



Embracing Regeneration: A New Horizon in Tourism

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In the shadow of over-tourism, climate change, and cultural erosion, the tourism industry stands at a crossroads, with one path leading toward sustainable practices and the other towards a more profound, holistic approach known as **regenerative tourism**. This forward-thinking concept seeks not only to mitigate the negative impacts of travel but to actively improve destinations' environmental, social, and economic fabric worldwide. Through the lens of real examples, we explore the transformative power of regenerative tourism and its potential to redefine our travel experiences.

The Essence of Regenerative Tourism

Regenerative tourism transcends traditional sustainability, aiming to leave destinations better than they were found. This approach focuses on revitalizing ecosystems, strengthening community bonds, and ensuring that tourism supports the comprehensive well-being of host areas. It's a method that sees tourists as active participants in the regeneration process rather than mere visitors.

Real-World Examples of Regenerative Tourism

Brazil: Sustainable Tourism in Bonito, Mato Grosso do Sul

The region of Bonito in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, has become a beacon of regenerative tourism. Known for its crystal-clear rivers and abundant biodiversity, the [City of Bonito](#) has become [Carbon Neutral Certified](#) and implemented strict environmental regulations and innovative practices to ensure that tourism contributes positively to environmental conservation and community well-being.

As a result, tour operators and local stakeholders like [Rio da Prata Recanto Ecológico](#) and [Estância Mimosa](#) collaborate to maintain the area's natural beauty while offering tourists an immersive experience in one of Brazil's most stunning natural landscapes.





Costa Rica's Conservation Efforts

Costa Rica's commitment to regenerative tourism is evident in its extensive network of national parks and protected areas, which cover more than a quarter of its land area. The country's innovative payment for ecosystem services program compensates landowners for conserving forested areas, thus promoting biodiversity and attracting eco-conscious travelers.

Through such initiatives, travel agencies in Costa Rica like [Tulu Travel](#) and [Swetours](#) are helping preserve the region's rich biodiversity and also to regenerate areas that were previously degraded due to deforestation. Green Initiative's [Forest Friends](#) project has also caught the attention of other companies, like [CEPA](#), that not only reduced its carbon emissions (CO2e) from its activities involving their study abroad programs in 2021, but also have planted over 4 thousand native trees at the Osa Conservation area, so far.



In the lush landscapes of the [Peninsula de Osa, Costa Rica](#), Green Initiative has partnered with the local [Saimiri Foundation](#) to undertake significant ecosystem restoration projects. This collaboration focuses on reviving the region's rich biodiversity which includes many endangered species, in particular for the Tití Monkey, which is threatened mainly by deforestation for agriculture and development, leading to a decline in their extent of occurrence and area of occupancy of 60% over the last 27.5 years. By integrating regenerative practices into the local tourism model, they ensure that every visitor contributes to the environmental health of the area, turning what was once a footprint into a lasting positive impact.





New Zealand's Pioneering Approach

New Zealand has long been at the forefront of integrating sustainable practices into its tourism sector. The country has taken this commitment further by adopting regenerative tourism principles.

Tourism New Zealand's strategy involves encouraging visitors to travel more consciously and engage in activities that positively impact the local environment and communities.

An example is the [Tiaki Promise](#), an initiative that invites tourists to commit to caring for the country, traveling safely, and respecting all cultures.



The Transformation of Palau

The Pacific island nation of Palau has introduced a pioneering policy to ensure that tourism contributes positively to the environment and local communities.

The [Palau Pledge](#) is a formal promise that all visitors must sign upon arrival, committing them to act environmentally responsibly during their stay.

his initiative, combined with sustainable tourism practices, helps to protect and regenerate Palau's delicate marine ecosystems.



Peru: Pioneering Projects in the Amazon and Dry Forests

In Peru, Green Initiative works closely with [Inkaterra Asociación](#) to regenerate critical ecosystems in two distinct regions: Tambopata in the Madre de Dios region, one of the wealthiest life formations on earth, with a high plant biodiversity of up to 300 tree

species/haand and the Chaparrí Ecological Reserve in the Lambayeque dry forests, aiming to safeguard animal and tree species including several threatened species from the IUCN Red List such as the Andean Bear.

FOREST FRIENDS™

These **Forest Friends** projects not only aim to restore the natural environment but also involve local communities in the tourism process, ensuring that they benefit economically and socially while maintaining their cultural heritage. This approach has proven effective in preserving biodiversity and enhancing the ecological resilience of these vital areas.

Travel agencies in Peru like **Kuoda Travel** are contributing to the conservation of the region by actively participating in the restoration of ecosystems.



Slovenia: A Green Heart in Europe

Slovenia is setting benchmarks for regenerative tourism in Europe. Recognized as one of the continent's greenest countries, Slovenia promotes eco-friendly tourism through its **Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism** (GSST). This certification program supports sustainable development.



The country's emphasis on preserving its natural landscapes and promoting local cultures has contributed to the regeneration of rural areas, turning them into thriving tourist destinations that prioritize the well-being of nature and inhabitants alike.



The Path Forward

These examples illustrate regenerative tourism's profound impact on preserving and enhancing destinations for future generations. By focusing on regeneration, the tourism industry can contribute to solving global challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality.

The success of regenerative tourism hinges on collaboration among all stakeholders—governments, businesses, local communities, and tourists. It requires a shift in mindset from merely using natural and cultural resources to actively contributing to their revival and resilience.

Green Initiative's Role in Shaping Climate Action in Tourism



Green Initiative's contribution to regenerative tourism extends beyond project-specific collaborations. As members of the **Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism**, we have developed a comprehensive *Climate Action Guide for Tourism Destinations*, prepared by Green Initiative and technically reviewed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nations Conference on Trade (UNCTAD). It helps them establish baseline emissions, monitor changes in carbon footprints, set emissions targets, and evaluate progress, offering a practical roadmap for businesses and destinations.

Moreover, it provides guidance on publicizing climate commitments and successes, thereby accelerating the decarbonization of global tourism.



Glasgow Declaration
Climate Action in Tourism





Regenerative tourism represents a hopeful vision for the future of travel, one where our wanderlust contributes to healing the planet and enriching communities. As more destinations adopt regenerative practices, we can look forward to a world where tourism acts as a force for good, creating a legacy of positive change and regeneration. This paradigm shift in how we travel can lead us to a more sustainable, equitable, and flourishing world for all.

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