservation-efforts>

35 Signé, Landry (2018, December 3). Africa's tourism potential: trends, drivers, opportunities, and strategies. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/africas-tourism-potential/>

company would want to contribute, instead choosing to focus perhaps on their own company's conservation initiatives. But there would be many that not only would see this as synergistic with their own supported conservation projects, but as a way to have global-level impact to advance conservation outcomes. Utilizing a concept similar to "crowdsource" fundraising, small individual contributions add up to huge positive returns for potential impacts on saving nature.

Conclusion

Each of the Transformational Opportunities put forward in this paper are based upon ideas that will enable the travel and tourism industry to move from viewing sustainable tourism as an option to embracing it as a core value for how all of the travel and tourism industry should operate, from large to small, and across all tourism industry sectors, from cruise lines to airlines, and from tour operators to hotels, and more. The Transformational Opportunities outlined are a recipe for taking sustainable tourism to the next level, to bring one of the world's largest industries into a new paradigm of sustainability based upon the industry's reliance on nature, culture, and community. They can be implemented individually or together. Some of the transformational opportunities focus on educational and awareness raising initiatives to influence market forces towards a more sustainable future for people and the planet, while others focus on direct initiatives to scale positive impact for protecting ecosystems, improving community livelihoods, and advancing climate change mitigation impacts, particularly in coastal and marine regions, through industry partnerships and programs.

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Working Group Co-Leads & Members

Co-leads

- Costas Christ: Sustainable tourism expert; former Senior Advisor for Sustainability, National Geographic; helped establish UN Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria; author of “Tourism and Biodiversity: Mapping Tourism’s Global Footprint.”
- Sandra Howard: Former Colombia Vice Minister of Tourism, Colombia State Secretary of Education and Culture, and Governor of San Andrés and Providencia, Colombia.

Members:

- Tony Charters (Australia): Founder and President, Tony Charters and Associates. Former Director of Tourism Queensland; Co-Founder, EcoAustralia; leader in establishing sustainable tourism policy for the Great Barrier Reef.
- Judy Kepher-Gona (Kenya): Founding Director, Sustainable Travel & Tourism Agenda; Publisher, East Africa Sustainable Tourism Report; Convenor, Green Tourism Summit Africa.
- Masaru Takayama (Japan): Founder and Chair, The Asia Ecotourism Network; Member, Sustainable Tourism Committee for Japan Tourism Agency; advisor to Green Destinations.
- Jalsa Urubshurow (Mongolia/USA): Sustainable tourism business leader; Chairman of Nomadic Expeditions; Board Member of Captain Planet Foundation; philanthropist and supporter to conservation and cultural nonprofits.
- Nina Boys (USA): Program Director, Beyond Green Travel; Destination Stewardship specialist; Sustainable Tourism researcher.
- Sally Christ (USA): Vice President, Beyond Green Travel; Sustainable Tourism expert; Community Engagement specialist; public health educator.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



Blue Climate Initiative

The Blue Climate Initiative accelerates ocean-related strategies, collaborating across a multidisciplinary global community towards a restored and healthy climate; an understood and protected ocean; and resilient, thriving and equitable communities. The fiscal sponsor for the Blue Climate Initiative is Tetiaroa Society, a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (tetiaroasociety.org).