

Best Practices for Local Sourcing in Destinations

Presented by:

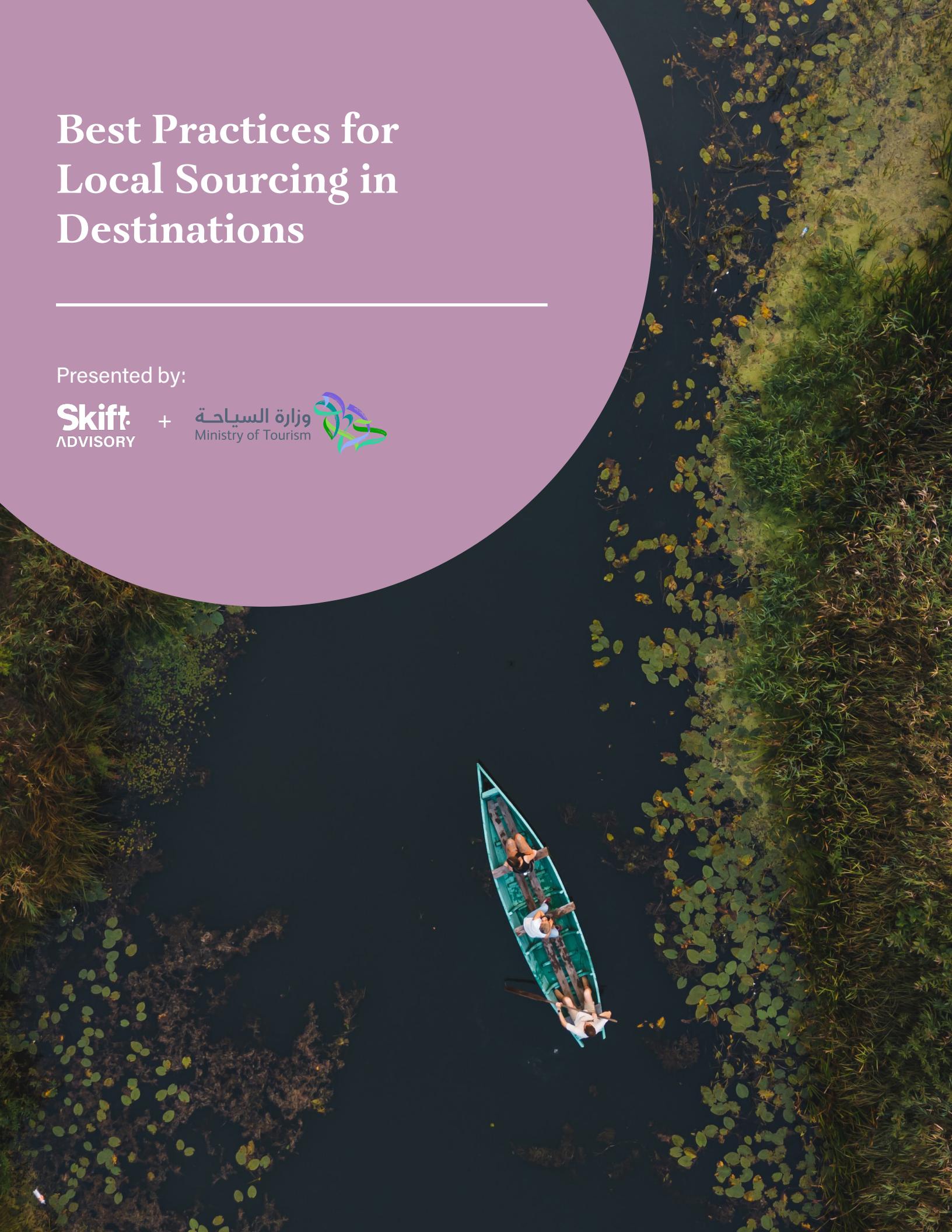


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Introductory Letter | H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity are the greatest challenges facing the world today. The rise of temperatures is fueling environmental degradation and having a profound effect on every destination and community around the world.

We believe in the ability of Travel & Tourism to make a meaningful difference in people's lives while being a force for good for our planet. Yet, despite the commitments and actions of the Travel & Tourism sector, change is not happening fast enough.

In 2019, Travel & Tourism accounted for 10.3 percent of global GDP and one in 10 jobs. And as we recover from Covid-19, we may soon surpass this figure. Travel & Tourism not only drive economic growth but also poverty reduction, peace, and tolerance. It has a positive impact on local communities and people's livelihoods.



Yet, despite its value, Travel & Tourism's impact on the environment is significant. It is responsible for 8 percent of carbon emissions globally and 12 percent of food waste. The lack of destination planning can cause overcrowding and impact the quality of life of local communities. Still, Travel & Tourism do not just influence our climate and biodiversity but are deeply affected by it. Indeed, deteriorating ecosystems put destinations at risk and overwhelm communities.

As we look to the future of our planet and sector, Travel & Tourism must be part of the solution. We must tackle the climate and biodiversity crises proactively. To do this, we need insights and data, as well as best practices and toolkits anchored in quantifiable data, that can inspire and incentivize change.

This is exactly what the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC), initiated by Saudi Arabia, will do. This unique multi-country, multi-stakeholder global coalition will lead, accelerate, and track the tourism industry's transition to net zero emissions, as well as drive action to protect nature and support communities.

Through this important report focused on local sourcing in destinations, which we are undertaking in partnership with Skift, we are doing just that. Looking at local sourcing through a broader lens, the report offers destinations around the world insights, solutions, and a toolkit as they rethink and implement actionable policies and initiatives to support local communities, drive economic growth, and positively impact our planet.

This effort is very much aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, through which the Kingdom is ingraining sustainability in everything it does. From policy and investment to destination development, Saudi Arabia takes a holistic approach to sustainability and puts people and the planet front and center. This approach can be seen from NEOM to AlUla and Green Riyadh, as well as all the work we do at the Ministry of Tourism.

We are pleased to partner with Skift on this critical effort, which will be an invaluable resource for destinations worldwide.

Ahmed Al Khateeb

Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Foreword

Tourism is not just an important sector in driving economic growth and job creation but in enhancing social progress and improving the livelihoods of people around the world.

Our sector supports diversity and inclusion, helps reduce poverty, and improves wellbeing while enriching entire communities. Yet, to do so requires the responsible planning and management of destinations. Over the years, we have seen destinations flourish and fall short, from the unintended impact of climate change and biodiversity to economic leakages out of local communities.

We must work together to unlock the potential of tourism and ensure it is part of the solution by maximizing our sector's benefits and proactively minimizing its unintended consequences. Destinations around the world have many lessons to offer in terms of the actions they're taking, as well as the ones they're avoiding. Destinations today can leapfrog rather than reinvent the wheel.

In this report, published by Skift and the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC) initiated by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, we showcase five destination case studies from AlUla in Saudi Arabia and Cape Town in South Africa, all the way to Portland, Oregon, in the U.S., to highlight the different ways destinations have intertwined tourism in their strategic plans, engaged their local communities, and preserved their natural and cultural heritage through local sourcing.

We hope that these examples will inspire and guide destinations around the world on how they, themselves, can unlock the true potential of travel and tourism through local sourcing strategies — one that not only enables economic growth but supports their local communities and protects their heritage and environment.

Gloria Guevara

Chief Special Advisor to the Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia

Rafat Ali

Founder & CEO, Skift



Introduction: A New Perspective On Sourcing Locally

Tourism is essential to the livelihood of destinations worldwide. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that travel and tourism contributed 10.4 percent, or \$10 trillion, of global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 and that between 2014 and 2019, one in five new jobs created globally came from the travel and tourism sector.¹

As the sector continues to recover from the pandemic, travel and tourism contributed 7.6 percent to global GDP in 2022, an increase of 22 percent from 2021.² Industry experts forecast this will continue to rise, reestablishing the sector as a critical economic driver and vehicle for national development, particularly in developing countries.

However, if not managed responsibly, tourism can have unintended consequences on a destination's local communities, natural environment, and ecosystem.

The call for responsible tourism and sustainability is even more urgent in the face of climate change, as tourism contributes approximately 8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) — a figure that is anticipated to double by 2050, along with water and energy consumption.

Overuse or mismanagement of shared resources can also result in the degradation of natural habitats and negatively impact the health of local wildlife. Meanwhile, tourism leakage — or when tourism revenue leaves the local community to a foreign or corporate entity — is also a major challenge, as it can lead to vast socioeconomic inequalities within a destination, particularly in developing countries.

As destinations around the globe consider how to embrace tourism's positive benefits while minimizing the potential negative consequences, new solutions are emerging. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, a key solution to reduce the negative environmental, economic, and social impacts of tourism is to "think local" by implementing sustainable sourcing and procurement procedures in the tourism supply chain — a practice that's increasingly referred to as "local sourcing."

Today, there is a growing call for destination leaders, including DMOs and DMCs, tourism business owners, and governments, to take action, assess their supply chains, and identify opportunities to integrate more locally sourced tourism strategies.

Local sourcing will play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism development and significantly contributing to the socioeconomic vitality of a destination. Tourism businesses that purchase supplies locally create income opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs and communities, thus stimulating the local economy. In addition to reducing tourism leakage, this promotes economic diversification and helps to reduce poverty and unemployment, particularly in developing countries. Sourcing locally also fosters cultural preservation and community engagement by showcasing and incorporating local traditions, crafts, and cuisines.

Yet the path to determining a local sourcing strategy can seem daunting and complex to a destination just starting to explore a more sustainable tourism strategy. How can they develop a plan that considers the unique aspects of their geographic location, natural resources, and the needs of their local communities? And most importantly, how can they quantifiably measure the success of their efforts?

In this report, Skift and the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC), initiated by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, offer guidance on how destination leaders can create a new path to sustainably benefit from tourism, centered on sourcing locally — one that purposefully integrates the social-cultural, environmental, and economic implications of sustainable supply chains in ways that improve the health of the destinations where they occur. The report also highlights best practices from successful destinations around the world, inspiring destination leaders to reimagine what their local sourcing should look like and how they can optimize their economic return on investment while still protecting natural and cultural heritage. ↪





Understanding Local Sourcing In Tourism: Why Is It Important?

Local sourcing offers a powerful solution for the world's tourism development challenges. But, it is key to understand what local sourcing is and how it differs from previous efforts to create more sustainable tourism systems.

Local sourcing is frequently referenced in the context of sustainable agriculture, farm-to-table restaurants, and local artisanal products when discussed today in the tourism sector. Yet, its application today encompasses a broader, more holistic look at three core tourism outcomes that impact sustainability within a destination:

- Socio-cultural (people)
- Environmental (planet)
- Economic (profit)

Local sourcing in tourism, as defined in this report, refers to purchasing products, goods, and services from local companies in a destination to reduce tourism leakage, support local

citizens, and reduce negative unintended consequences of the sector. It requires a destination to form partnerships and collaborations with local farmers, artisans, service providers, and suppliers to meet the needs of both tourists and the community.

