

Regenerative tourism moves forward: integrating with local communities and optimizing resource management

TIS2024 shared the actions that tourism executives are implementing to integrate local communities, reduce overcrowding and preserve the environment

Companies such as Amadeus, Vueling, Radisson Hotel Group and Unicef have revealed the importance of collaboration to thrive in tourism sustainability

Madrid, October 24, 2024. Avoiding being invasive with the visited culture, managing experiences with the local government, improving the conditions of employees in the sector and getting local communities to value tourism positively are key aspects that the industry is beginning to focus on. This was made clear during the first day of [TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit 2024](#). The international tourism innovation summit focused on sustainability as one of the key aspects of the future, with an eye on regenerative tourism, integration with local communities and a commitment to preserving cultural heritage.

This is the case of Variety Cruises, which, with regenerative tourism in its DNA, advocates creating a better world at sea, avoiding being invasive to the cultures we visit. *“Overcrowded tourism occurs in very specific areas and at very specific times of the year. It has to be managed from the point of view of the administration, the local government, etc”*, has indicated **Filippos Venetopoulos**, Chief Executive Officer at Variety Cruises. In this sense, he explained that Variety Cruises has implemented a 25-euro fee for tourists in Santorini, which will be destined to the Greek government to improve other destinations. In addition, he has opted to integrate sustainability not only in the design and operations of the shipping line, but in the experience of travelers. *“We organize beach cleanups, we dive to clean the ocean, and we source seafood locally,”* he said.

For his part, **Héctor Fernández**, CEO of SPEL-Turismo Lanzarote, considered thinking beyond environmental criteria when we talk about sustainability in the sector. *“We must also think about governance, the social aspect, the economic aspect,”* he said. For this reason, he said it is necessary to *“integrate the interests of the local community and those of the tourists”*, as well as *“try to improve the conditions of the workplace and try to prevent people from leaving. The local community must see the benefits of tourism. We have to try to prevent people from seeing tourism as a phenomenon, to see it as something bidirectional”*, he pointed out. In fact, *“some indicators suggest that the more integrated regenerative tourism is in the company, the easier it will be to retain talent,”* he guaranteed.

Amit Sharma, Advisor at the Saudi Tourism Authority, also spoke along the same lines, highlighting the importance of focusing on the positive aspects to advance regenerative tourism and basing it *“on the principle of value, not volume. Quality not quantity. Tourists who want to spend more need to have culinary and cultural experiences, the local aspect. Local guides bring more to visitors, which translates into a better visitor experience”*.

TIS es un evento de:

However, he has considered that there are aspects left to thrive in regenerative tourism. *“There is a need for clarity, indicators, benchmarking. This will help identify the right targets. Right now, regenerative tourism is a 'should', not a 'must'. It is growing slowly but steadily and could be the future in the next few years.”*

Sustainability matters

87% of hoteliers consider sustainability to be important or very important to them. These are the conclusions of the Travel Technology Investments Trends 2024 report prepared by Amadeus, which highlights the relevance that sustainability has acquired for customers and travelers. This was highlighted by **Agnes Pierce**, Director, Global Head of Sustainability - Hospitality at Amadeus, who highlighted sustainability as an integrated element in her company. *“We want to create travel experiences for everyone and everywhere with sustainability in mind,”* she said. For the tourism sector to thrive in the green transition, he said that *“the whole ecosystem must align”* and that it is *“necessary to support other organizations working for sustainability at the local level.”*

Santiago Lopezbarrena, Head of Sustainability at Vueling, also considered partnerships with companies to be key. He presented the company's commitment to sustainability through the promotion of three pillars: more sustainable fuels, a more efficient fleet and technology applied to make operations more environmentally friendly.

Inge Huijbrechts, Chief Sustainability and Security Officer at Radisson Hotel Group confirmed the company's commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. To make progress in sustainability, she stressed that it is *“essential”* to involve teams in green operations, as well as *“integrating sustainability into the guest experience to make it easier”*, whether by reducing single-use plastics or including electric vehicle chargers, among other actions. Lastly, he called for collaboration in the sector, transparency and clear communication with travelers so that they can be confident in their sustainable travel.

Likewise, **Marta López**, Head of Corporate Partnerships at UNICEF Spain, remarked that *“the tourism sector is not on track to meet the SDGs. We are not moving fast enough, but there is potential to accelerate the process.* Lopez has highlighted the importance of transforming the way companies operate to influence children's rights. *“The social aspect of sustainability is forgotten. We neglect the much-needed investment in everyone around the company. This is not a philanthropic agenda, it makes business sense,”* he said.

About [TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit](#) (October 23-25, 2024, FIBES Seville): TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit is an international forum for innovation, trends and reflection for the tourism sector, offering managers and companies in the sector the opportunity to learn about the latest technological solutions and products to improve their competitiveness. Over 3 days, TIS2024 will bring together more than 7,000 tourism professionals looking for the latest solutions to boost their destination or tourism business. In addition, more than 400 experts from around the world will share their strategies and success stories to promote smarter, digital and sustainable tourism at the Tourism Innovation Global Summit.