

International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

BY LYDIA WEBER • 10. JANUARY 2017 • GENERAL,
GERMANY, INDIA, ITALY, SOUTH AMERICA, TRAVEL



A new year has begun. As declared by the United Nations, 2017 is the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Wow, that sounds great! But what exactly does that mean? Lets take a look behind the scenes and explore the opportunities, objectives and practices of the International Year further:

International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

“With more than one billion international tourists now traveling the world each year, tourism has become a powerful and transformative force that is making a genuine difference in the lives of millions of people. The potential of tourism for sustainable development is considerable. As one of the world’s leading employment sectors, tourism provides important livelihood opportunities, helping to

alleviate poverty and drive inclusive development.” (Banki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General, 2015)

Fifteen years after the International Year of Ecotourism, 2017 presents a unique opportunity to explore and highlight tourism's potential to contribute to preserve biodiversity, protect natural and cultural heritage and improve livelihoods.

As one of the largest and fastest-growing socio-economic sectors, tourism can stimulate economic growth, help millions of people around the world to escape poverty. With the right policies, collaborations, as well as dialogues and a mutual understanding between all stakeholders, tourism can even offer solutions to many other pressing issues our world is facing today, such as gender equality or the preservation of the ecosystems.

Focus Areas and Objectives

According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development aims for changes in policies, business practices and consumer behavior, in order to achieve a more sustainable tourism sector. The focus areas that need to be explored include: sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness and poverty reduction, resource efficiency and environmental protection, cultural diversity and heritage, as well as peace and security.

In 2017, the aim is to raise awareness among decision-makers and the public about how travel and tourism impacts the society and the environment, but also how tourism can contribute to a more sustainable development. Therefore, educational development and equal knowledge-building will be supported. Furthermore, good tourism practices that contribute to a sustainable development will be promoted.

Best practice

Some of those good tourism practices are already in place.



Whole destinations, such as [Thailand](#), rethink and have already focused on the topic of sustainability. Wonderful projects show the authentic side of the destination and support, maintaining the environment.

Also hotels have increasingly paid attention to green initiatives and contribute to a more sustainable tourism development.



The Tongsai Bay, Thailand

Ever since the the luxury green resort [The Tongsai Bay](#) opened in 1987, is devoted to contribute to sustainable tourism development. Next to protection the flora and fauna, attention is paid to being authentic and giving knowledge about the local environment and culture. The project “Youth Green Explorers” has been implemented to educate young students of local schools regarding waste management, energy conservation, plant growing and other sustainability related topics.



Inkaterra, Peru

Inkaterra is a pioneer of ecotourism and sustainable development. With its properties [Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#), [La Casona](#), [Reserva Amazonica](#) und [Hacienda Urubamba](#), Inkaterra generates added value in rural areas by conserving biodiversity, encouraging scientific research and education, and contributing to economic growth of local communities.



CGH Earth Spice Village, India

Also CGH Earth practices responsible tourism practices resulting from a green core philosophy. At [CGH Earth Spice Village](#), the focus is to not let the presence of the hotel impact nature negatively by conserving nature, reducing the dependency on fossil fuels and raising awareness of resource scarcity among tourists.



Hotel Speicher am Ziegelsee, Germany

The climate neutral [Hotel Speicher am Ziegelsee](#), Germany, has thrived to reduce CO2 emissions to a minimum. A special emphasis is on electric mobility to climate-neutrally explore the area. Meanwhile, climate protection projects are supported to regrow forests and compensate arising greenhouse gases. A range of regional and organic products from fair trade are offered here.



Hotel Milano Scala, Italy

In a well insulated building in the centre of Milan, the Zero emission Boutique [Hotel Milano Scala](#) can be found. Next to eliminated CO2 emissions, one specialty of the hotel is the roof terrace offering an organic garden with natural herbs that are used to create regional culinary delights in the kitchen.