Destination industry leaders and policymakers who integrate local sourcing into their own management strategies can help re-envision what sustainable sourcing in the tourism sector should look like to support the local community, protect the environment, and promote economic growth.

Given the growing threats of climate change and global supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic, geopolitical instability, natural disasters, labor shortages, and logistical delays, local sourcing is increasingly important for destinations.

However, there's no one-size-fits-all model for local sourcing in tourism — it largely depends on the natural and cultural resources available in the host community and the destination's ability to allocate resources to support local sourcing. ↵



Measuring Local Sourcing Success: From Inspiration To Action

More destination stakeholders recognize the value of local sourcing as a holistic approach to building a sustainable tourism strategy. But to enjoy the benefits, it has become critical to quantify their activity and create benchmarks to measure the success of their strategies.

To date, this has been a challenging task. All too often, well-intentioned efforts to commit to “sustainable tourism” practices in various destinations turn into nothing more than empty marketing promises, or at worst, greenwashing — initiatives that feel good on paper to those involved but don’t ultimately lead to measurable impact or long-term benefits for destination stakeholders.

That is why defining, collecting, and applying the right metrics to evaluate and measure a local sourcing program’s success and ensure compliance is the greatest challenge facing destination industry leaders today. However, when done right, defining these measures of success is a significant opportunity, ensuring destination leaders can maximize local sourcing strategies, supply chain management, and community empowerment.

How should destination leaders define and measure the results of their efforts to promote local sourcing? And what metrics are other organizations using around the world? This section explores frameworks and best practices to quantify existing and future local sourcing activities.

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals

One of the most frequently mentioned measurement frameworks when it comes to assessing sustainable tourism objectives is the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of global benchmarks adopted by United Nations (UN) member states in 2015. Although ambitious, the 17 SDGs provide a robust framework to address critical worldwide challenges and encourage international collaboration as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As environmental changes place significant pressure on tourism destinations and businesses to develop more sustainable



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: United Nations, 2016, 17 Sustainable Development Goals

practices that consider their social, economic, and environmental impacts, the SDGs provide a framework for a sustainable future, particularly with local sourcing. Local sourcing in tourism addresses several of the SDGs and provides a useful roadmap for destination leaders to consider as they consider how to define and implement more sustainable practices.

The United Nations SDGs include a mix of goals and indicators that explore the economic, cultural, environmental, and community-driven output of a given organization or destination.

Through local sourcing, tourism businesses support the economic development of the host community, which leads to job creation, income generation, and improved livelihoods for local citizens, aligning with **SDG 1 (No Poverty)** and **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**.

Additionally, local sourcing promotes cultural preservation and fosters mutual understanding between tourists and

locals, contributing to **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**.

Sourcing locally also encourages investment in local agriculture, crafts, and industries, supporting **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)**. Using local products and services reduces tourism's environmental footprint by minimizing transportation-related emissions and promoting **Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG 12)**.

Lastly, local sourcing contributes to **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)** by encouraging collaboration between the tourism sector, local communities, visitors, and governments to collectively work towards sustainable tourism development.

Beyond developing the framework and the associated goals, the United Nations SDGs also attempt to provide numerical benchmarks that assist with assessing and monitoring efforts to achieve them. For **SDG 12, for instance (Responsible**

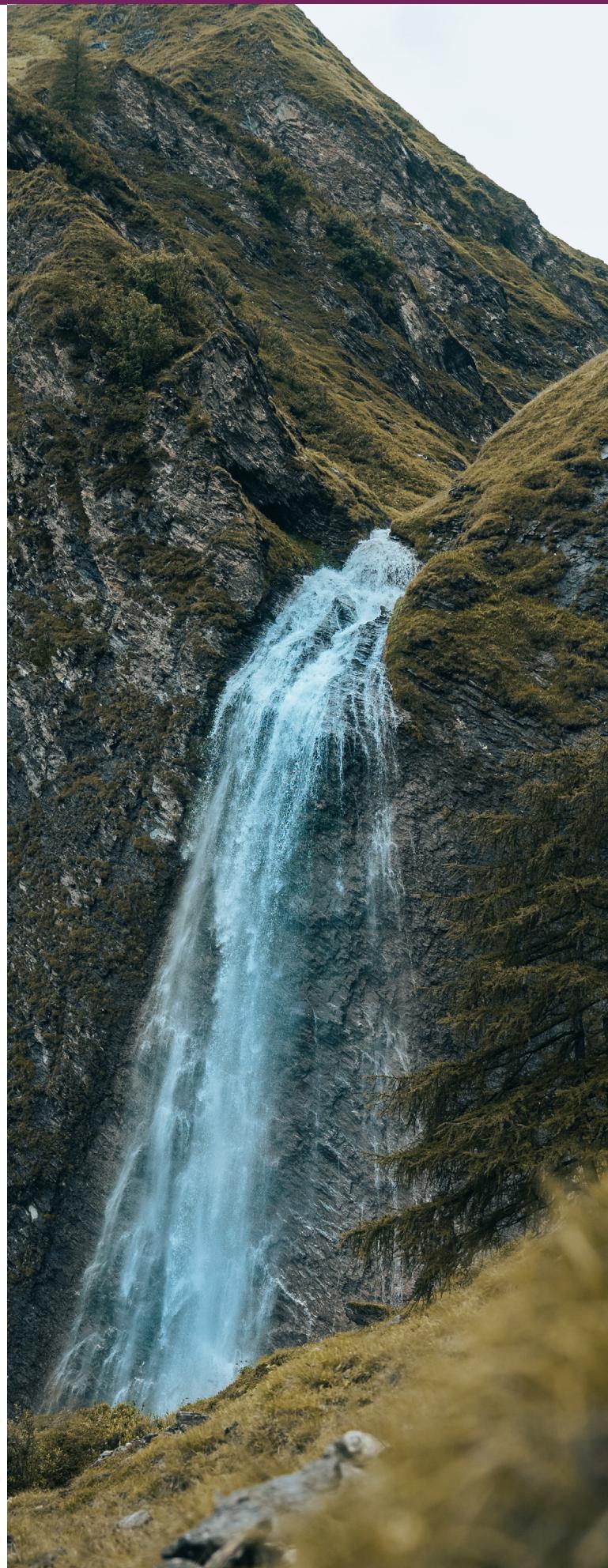
Consumption and Production), the SDG most closely related to local sourcing in tourism, the UN set target and indicator:

- **SDG target 12.7:** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.
- **SDG indicator 12.7.1:** Number of countries implementing Sustainable Public Procurement policies and action plans.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) then collects data from national governments on the status of their sustainable public procurement efforts every two years.

The SDGs are not perfect. Not every goal is perfectly trackable, and in some instances, the timing and quality of data gathered by participant UN member states can be inconsistent. Still, the framework offered by the model offers an excellent guideline for the case studies in this report since it relies on an internationally recognized standard for sustainable development and procurement. For further exploration of other alternative metrics used for tracking, measuring, and benchmarking local sourcing in tourism, please refer to Appendix A.

This report also offers an actionable local sourcing “toolkit” for destination industry leaders, found at the report’s conclusion, to help them evaluate their own local sourcing efforts. This toolkit can assist with tracking and monitoring sustainable local sourcing on a local, regional, and national level. Additionally, the following case studies are intended to complement this analysis, reinforcing the case for sustainable local sourcing, while the toolkit provides concrete resources for destination leaders, businesses, and government agencies to track and monitor local sourcing in tourism from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. ↵





Case Studies: Best Practices For Local Sourcing In Destinations

We have now explored what local sourcing means, why it is important, and how to potentially define it, collect data on it, and quantify it. But where can destinations hoping to improve their local sourcing strategies look for inspiration to see how others are tackling the problem? What does a successful local sourcing strategy look like in a tourism context? And how might it work for different types of destinations, be they urban or rural, mature or developing, large or small?

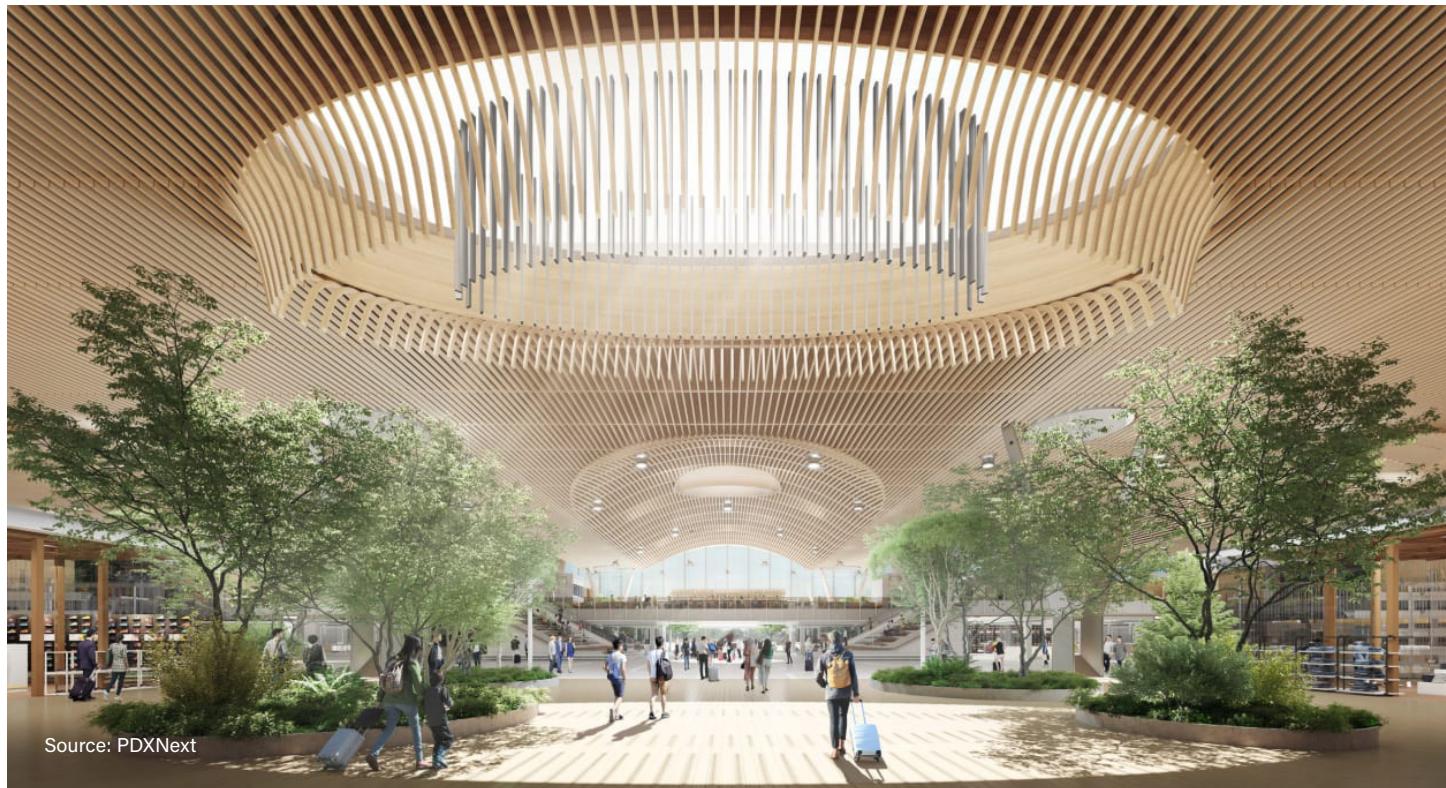
To help explore these questions, Skift and the STGC have identified five innovative tourism case studies from across the world: Portland, Oregon, U.S.; Cape Town, South Africa; Jeju Island, South Korea; AlUla, Saudi Arabia; and Dasindo, Italy.

These case studies illustrate what successful local sourcing strategies look like, showcase the value of local sourcing for

destinations, and inspire action. These examples have been selected from a wide variety of tourism locations, cultural traditions, population sizes, and economic systems and demonstrate real-world solutions for how destinations can:

- Build socioeconomic resilience at a local level
- Diversify tourism-dependent economies with new industries by empowering local citizens
- Authentically involve the local community in sustainable tourism planning and development
- Preserve important natural and cultural resources

Case Study #1: Portland, Oregon, U.S.



Source: PDXNext

PDXNext: Portland International Airport redesign supports local communities, forests, and biodiversity through innovative local sourcing.

The Context and Challenge

Large infrastructure projects such as airport terminal redesigns are typically driven by cost-based decisions, often focused on finding the firm that can provide the cheapest bid and quickest timeline. But unlike traditional airport renovations, the Portland International Airport's (PDX) "PDXNext New Main Terminal Project" — a large-scale renovation that introduced a revolutionary new model of supply chain management and local sourcing — developed a groundbreaking model to support the regional timber industry in Oregon and Washington while also ensuring wood traceability and equitable sourcing from local indigenous tribes and landowners' sustainably managed forests.

As Jacob Dunn, sustainability expert and ZGF Architect's wood sourcing liaison for the PDXNext project, explained, "Local sourcing was fully embraced. The goal was to showcase the

local region's cultural and natural resources and improve the passenger experience by tapping into the psychological and physiological benefits of biophilic design. We want the airport to serve as a 'front door' or first touchpoint for visitors."

Vince Granato, chief project officer at the Port of Portland, agrees. "Whether it's people coming to Portland for conventions, sporting events, or other activities, PDX is the gateway. We're the first place that most people see."

Airlines invested in the \$2 billion renovation project to improve the infrastructure of PDX and the Port of Portland, which helped them meet their passenger handling capacity growth target (34 million) while also addressing sustainability goals.

Dunn said, "We had to change how we thought about procurement. We built an integrated team structure that allowed us

to connect directly with landowners and mill partners about how they managed the land and their roles in the community, economic drivers, and conservation practices."

This hands-on approach led PDXNext to win the 2022 Forest Stewardship Council Leadership Award for its dedication to sustainably sourced materials. PDXNext's local sourcing and sustainable supply chain strategy provides a framework for destination leaders to rethink large-scale transportation and infrastructure projects, which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable forestry practices, protect biodiversity, and stimulate local economies.

Rethinking Sustainable Sourcing in Large-Scale Infrastructure

The PDXNext New Main Terminal Project spans over one million square feet. It aims to boldly transform the terminal core of PDX with locally sourced wood products from sustainably managed forests in Oregon and Washington.

Notably, the project features a nine-acre mass-timber roof structure constructed from responsibly sourced wood to safeguard the cultural and natural resources of the Pacific Northwest. Linking 2.6 million board feet of Douglas Fir to the local forests and people who nurtured the trees, this ambitious project is unique in scale and uses innovative local sourcing strategies. "We want to be able to point to a beam in our roof and identify which landowner it came from," said Dunn.

The Port of Portland, which is leading the project, collaborated with ZGF Architects, Sustainable Northwest Wood, and Timberlab to establish sustainability goals that support the local timber industry, ensure wood traceability and equitable landowner sourcing, and form mutually beneficial partnerships with responsibly managed regional forests. Dunn explained, "Finding the right partners willing to consider direct sourcing in fundamentally new ways was a big challenge."

Together, the project team created several procurement pathways to meet sustainable wood requirements, with third-party certification from the Forest Stewardship Council being one of five options if tracking and transparency were not possible. This

Figure 1.2 "Forest to Frame" map which provides an overview of the forests in Oregon where local wood products for the PDXNext renovation were sourced.



Source: Port of Portland, n.d.

third-party certification helped guarantee that natural resource conservation and environmental stewardship remained at the heart of their sourcing efforts.

The project established a first-of-its-kind supply chain by working closely with local tribal, private, and public landowners, including the Coquille Indian Tribe in Southwest Oregon and the Yakama Nation in Central Washington.

Traditionally, large-scale construction projects like PDXNext work with timber mills that contract landowners to clear-cut timber from large tracts of forestland, which can cause significant environmental damage, including erosion and landslides. By contrast, the landowners and forest managers working with PDXNext responsibly manage their forests to preserve biodiversity and ensure the longevity of forest resources for future generations.

Measuring Success: Fostering Local Collaboration, Improving Traceability, and Reducing Resources

Although construction on PDXNext will not be completed until 2025, the PDXNext team designed processes and metrics to manage and track their local sourcing and sustainability efforts from start to finish.

The relative distance that timber resources were collected for the project was one key measure of success, with an aim to source these resources as locally as possible. Granato explained, "Every forest and organization that supplied wood for the renovation is located within 300 miles of the airport." Developing a local sourcing strategy (see Figure 1.2) that ensured traceability was an extremely challenging task for the PDXNext team. To source the wooden roof sustainably and locally, they created a whole new supply chain structure by incorporating landowners and mills to ensure that trees were sourced and tracked accurately.

"In lumber mills, logs typically come in, go into a pile, and get milled before being removed. You don't know anything about where they're from. In this case, we asked the lumber mill to sort the wood so when it was milled, we knew exactly where that wood came from, and then we tracked it — so we know the wood in certain parts of the roof came from the Yakama Tribe and in other parts came from the Coquille Tribe," Granato said.

The PDXNext team even launched an [online interactive map](#) where you can click to see the exact forest where the trees come from in Oregon and Washington.

Engaging the Local Community

Sustainability has been a priority for the Port of Portland from the beginning of the design process. A series of 11 Healthy Building Focus Group meetings were held with key local stakeholders to discuss topics such as water, materials, and health and wellness and to define a framework of goals in line with the Port's guiding principles and environmental objectives. "



Including that sustainability story in our design was a non-negotiable for us," Granato said.

PDXNext quickly recognized that considering the local community's needs alongside their environmental sustainability goals would be key to the project's success. In the process, preserving Oregon's cultural and natural resources emerged as two of the main priorities. The project is anticipated to create approximately 1,250 new jobs while improving energy efficiency at the airport by 50 percent.

Locally Sourced Wood Products and Traceability

PDXNext's prefabricated modular mass timber roof consists of glulam (glued-laminated timber) beams comprising a heavy timber structure, with over 400,000 square feet of mass ply panels from Oregon and Washington state forests. Sourcing locally helped support multiple goals related to sustainability, cost, constructability, resiliency, and promoting regional identity.

Dunn explained the firm's sustainable forestry practices: "Nothing came from more than a 12-acre patch of forest cut with a 30 percent retention value. We know that it all came from best-in-class forestry."

At Hyla Woods, a family-owned sawmill outside of Cherry Grove, Oregon, that provided wood for PDXNext, instead of clear-cutting the forest, they use patch cutting and selective thinning to protect the diversity of tree species, ages, and sizes. Greater species and forest structure diversity increases resilience and protects from drought and other extreme weather events.

The largest beam used in the construction is 80 feet long and 8 feet thick, making it the longest curved glulam beam ever produced in the U.S. The alternative building approach was to join two smaller beams with larger steel connections, which would have added millions of dollars to the project and significantly increased its carbon footprint. In the end, more than two million board feet of Forest Stewardship Council-certified lumber was purchased, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the lumber in the curved glue-laminated beams and 100 percent in the 3-inch by 6-inch ceiling grid.

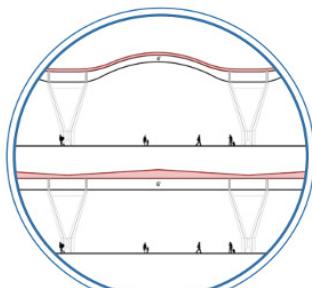
These traceable wood-sourcing practices and strong partnerships with regional suppliers allow the PDXNext team to monitor its regional environmental and economic footprint. Figure 1.3 highlights how and why selecting local wood helped PDXNext achieve its sustainability goals and reduce its environmental

Figure 1.3

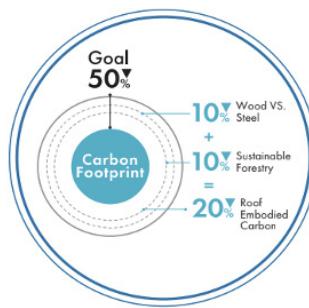
WHY WOOD?



Regional Identity and Industry



Efficiency of Form



Environmental Impact



Passenger Experience

Source: PDXNext, 2022

footprint while supporting the local community and providing a high-quality passenger experience.

Tracking and Reducing Carbon Emissions and Water Usage

Because heating and lighting currently generate the most significant operational carbon emissions for the PDX Airport, the PDXNext team also prioritized designing strategies to monitor, measure and reduce these emissions. To start, a high-efficiency, open-loop, ground-source heat pump system delivers close to 95 percent fossil-fuel-free heating throughout the airport and will continue to improve as the local power grid is converted to renewable energy. Additionally, the team incorporated LED lighting and extensive daylighting in the main terminal to qualify for a 30 percent reduction over the Oregon energy code.

Although the airport's water consumption level is expected to increase alongside passenger volume over the next decade, the design team is attempting to reduce the number of gallons needed per passenger by using well water for non-potable. They

plan on continually monitoring water usage to stay on target. "We're not adding any additional fossil fuel-based heating and cooling systems as part of this," Granato said.

A Healthy and Safe Airport Experience for All

PDXNext prioritized the health and safety of its passengers by creating a custom chemical framework to help select materials that reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. The custom framework resulted in more than 90 percent of the materials meeting volatile VOC emissions criteria and more than 75 percent having a custom chemical framework.

In addition, the design team improved the passenger journey through biophilic design, which leans into the human tendency to gravitate toward nature and has proven to reduce stress, increase cognitive performance, and improve one's overall mood. They improved the passenger journey by providing direct contact with nature through landscaping and daylighting. "Port of Portland really embraced positively impacting the health and wellness of not only the 35 million passengers that pass through PDX annually but also the airport's 10,000 employees that spend their day there," Dunn said.

As the innovative airport remodel comes to completion, PDXNext will continue to track and manage its sustainability



VOCs are a group of organic chemicals that can easily evaporate into the air at room temperature and negatively impact air quality — they can be found in paints, solvents, cleaning products, and vehicle emissions. Due to their potential harm to air quality and human health, environmental agencies set standards to control and reduce VOC emissions.

efforts to ensure the preservation of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Pacific Northwest. Similarly, the wood suppliers and local sawmills that worked on the PDXNext project will continue to promote a model of sustainable forestry management that can uplift both urban and rural communities and the critical ecosystems on which they rely.

As Granato explained, the PDX Next project was the first project the local wood community was involved with that was created on such a magnitude. "At the end of the day, if you get the right partners in the room and align around the objectives and goals, local sourcing on this scale is absolutely possible." ↵

UN Sustainable Development Goals Addressed:



Guidelines for Other Destinations to Adapt and Apply This Best Practice:

- Establish cross-sector partnerships to develop effective local sourcing and procurement that protects the environment and local community.
- Create a culture of transparency and accountability in your supply chain that prioritizes the needs of the local community and the environment.
- Track, measure, and report on your local sourcing efforts regularly.

Case Study #2: Cape Town, South Africa



Source: Makers Landing, 2022

Makers Landing: Empowering citizens and communities with an entrepreneurial food incubator.

The Context and Challenge

Cape Town is a vibrant economic hub in South Africa, known for its rich history, diverse culture, and breathtaking views. This coastal city is home to some of South Africa's most iconic landmarks and popular tourist destinations, including Table Mountain and Robben Island, where former South African president Nelson Mandela was imprisoned during apartheid. The city's beautiful beaches, local artisan markets, main shopping and dining area, and Victoria & Alfred (V&A) Waterfront allow visitors to enjoy the city's natural beauty and explore the diverse cultural offerings that make this destination stand out.

Yet for all its abundant tourism amenities, tourism development in Cape Town has faced considerable sustainability challenges in recent years due to growing challenges, including water

scarcity, power outages, safety concerns, and socioeconomic and racial inequalities among local citizens.

To address these issues, destination industry leaders in Cape Town, including the Western Cape Government Tourism Directorate, Cape Town Tourism, and the V&A Waterfront, have developed innovative strategies to ensure sustainable tourism practices with careful planning, community involvement, and innovative natural resource management to empower the local community and minimize unintended impacts on the environment.

As Jacques Stoltz, director of tourism in the Department of Economic Development and Tourism for the Western Cape Government, explained, "Sustainable tourism efforts happening at the provincial level and the strategic policy and planning

level are largely informed by a long-term strategy we developed called Tourism Blueprint 2030 (now extended to 2035), that provides a detailed strategy for the destination to guide sustainable recovery and growth. We've tried to ensure that sustainability practices are central to this."

Nurturing Entrepreneurial Activity in the Cape Town Tourism and Food Sectors

The V&A Waterfront, situated on the harbor in Cape Town, is a mixed-use destination that promotes art and design, supports entrepreneurship and innovation, champions sustainability, and drives positive social and economic change. Despite pandemic-era challenges, the V&A Waterfront has managed to maintain an annual employment growth rate of 3.7 percent.²



Source: Makers Landing, 2022

In December 2020, the V&A Waterfront launched Makers Landing, a community celebrating South Africa's diverse cultures through food. This initiative includes a shared incubator kitchen, a demo kitchen, eight production stations, a food market with approximately 35 flexible market stands, eight small co-op eateries, and five anchor restaurants of various sizes. The primary focus of Makers Landing is to support early-stage entrepreneurs with limited access to resources in the packaged foods, food service, and catering industries.

Henry Mathys, senior manager of social impact and food ecosystem head at the V&A Waterfront, explained how the initiative was financed: "We partnered with an organization

called the Jobs Fund, a division of our National Department of Finance that looks to enable job creation by leveraging public-private partnerships. They funded one-third of the bold project and a little bit of the incubator project, and the V&A Waterfront also continues to fund the project. The project was a total of 67 million rand (US \$3.5 million) investment at the outset, and V&A Waterfront funds operational costs in perpetuity."

The Makers Landing funding model supports skills development, local entrepreneurship, and community empowerment and emphasizes the importance of forming public-private partnerships to build capacity and resources.

Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism, underscored that it is important that initiatives like Makers Landing stem from the needs of the community. Duminy believes in a bottom-up approach, starting with the community: "Once a community buys into the beliefs of the project, they drive the politicians" to develop policies that support the most pressing community needs, such as crime and hunger prevention, safety, professional development, and education.

According to Wesgro's 2022 Western Cape Regional Trends in Tourism report, these are the top three activities visitors enjoy in the Western Cape, including Cape Town:

- 1.** Cuisine (enjoyed by 14.4 percent of visitors)
- 2.** Scenic drives (13.9 percent)
- 3.** Cultural and heritage activities (10.5 percent)

The team at the V&A Waterfront that launched Makers Landing is acutely aware of tourists' interests in enjoying local Cape Town cuisine and wanting to experience "authentic" cultural and heritage activities, hence solidifying Makers Landing's importance and position in this thriving tourism destination.

Measuring Success: Empowering Local Communities and Fueling Entrepreneurial Energy

As a result of this initiative, since its launch in December 2020, 98 permanent full-time new jobs and eight new businesses have been created, with 76 percent owned by previously disadvantaged individuals and 57 percent led by women. Twenty interns

have completed the Makers Landing Internship Programme, and the Makers Landing space has hosted over 250 events, including MasterChef South Africa and Food Dialogues South Africa. The V&A Waterfront has also maintained mentorship and coaching programs, provided grants of \$32,000 (R591,000), and distributed food parcels of \$70,000 (R1.3m) to support disadvantaged communities.³

Stoltz said, "The most exciting trend right now is that the tourism industry is saying we'll take youngsters, whether they have the right qualifications or not, and we will train them for success. This is happening at scale suddenly with initiatives like Makers Landing, which is hugely exciting for me."

To support job retention in small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs), the V&A Waterfront raised working capital to support 49 businesses, totaling US\$13,531 (R2.52 million), which supported 208 permanent and 111 temporary jobs. Additionally, the V&A Waterfront provided access to cash flow analysis and support and US\$1,073,920 (R20 million) rental relief to their 270 tenants.

Mathys explained, "We developed a food ecosystem strategy. The vision was to build an example of a just, equitable, and sustainable food ecosystem that supports local community well-being and businesses. There were a number of levers

that we could pull to do this, including collective and local purchasing. Makers Landing is the physical manifestation of our food ecosystem and aims to address specific challenges, including hunger, employment opportunities, and skills development."

Through their urban garden that supplies fresh produce to Makers Landing, the V&A Waterfront has provided Ladies of Love. This inner-city food program serves meals to those in need, with just under six tons of vegetables, from which 130,000 meals were served in 12 kitchens over two years. The V&A Waterfront's innovative approach and unwavering commitment to growing opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized communities earned it the World Travel Market's (WTM) Global Responsible Tourism Award in 2021 for "Sustaining Employees and Communities."

Duminy explained that Cape Town aims to "position ourselves not only as an attractive destination, but also a responsible destination within Africa, and globally. We would like to be pioneers in responsible tourism." As a large-scale destination business, the V&A Waterfront has demonstrated what can be achieved when a company is determined to use its scale and dominance to benefit those otherwise excluded and marginalized in a tourism destination. ↩

UN Sustainable Development Goals Addressed:



Guidelines for Other Destinations to Adapt and Apply This Best Practice:

- Evaluate if and how local sourcing strategies in your destination can be used to champion sustainability and drive positive social, economic, and environmental changes.
- Leverage supply chain challenges and obstacles to designing new and innovative sourcing solutions that safeguard cultural and natural heritage.
- Empower local citizens with skills development and training to start their own businesses.
- Establish cross-sector partnerships with government, local community members, businesses, and non-profit organizations to streamline supply chain sourcing.

Case Study #3: Jeju Island, South Korea



Jeju Haenyeo Fisheries System: A model for sustainable fishing and safeguarding agricultural heritage systems.

The Context and Challenge

Jeju Island, located off the coast of South Korea, is grappling with a unique set of challenges in its pursuit of sustainable tourism. The island's delicate ecosystem, renowned for its natural beauty and UNESCO-listed sites, faces strain in its attempts to balance preserving its diverse flora and fauna alongside the demands of an influx of visitors across Asia.

For example, the surge in construction for accommodations and infrastructure puts pressure on limited local island resources, which can lead to habitat destruction and economic and social pressures on the local community.

Professor Juhyun Kang, an assistant professor in the Department of Tourism Management at Jeju National University,

believes that "the most significant issue concerning the sustainability of Jeju tourism is the release of contaminated water from Fukushima." Japan has already initiated the first release, and 1.34 million tons of water is estimated to be discharged over the next 30 years. Jeju, being geographically close to Japan, will likely face significant consequences. Sectors such as the seafood industry, including preservation of the haenyeo — a community of women free-divers who harvest shellfish — marine sports, and swimming, are particularly expected to be impacted. "Additionally, disposing wastewater into the sea from agriculture, livestock farming, and other industries on Jeju Island should be closely controlled," she added.

Climate change is also threatening Jeju Island's tourism and marine life. According to Profes severe phenomenon of seaweis estimated to looms and water pollution in Jeju's coastal areas.

This has resulted in various negative effects, such as the decline of shellfish and abalone populations, as well as problems for aquaculture. In the context of tourism, this pollution may necessitate changes in the locations of beaches and tourist sites that tourists can visit."

Additionally, Jeju Island's local culture and traditional way of life are being overshadowed by commercialization, potentially eroding the authenticity tourists seek. Promoting the island's cultural heritage while encouraging economic growth requires thoughtful planning and community involvement. To preserve Jeju Island's delicate natural and cultural assets and its finite resources, Jeju Tourism and the local government are instituting a renewed focus on sustainability practices and local sourcing strategies.

Dr. Jungho Suh, an assistant professor of management at George Washington University School of Business and project director of George Washington University's Korean Management Institute, said, "After the pandemic was over, the South Korean government and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism announced a new agenda that focused on six goals for tourism development over the next 10 years. One of the goals relates to sustainable tourism. It includes specific objectives such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving local cultural and natural resources, and empowering local communities through information and communication technology."



Source: © Haenyeo Museum, 2013

One critical effort of Jeju Island's larger sustainable tourism strategy is the preservation of the haenyeo. This culturally significant practice of Jeju haenyeo fishing has empowered women on the island for decades and provides important biodiversity

conservation and opportunities for economic development in the local community. It's also a model for preserving and tracking ecologically important local sourcing practices and safeguarding agricultural heritage systems.

Providing Food and Livelihoods to the Local Community

Jeju Island's fisheries system has been instrumental in providing food and livelihoods to its inhabitants, as haenyeo can sell their catch, divide the profits, and feed their families with the remaining seafood from the sale.



Source: © Haenyeo Museum, 2005

The sea-diving industry of Jeju Island consists of individual fishing grounds, which are managed and operated by more than 100 fishing village cooperatives. The seafood from these fishing grounds is common property and is harvested, owned, and managed by a collective of haenyeo women in each fishing village. This shared ownership and management system is still in place and is based on consultations and agreements between members of the haenyeo community.

As tourism developed on Jeju Island, the haenyeo fisheries system became a main cultural attraction for visitors. Tourists can see the haenyeo fisheries up close and learn about the

history and cultural tradition in the Jeju Haenyeo Museum, deepening the efforts to preserve this endangered tradition.

As haenyeo women age out of their profession and younger women in the community are less likely to train for this physically demanding profession — opting for higher paying and less-labor-intensive positions — the sustainability of this ancient fishing system and agricultural heritage is at risk.

Dr. Suh explained, "There are only four women under the age of 30 among the active haenyeo divers." Local tourism experts argue that the local community and provincial government should work to protect the tradition of haenyeo — which was inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016 — due to its growing role in the island's tourism and the need for sustainable food sourcing in the region.

Measuring Success: Preserving Cultural Heritage and Embracing Sustainable Harvesting Practices

The social, economic, and environmental aspects of the Jeju Haenyeo Fisheries System are tracked and managed in an attempt to preserve this endangered cultural tradition of fishing that is critical to marine and community well-being on Jeju Island.

Governments Investing in Social, Economic, and Natural Heritage

According to [UNESCO](#), "The culture of Jeju haenyeo has contributed to the advancement of women's status in the community and promoted environmental sustainability with its eco-friendly methods and community involvement in the management of fishing practices."

Fortunately, the Jeju Island government recognizes the cultural, economic, and environmental importance of the haenyeo tradition in the community. Specifically, the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province's commitment and financial support of the haenyeo highlights the importance of government investment in local sourcing and in preserving significant cultural and natural heritage.

As Professor Kang explained, "The Jeju Special Self-Governing Province announced a plan to allocate KRW 286 billion for the year 2023 for haenyeo support projects to realize the vision of 'Sustainable Haenyeo Fishing and Globalization of Jeju's Haenyeo Culture.'" She continued, "These investments aim to strengthen and sustain the haenyeo culture and industry while promoting the well-being, income, and working conditions of haenyeo, ultimately contributing to the global recognition of Jeju's unique haenyeo culture."

According to Professor Kang, the budget is allocated across four main areas:

- 1. Haenyeo Welfare**, including medical expenses, allowances for elderly haenyeo, attire and protection equipment, support for new divers and members of coastal fishery associations, and the promotion of health and safety education (KRW 125 billion)
- 2. Income Support**, including the evaluation and restoration of village fisheries, support for self-managed cooperative fisheries, and other expenses related to fishing, diving, and the marketing and selling of seafood (KRW 111 billion).
- 3. Working Environment**, including the operation and restoration of dressing rooms, fishing and safety equipment used by coastal fisheries associations and divers, and the maintenance of haenyeo workspaces and harbor entry routes (KRW 15 billion)
- 4. Culture and Heritage**, including the Jeju haenyeo festival and other cultural events, operating haenyeo schools and museums, supporting haenyeo performances, rituals, and the documentation of Jeju haenyeo's oral history, and other efforts to preserve haenyeo culture (KRW 35 billion).

Haenyeo Local Sourcing as an Economic Driver

The haenyeo fisheries system has improved the livelihoods of haenyeo women and their families, as well as the local economy. Haenyeo fisheries produce approximately 1,200 tons of shellfish, or 89 percent of shellfish exported from Jeju Island annually, illustrating that the local sea-diving tradition is a driving force behind the island's economy (Song, 2020).⁴ Additionally, haenyeo now attracts visitors to the region, further contributing to growth in the tourism economy with spending on haenyeo

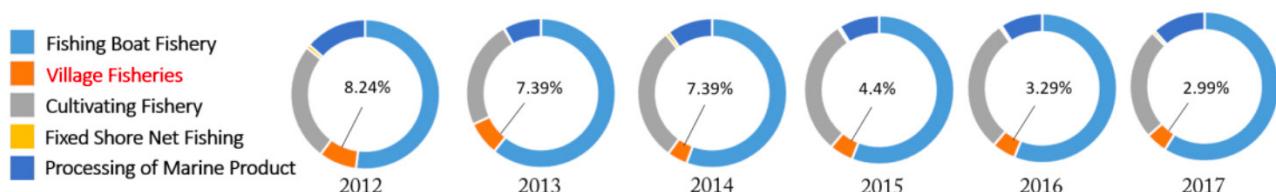


Figure 3. Percentage of fishery production volume and village fisheries in the Jeju area.

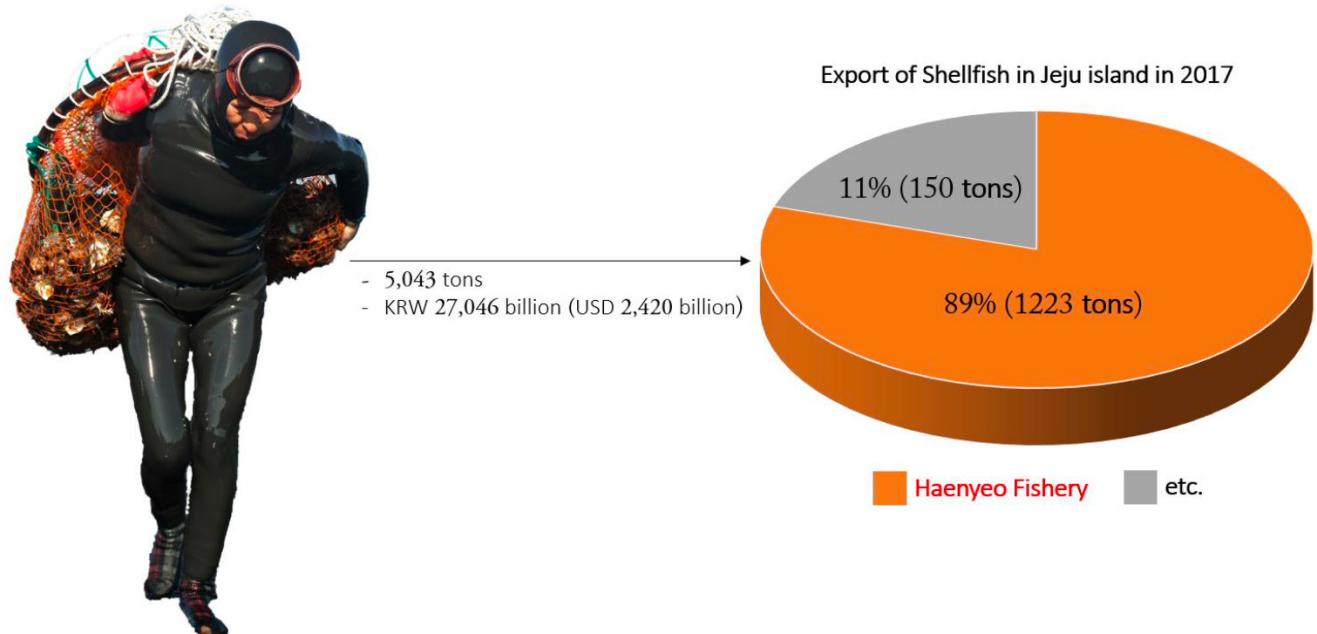


Figure 4. Jeju *haenyeo* fishery production in 2017.

Source: Song, 2020

museums, tours, restaurants, experiences, souvenirs, and the seafood itself.

According to Professor Kang, "There are also interactive tourist experiences such as 'Haenyeo's Kitchen,' a theatrical performance and dining experience that allows visitors to learn about the lives of haenyeo and dishes made from ingredients they collect. The audience is also able to meet elderly haenyeo after the performances." She added, "Jeju haenyeo are utilizing their culture and creating characters, resulting in a variety of products and merchandise such as dishes, accessories, and clothing."

In addition to the interactive dining and performance experiences, the sale of horned conchs — which accounts for 60 percent of haenyeo's income — has also created a new business market for the local community, both in person and via online malls.

Sustainable Harvesting Practices to Protect Biodiversity

Haenyeo fishing plays an important role in managing ecological resources and preserving marine biodiversity on Jeju Island. The haenyeo closely regulate the timing of the harvesting seasons to avoid over-harvesting resources, as well as the size of the seafood to ensure that the fish are not harvested too young and to preserve future generations. Haenyeo fishing village cooperatives also collectively control the tools and technologies used to regulate harvesting periods.

There are nine species of marine life that the haenyeo sustainably harvest, classified into three broad categories, and each of them has its own ecological importance.

- Marine algae: Hizikia fusiformis, Gelidium amansii, Eklonia cava, and Undaria pinnatifida
- Echinodermata: Apostichopus japonicas and Anthocidaris crassispina
- Mollusca: Haliotis discus hanai, and Haliotis diversicolor

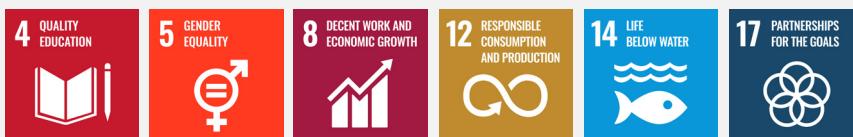
These nine different species live 25 meters below the sea surface and create an interconnected ecological cycle that helps each flourish together. Because each species depends on the other, the haenyeo divers must take great care in identifying when, where, and how many species are harvested during a specific period.

Monitoring and Training the Next Generation of Divers

The aging haenyeo population poses another risk to the long-term viability of Jeju Island's fisheries: 98 percent of haenyeo are at least 50 years old. Jeju Island's declining local population poses another serious threat. In 1965, there were about 23,000 haenyeo. By 2017, the number had drastically declined to 2,500 haenyeo (UNESCO, n.d.).⁵

The island now operates haenyeo schools and vocational institutions to help increase the haenyeo population. The Haenyeo School opened in 2008 and had more than 500 haenyeo graduates by 2017 (Song, 2020). ↩

UN Sustainable Development Goals Addressed:



Guidelines for Other Destinations to Adapt and Apply This Best Practice:

This case study illustrates the importance of creating systems to support local sourcing practices that preserve cultural heritage at risk due to environmental impacts and population or workforce shifts.

- Evaluate how your local sourcing strategies can be used to safeguard important cultural or natural resources in your local community.
- Create a succession plan to avoid jeopardizing the local supply chain if key stakeholders depart.

Case Study #4: AlUla, Saudi Arabia



AlUla: Putting local sourcing, community empowerment, and economic growth at the forefront.

The Context and Challenge

For decades, Saudi Arabia's economy has been largely dependent on oil and fossil fuels, but recently, the government has been challenged to diversify its economy and consider a sustainable future that is less reliant on fossil fuel. Developing sustainable tourism destinations in the country provides a viable economic alternative, yet this new strategy also comes with its own challenges. Since Saudi Arabia and its new destinations, including AlUla, are late additions to the global tourism scene, AlUla is challenged to position itself as a desirable and sustainable destination for international travelers amongst already popular tourist destinations, including Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Istanbul. What can AlUla offer as a destination to entice travelers to voyage to an oasis in the middle of the desert?

AlUla is home to some of the world's most distinctive natural and cultural offerings, encompassing a picturesque oasis valley, dramatic sandstone mountains, and thousands of years of ancient cultural heritage sites, including Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage site. Located in Saudi Arabia's northwest, approximately 1,100 kilometers from the capital, Riyadh, it covers an area of more than 22,500 square kilometers with approximately 46,000 residents.

AlUla is at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan — an initiative set forth by the nation's government to transform its economy and society and move away from its dependence on oil by the year 2030 — and is one of many major projects aimed at diversifying the country's revenue sectors and elevating its international profile.



Source: AlUla

Saudi Arabia aims to showcase its fascinating history through the region's rich cultural heritage and spectacular landscapes in a way that preserves the area's unique and vibrant culture. According to Melanie deSouza, executive director of destination marketing at the Royal Commission for AlUla, "It was very clear that tourism represented a significant economic opportunity when the Saudi government launched Vision 2030, and it makes sense — Saudi Arabia has natural and cultural heritage assets that are world-class."

Combining its archaeological sites, museums, and old city with its natural landscape, deserts, and oases, AlUla is developing an archaeological, cultural, and tourism complex — an open-air living museum — in a region the size of Belgium. The AlUla region is becoming one of the Kingdom's cultural capitals due to this significant investment, rooted in the Arab tradition of hospitality.

According to de Souza, local sourcing, community upskilling, and sustainability are important parts of AlUla's framework. "Sustainability is very much enshrined as a core principle underpinning of AlUla," she explained.

AlUla's approach to local sourcing goes beyond simply purchasing locally, such as farm-to-table concepts. Instead, AlUla views local sourcing as supporting its local community, economy, and natural resources.

A Holistic Framework to Understand the Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts of Tourism Development

AlUla developed a 15-year plan, entitled "Journey Through Time Masterplan," that includes 12 sustainable development

principles to guide its development and management so that the social, economic, and environmental impacts on the region's natural and cultural heritage are considered (see Figure 1.4). The Masterplan is funded by the Royal Commission for AlUla's (RCU) government budget backed by the Ministry of Finance and earmarked for the development of AlUla. It will also be supported by the income from RCU's tourism and economic initiatives and potentially by investors who are also focused on sustainability, responsible development, and community inclusivity.

Figure 1.4 AlUla's 12 Sustainable Development Principles

12 Development Principles govern our approach

- | | |
|---|---|
|  01
Safeguard the natural and cultural landscape |  02
Celebrate heritage, culture and arts as a global destination |
|  03
Sustain ecosystems and wildlife |  04
Maintain balanced agriculture |
|  05
Develop light touch tourism |  06
Ensure subtle connectivity and accessibility |
|  07
Revitalise, restore and regenerate the built environment |  08
Enable the local community |
|  09
Incorporate imaginative infrastructure |  10
Integrate invisible security |
|  11
Design safe & healthy environments within the circular economy |  12
Embed resilience |

Source: Royal Commission for AlUla

"AlUla is not just an exchange of commodities — it's an exchange of ideas and cultures. We want to build on the region's legacy and do it in a way that reflects our history and celebrates the best of contemporary thinking, whether it's cultural expression, design, or architecture," deSouza explained.

Sustainable and responsible development is central to this plan, taking AlUla's fragile desert environment and cultural heritage into account. Strong policies based on in-depth research into human behavior, the environment, and geology have been



Source: AlUla

created to help guide the development of sensitive areas. These resilience policies are based on a zero carbon strategy, circular economy practices, better water management, planting of vegetation, sustainable agriculture, and policies for off-road operations and are in line with the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI)

According to deSouza, "Agriculture is an important economic driver in the AlUla economy. AlUla's ancient civilizations were ahead of their time in allocating and distributing resources and harvesting water. We want to reintroduce these ancient resource and water management practices to our farmers and educate them about best practices to create more sustainable supply chains."

This plan is an investment in the future of AlUla's citizens and reflects RCU's ethos of community inclusiveness to drive a new tourism, cultural, and agri-economic system. It includes new community-led services and amenities, agricultural, cultural, and education facilities and technologies to support agricul-

tural regeneration, water management, community green spaces to promote health and well-being, and a 46-kilometer environmentally friendly tramway. Local sourcing, community empowerment, and sustainable economic development are at the heart of AlUla's sustainable development strategy and act as an innovative model for emerging destinations.

The AlUla framework also guides governments and other key tourism players, such as regional and local governments, the private sector, industry associations, local communities, and tourists, to promote a truly integrated and holistic approach to inclusive community development through tourism.

Measuring Success: A Community-First Approach to Sustainable Destination Development

The Royal Commission for AlUla developed concrete goals and metrics to track its sustainability efforts throughout the duration of the project.

When completed in 2035, AlUla's development strategy is expected to have generated 38,000 jobs for a growing population of 130,000. By then, AlUla is also expected to contribute 120 billion Saudi riyals to the Kingdom's GDP, with an estimated two million visitors annually. The Royal Commission for AlUla estimates that 75 percent of new employment opportunities will be in hospitality by 2035.

This socioeconomic development will not only strengthen AlUla's talent pool within the local community, which has safeguarded ancestral values, skills, and traditions for thousands of years, but it will also create a prosperous and dynamic society where these people can live, work, explore, and continue to drive the culture.

As deSouza explained, "If we don't have community front and center as the beneficiaries of the tourism endeavor, then we haven't succeeded. There were a range of steps that we put into place to make sure that the community was, in fact, prioritized from a range of perspectives. Whether that was in the context of upskilling to ensure that they could be the core face of the tourism experience or providing scholarships to train chefs, for us, it's all about training programs." AlUla's innovative community-first approach highlights the importance of rooting destination planning and local sourcing in the region's social needs.



Innovations in Tracking and Managing Local Sourcing and Sustainability

Tracking and managing data is critical to the Royal Commission for AlUla's (RCU) operations as the insights generated are leveraged to shape the sustainable development of AlUla. Consequently, data sharing, integration, and interoperability across RCU systems and services are key priorities, with RCU's open-data platform striving to promote transparency and accuracy.

At the core of RCU's data management efforts is a centralized and accessible hub of knowledge that provides high-quality data — the recent attainment of gold-level ISO 37120 certification (an internationally recognized certification for sustainable cities) is a testament to the organization's adherence to the best international practices in data management.

RCU has a dedicated data office responsible for analyzing and publishing data related to the economy and quality of life of the

local residents. As part of this vital role, the data office monitors data across a number of streams, including education, the environment, energy, and tourism. A sample of the metrics used to track and measure RCU's contribution to the local community with the relevant data source for each is provided below:

- **Number of jobs generated by the tourism sector per annum.** Data source: Spatial and Spatio-Temporal Geostatistical Modelling (GSTAT)
- **Number of jobs generated from the arts and culture sectors.** Arts and culture jobs are defined by +80 cultural occupations within the Unified Saudi Occupational Classification. Data source: GSTAT
- **Number of residents participating in art and culture vocational training.** Measures the number of beneficiaries of arts and culture in-depth vocational programs in AlUla sponsored by RCU.

- Percentage of female participation in jobs.** Measures the percentage of employed females from the total female workforce (age +15) in AlUla. Data source: GSTAT.
- Number of graduated residents from AlUla training programs.** Measures the number of residents who graduated from vocational and training programs, including any RCU-enabled programs (short term). Data source: ESD.
- Number of residents who graduated from AlUla advanced upskilling programs.** Measures the number of students who have graduated from upskilling programs, including RCU-enabled programs (long term), scholarship grads, and ULI Student grads. Data source: ESD.
- Cumulative number of jobs generated by other non-tourism sectors.** Data source GSTAT.

RCU also introduced an innovative conservation assessment tool called IBEX V1.0, developed in collaboration with the Inter-

national Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IBEX V1.0 was created to simplify the evaluation and review process of protected areas while ensuring that conservation efforts align with IUCN Green List certification standards. According to deSouza, the new tool is invaluable in streamlining the assessment process, making the process more accessible and efficient for protected area managers.

"We recognize that Saudi Arabia has come to the international tourism space fairly late, but this means we have a real opportunity to learn from the destinations that have both gotten it right, as well as those that haven't," deSouza said.

AlUla is leveraging this unique opportunity to position itself to become a leading sustainable destination. AlUla's innovative approach to sustainable sourcing and tracking also serves as a model for destination management leaders who aim to monitor and manage their efforts through a holistic and technologically advanced approach. ↵

UN Sustainable Development Goals Addressed:



Guidelines for Other Destinations to Adapt and Apply This Best Practice:

- Develop a sustainable destination plan that includes a section on local sourcing policies.
- When goal-setting for local sourcing and community upliftment, directly align the goals with metrics to measure their success to improve your return on investment.
- Use digital online tools, including AI for supply chain forecasting, to manage and monitor supply chains more efficiently.

Case Study #5: Dasindo, Italy



Dasindo, Italy: Coordinating, redistributing, and re-investing community-based resources.

The Context and Challenge

Largely unknown to international tourists, Dasindo is a small picturesque mountain hamlet in the Trentino-Alto Adige region of Northern Italy that is tucked between two popular tourist destinations in the Dolomites: Lake Garda and Lake Molveno. With a small population of just 144 residents (Italian Census, 2011)⁶, Dasindo is located in the UNESCO Ledro Alps and Judicaria Biosphere Reserve.

The town has struggled to maintain its current population, along with its rich cultural, economic, and environmental traditions of collective resource management, primarily due to its aging residents and youth moving to cities such as Milan in search of work. Without a future generation to steward its natural and cultural resources, Dasindo has had to innovate and rethink its approach to local sourcing and protecting collective resources.

As Juri Bottura, co-founder of [Dolomit](#), which provides international education opportunities in Italy, explained, "Dasindo is a very small village in a valley that is investing a lot in tourism, but also is in search of its own identity as a community and as a destination."

In 2022, a group of four skilled young people from the region, including academic researchers, developed an innovative project to explore how they could revitalize Dasindo and its local collectively-owned resources, such as agriculture, forest products, and mountain huts, through strategic community engagement (Dalla Torre et al., 2022).⁷ Ultimately, the project aimed to raise citizens' awareness about the importance of community-based resource management for community well-being, nature conservation, and landscape quality, as well as inspire entrepreneurship with local collective resources.



Source: Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere

Stefano Zanoni, coordinator of the UNESCO Ledro Alps and Judicaria Biosphere Reserve, explained that "Dasindo currently has two main goals related to local sourcing and sustainable tourism: promoting community-based tourism capable of transmitting the value of land stewardship to the tourist, and helping tourists understand the value of the social capital of a territory."

According to Manola Corrent, co-owner of Dolomit, who was involved with the research for this project, "Dasindo Mountain Hut is first and foremost the 'house of the community.' It was built for and has been used mainly by the residents of the Dasindo. It holds a deep social meaning: It is used for community gatherings and the enjoyment of the locals and their families and friends at virtually no cost. It exemplifies how places strengthen social relations and reinforce a sense of belonging, pride, and love for the amazing alpine environment."

Rethinking Collective Resources

Dasindo uses a system of community-based resource management — a centuries-old tradition, particularly in Italy — in which natural resources and infrastructure, such as forests, pastures, huts, mountain trails, and irrigation systems, are owned and managed through local citizen cooperatives. Typically, this style of common property or pool resource management is referred to as the "commons" and has proven to promote citizen stewardship and ensure local decision-making in resource management (Ostrom, 1990).⁸

The "commons" redistributes gains from resource extraction and reinvests them to regenerate and revive local resources

such as forests and livestock pastures. This approach builds resilience to external factors such as climate change, promotes rural development, protects biodiversity, and enhances environmental sustainability.

Zanoni stated, "The issue of commons is very much felt in the Trentino and Giudicarie regions. However, it hasn't been adapted for our current times — there is a reliance on 'it has always been done this way.' Our project intends to innovate how collective assets are considered by proposing new ways of conception and management."

The "Amministrazioni Separate Usi Civici" (ASUC) Dasindo — translated to "the separate administrations of civic-use lands Dasindo" in English — is the organization responsible for managing the commons. For this project, ASUC Dasindo worked with 12 partners from public agencies, local businesses, and civil society, along with the local community, to identify ways to create a more inclusive and sustainable approach to local sourcing and collective resource management (Dalla Torre et al., 2022).⁷

The project was 95 percent funded by the Autonomous Province of Trento (the department for the development of mountain areas), which granted ASUC Dasindo more than US\$32,000. The remaining 5 percent was co-paid for by ASUC Dasindo and ASUC Favrio.

Zanoni explained how the Dasindo Mountain Hut relates to the concept of "the commons" and how it is managed by the local community. "The mountain hut is owned by the Dasindo community, which uses it directly throughout the year through the management of the ASUC. In the summer months, there's a contractual agreement with a local entrepreneur who rents it out. However, the contract states that check-in and other tourist interaction activities are to be guaranteed by the Dasindo community. This makes the experience authentic and unique."

Measuring Success: Using Research to Support Social Innovation in Local Resource Management

The project team, ASUC Dasindo and ASUC Favrio, and their partners worked closely with the community to gather qualitative information, including citizens' perceptions, visions,

expectations, and preferences, about the best way to support the sustainable development in community-based resource management using the following research methods:

Research Methods	Number of Participants
2x Focus group interviews	61 community members (32% of the population of Dasindo and Favrio), 15 external stakeholders
Self-administered anonymous surveys of Dasindo and Favrio	43 respondents (23% of the population of Dasindo and Favrio)
Participant observation during a convivial festival aimed at exploring rural commons and building community relationships	Community members and external stakeholders, exact count was not collected
2x Participatory mapping and co-creation workshops to discuss local sourcing and common resource management	25 community members, 7 external stakeholders
Follow-up semi-structured interviews	10 participants

Source: Dalla Torre et al., 2022

Results from Dalla Torre et al.'s (2022)⁷ research and community engagement showed the following key takeaways that are applicable to similar rural global destinations:

The uses of collective resources are changing.

In the past, community-based resources provided important sustenance for local citizens in Dasindo and Favrio. For example, they harvested hay to feed animals and wood for heating and building. Now, the resources are important for recreational and relational assets such as forest trails for hiking and biking and mountain huts for community events to improve physical, mental, and relational well-being. This shows that it is important for communities to continue assessing how and why the community uses the local resources.

Collective resources should be managed by an inclusive and diverse group.

Findings revealed the need for a larger and more diverse group of individuals to manage collective resources, apart from those



Source: Juri Bottura

legally obliged to community-based resource management or elected officials. The community members believe that having a more inclusive and heterogeneous group of local stakeholders, such as local entrepreneurs, regional development, and conservation professionals, involved with the management of the collective resources would help with innovation and reduce the burden of administrative and bureaucratic tasks on the community.

Rethink community-based resource management organizational models so they balance destination stewardship, education, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The community has differing needs, interests, and perceptions about how collective resources should be used and managed. For example, some farmers emphasized the importance of traditional farming practices such as harvesting pasture grass to preserve biodiversity and protect the landscape from abandonment. Other community members highlighted the need to build entrepreneurial skills and educate visitors and community members about existing forms of community-based resource management. The project showed that it is important for destinations to reimagine organizational models so that they have an open decision-making process that maintains opportunities for destination stewardship, education, innovation, and entrepreneurship with community resource management.

Bottura advised that destination leaders who are interested in creating a similar concept as the Dasindo Mountain Hut and integrating common shared resources into their local sourcing

strategy should “invest time and resources in getting to know the community, talk with locals, hear their needs and concerns, and get them involved.”

“It is crucial to identify and empower the usually few members of the community who are more open to innovation or may have a personal interest in such a project,” Bottura added. “The initiative should not look as an intervention from the outside, or top-down — it has to start from the community, bottom up.”

Corrent explained, “It’s crucial to take the time needed to understand the community’s desires, hopes, and concerns through participatory meetings. At the same time, it is important to have sensitive and thoughtful leadership that makes decisions and helps the process move forward.”

As the Dasindo community illustrates, a community-focused approach to natural and cultural resource management is key when developing a destination and sustainable local sourcing practices. ↪

Figure 1.5 Community workshop to assess local sourcing strategies and community-based resource management



Source: Cristina Dalla Torre

UN Sustainable Development Goals Addressed:



Guidelines for Other Destinations to Adapt and Apply This Best Practice:

- Continuously work with community members to innovate ways to preserve, share, and celebrate rich local resources.
- Develop an equitable local tourism sourcing system that welcomes community members who are typically excluded or seemingly hold less power to actively and equally participate in resource management and local sourcing decision-making.
- Ensure that cultural and natural resources remain valuable to the local community. Avoid over-commodifying resources to primarily appeal to tourists or be used for financial gain.



5 Key Takeaways To Improve Local Sourcing In Tourism

Research for the five case studies on local sourcing in tourism revealed a much broader and more comprehensive definition of local sourcing — one that looks at local sourcing in ways that support the local community (e.g., educates and empowers citizens or preserves cultural heritage), the local economy (e.g., creates full-time jobs for locals, entrepreneurial opportunities, etc.), and the destination’s natural resources (e.g., plant biodiversity, water, etc.). Rooted in this new and broader definition of local sourcing in tourism, five key takeaways emerged as common themes from the case study research.

1. Local sourcing builds economic and community resilience. Local sourcing in tourism can build local economic resilience and diversify tourism-dependent economies by empowering local citizens to develop entrepreneurial businesses within a destination, such as restaurants, bakeries, and retail stores, and to create opportunities in other industries, such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, entertainment, and marketing. New business offerings benefit visitors and the local community, further emphasizing the value of tourism and its positioning in the local economy. It is important to take a holistic approach to local sourcing and sustainable tourism development that includes public-private partnerships and meaningful community engagement to avoid developing tourism and local sourcing in silos.

- 2. Community-led local sourcing assessment and planning is key.** With a community-led coalition, evaluate how local sourcing can be used to preserve important natural and cultural resources in the destination. Community members provide a realistic perspective on the community’s needs and how local sourcing can be used to protect what they deem to be the region’s most important natural and cultural assets.
- 3. Local sourcing requires mutually beneficial cross-sector partnerships.** Create cross-sector partnerships between local businesses, governments, and nonprofits to maximize opportunities for sourcing and purchasing locally at scale.
- 4. Track, adapt, and communicate local sourcing strategies.** Identify methods to track, quantify, adapt, and communicate the results of local sourcing strategies to key stakeholders based on the destination’s sustainability goals and organizational capacity.
- 5. Establish fiscal policies and processes that support circular procurement and production.** In collaboration with the local government, establish fiscal policies that promote circular procurement and sustainable production and consumption to support the local community and environment.



From Stories To Action: A Toolkit For Destinations To Integrate Local Sourcing

Based on the research conducted for the five case studies and the supporting metrics/data, a summary of twelve actionable guidelines with linked resources is provided below for destinations to re-envision what local sourcing in a destination could and should look like.

The guidelines provide recommendations for destinations to evaluate current sourcing strategies, local sourcing goal-setting, key partners, social, environmental, and economic local sourcing best practices, and metrics to track results. This framework can help tourism industry leaders identify local sourcing strategies in their community that consider the social, economic, and environmental factors related to sourcing and strategies to accurately assess and report these practices.

- 1. Supply Chain Mapping:** Create visual maps of your supply chain to identify opportunities for local sourcing, such as partnering with nearby farmers for fresh produce, collaborating with local artisans for authentic crafts, or sourcing local renewable energy
- 2. Local Supplier Database:** Compile a list of local suppliers for various products and services needed in the tourism sector, such as food, beverages, accommodations, transportation, and souvenirs.



Source: Makers Landing

3. **Local Sourcing Policy:** Develop a policy that outlines your commitment to supporting local businesses and communities through tourism-related procurement. Emphasize the economic, social, and environmental benefits.
4. **Sourcing Criteria:** Define criteria for considering a supplier "local," taking into account factors like distance, percentage of locally produced products, and alignment with sustainability standards.
5. **Supplier Assessment Form:** Create a questionnaire to evaluate potential local suppliers. Inquire about their capacity to meet your tourism business's needs, sustainability practices, quality control, and flexibility.
6. **Cost Analysis Template:** Develop a template to compare the costs of sourcing from local suppliers versus distant ones, considering factors like transportation, tariffs, and quality differences.
7. **Sourcing and Securing Financing:** Identify potential funding sources to support local sourcing and sustainable community development efforts, including federal, municipal, and provincial government grants, impact investors, banks, angel investors, and venture capitalists. Think outside the box to find socially responsible investors and green investments aligned with your destination's local sourcing mission.
8. **Local Community Engagement Plan:** Detail how you plan to engage with local communities to build partnerships and support their economic development through tourism activities. Consider using digital community engagement platforms such as Citizen Lab.
9. **Metrics and Tracking Tools:** Define metrics to track local sourcing impacts, such as the percentage of locally sourced products and services, economic contributions to the community, and carbon emissions.
10. **Communication Templates:** Draft templates for communicating your commitment to local sourcing to customers, partners, and stakeholders. Highlight the positive impacts on the local economy and environment.
11. **Training Resources:** Develop training materials for staff to understand the importance of local sourcing and how to effectively identify and engage with local suppliers.
12. **Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines:** If you're implementing eco-friendly practices, provide guidelines for assessing the environmental impact of local sourcing choices and minimizing negative effects.
13. **Feedback Mechanism:** Set up a process for gathering feedback from local suppliers, tourists, and other key stakeholders to continuously refine your local sourcing approach.

Key Stakeholders to Engage in Local Sourcing in Tourism:

Creating, adopting, and implementing a local sourcing policy requires the buy-in from many different stakeholders representing the entire supply chain, including local governments, NGOs, and community leaders, among others. The following is a list of types of entities to include in local procurement policy planning:

- State and local policymakers: elected and appointed officials, county and city officials
- Task forces and/or food policy councils
- Local farmers, growers, producers, manufacturers, and artisans
- Local residents and consumers
- Local small business owners
- Producers and distributors that support local growers and local artisans
- Local entrepreneurs
- Labor organizations
- Tourists/second home owners/part-time residents
- National and state policy organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Community residents and farmers



Looking Ahead

In an effort to inspire and enable destination industry leaders and policymakers to take action around local sourcing, this report provided an overview of what local sourcing is, how it is intimately connected to the three pillars of sustainability — people, planet, and profit — tools to track and measure it, as well as five global case studies from the U.S., South Africa, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Italy that showcase best practices in local sourcing from around the world.

As the case studies illustrated, although local sourcing builds socioeconomic resilience and promotes environmental conservation in tourism destinations, it requires extensive strategic planning, fundraising, strong and mutually beneficial public-private partnerships, a serious commitment to addressing community needs, knowledge of ecological vulnerabilities and natural resource management, and most importantly, the ability to track and monitor the local sourcing strategies.

Our research revealed a critical issue: Many global tourism destinations struggle to identify and implement effective ways to track and quantify their return on investment for sustainable local sourcing in tourism.

One underlying problem is that certain results stemming from local sourcing in tourism are intangible and challenging to quantify as they represent community empowerment, skills development, cultural preservation, and improved community connections. Another significant issue is that certain destinations do not have the time, skills, or resources to accurately track and report on the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their local sourcing initiatives.

However, as we learned from the research participants for this report, you can't manage what you can't measure. It is crit-

ical for tourism destinations that are considering sustainable local sourcing strategies to plan how, when, and who will be responsible for tracking and measuring their local sourcing impacts from an economic, social, and environmental perspective. Planning for accurate and efficient tracking and monitoring of local sourcing in tourism is an essential part of the pre-planning process for local sourcing initiatives — it cannot be an afterthought.

Due to the lack of standardized local sourcing metrics and the wide variety of complicated measurement tools available, the responsibility of tracking and monitoring local sourcing efforts falls on individual destinations and businesses within that destination to identify the most efficient and useful way to consistently track high-quality data related to local sourcing. With community-focused pre-planning efforts and a clear data tracking method in place from the beginning, destination industry leaders and business owners can improve fund mobilization, community engagement, partnership development, and future planning strategies.

The toolkit provided in this report provides specific and actionable guidelines around how destinations can integrate and track local sourcing in their own communities to improve the lives of the citizens they serve, their visitors, and the environment that they inhabit. Local sourcing in tourism is a complex process, but it starts with a vision and a community commitment to take small steps in the right direction. We hope our toolkit and the lessons learned from these case studies will help destination industry leaders take a step in the right direction to implement sustainable local sourcing practices. ↵

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Appendix A. Alternative Metrics for Measuring Local Sourcing in Tourism

Beyond The UN Sustainable Development Goals, there are other emerging methodologies, though each has its own challenges. Currently, there isn't a universally standardized metric or framework to measure local sourcing in tourism that applies across all destinations and contexts.

Instead, measurement approaches vary based on the goals, priorities, and resources of each destination or tourism organization and often focus on environmental, social, and economic impacts. While this gives destination leaders flexibility to track and assess local sourcing with the methods that best apply to their regional context, it can create ambiguity in tracking and reporting local sourcing strategies most effectively.

To reduce ambiguity around local sourcing metrics and reporting, a variety of multinational organizations have developed tools to increase awareness and promote local sourcing strategies in tourism and effective ways to track them. For example:

- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) launched the [UNEP Circularity Platform](#) to improve understanding of how a circular economy works and how it contributes to promoting sustainable consump-

tion and production practices that can be applied to the tourism sector.

- [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022 - 2025](#) provides guidelines for sustainable procurement and emphasizes how digitalization can be leveraged to create more efficient procurement processes and tracking.
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) developed a [Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism \(SF-MST\)](#) that introduces methods for destinations to measure the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of tourism.

The following table provides an overview of existing metrics and frameworks frequently used to track and monitor local sourcing in tourism from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. Data collection strategies for each of the metrics/frameworks vary depending on the destination and can include community or visitor surveys, self-reported data from tourism businesses, focus groups and interviews, and geographic information systems (GIS) to map the distribution of local suppliers.

Metric/Framework	Description	Sustainability Components Measured (Economic, Social, Environmental)
Local Expenditure Ratio	This metric is used to calculate the percentage of money spent on locally sourced goods and services compared to total expenditures.	Provides insight into the economic impact of tourism on the local community.
Local Supplier Index	This framework evaluates the proportion of goods and services procured from local suppliers and can assess the commitment of tourism businesses to sourcing locally.	Provides insight into the social and economic impacts of local tourism suppliers on the host destination.

Metric/Framework	Description	Sustainability Components Measured (Economic, Social, Environmental)
Local Sourcing Percentage	Calculates the percentage of goods and services sourced locally compared to the total goods and services.	Provides insight into the economic impacts of tourism on the local economy.
Local Employment	Tracks the number of local jobs created by tourism-related businesses and can indicate the level of local engagement and support in the sector.	Provides insight into the social and economic impacts of tourism on the local job market.
Tourism Leakage	Involves assessing the money spent on imports, foreign-owned businesses, and other leakages from the local tourism economy.	Provides insight into the social and economic distribution of wealth related to tourism.
Multiplier Effect	This measures how many times money spent in the local economy circulates through various transactions, creating additional economic value.	Provides insight into the social and economic impacts of tourism on the local community.
Economic Input-Output (EIO) Analysis	EIO models estimate the interdependencies between industries in a region. This analysis can reveal the direct and indirect effects of tourism spending on various sectors of the local economy.	Provides insight into the economic impacts of tourism spending based on economic inputs and outputs.
Social Impact Assessment	This framework analyzes, monitors, and manages tourism's social benefits and drawbacks, such as its effects on cultural preservation, community well-being, and local traditions.	Provides insight into the social effects of tourism on the local community.
Environmental Sustainability	Measuring the environmental impact of sourcing locally involves assessing factors like reduced carbon emissions from shorter supply chains and decreased transportation. Environmental metrics also include water, waste, and energy consumption patterns, biodiversity impact, and land use and deforestation related to tourism.	Provides insight into the environmental impacts of tourism on the host destination.

Local Sourcing and Sustainable Supply Chain Resources:

- [How to Complete a Supply Chain Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#)
- [World Bank's Guide to Getting Started on Local Procurement](#)
- [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022 - 2025"](#)
- [UNEP Circularity Platform](#)

Sustainable Tourism Tracking Platform and Community Engagement System:

- [Weeva](#): A digital platform to assist with managing sustainable tourism efforts.
- [Greenview](#): Sustainability management system
- [Citizen Lab](#): An online community engagement platform backed by a team of community engagement experts.
- [SAP Cloud](#): Sustainability Tracking and ESG Reporting

Supply Chain Management and Procurement Software:

- [SAP Ariba](#)
- [Oracle Procurement Cloud](#)
- [Coupa](#)
- [Jaggaer](#)
- [GEP SMART](#)

Tools to Measure and Track Tourism Impacts:

- [UNEP's Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment](#)
- [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- [Visitors count! Guidance for protected areas on the economic analysis of visitation.](#)
- [Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism \(SF-MST\)](#)

About Sustainable Tourism Global Center

The Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC) is the world's first multi-country, multi-stakeholder global coalition, incubated within the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, that will lead, accelerate, and track the tourism industry's transition to net-zero emissions, as well as drive action to protect nature and support communities. It will enable the transition while delivering knowledge, tools, financing mechanisms, and innovation into the tourism sector. The STGC was announced by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman during the Saudi Green Initiative in October 2021 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for Saudi Arabia, then led a panel discussion during COP26 (November 2021) in Glasgow, United Kingdom, to elaborate on how the Center will deliver on its mandate with founding country representatives and experts from partner international organizations.

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About the Saudi Ministry of Tourism

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism leads the Saudi Tourism ecosystem. The Ministry sets the Kingdom's tourism sector strategy and is responsible for the development of policies and regulations, developing human capital, gathering statistics, and attracting investment. It works in partnership with the Saudi Tourism Authority, which promotes Saudi Arabia as a global tourism destination, and the Tourism Development Fund, which executes the Ministry's investment strategy by providing funding for the sector's development. Headed by His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, the Ministry was founded in February 2020, following the opening of Saudi Arabia to international leisure tourists for the first time in its history in 2019. By 2030, Saudi Arabia aims to welcome 100 million tourists, increasing the sector's direct contribution to GDP from 3.8 percent in 2019 to 10 percent.