



Issues Paper

Fostering a Whole-of-Government Approach in Tourism

2-3 October 2017
OECD, Paris



OECD

■ Background information

This note is provided as background information at the High Level Meeting on Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, 2-3 October 2017, OECD. This meeting brings together Ministers, senior policy makers and industry leaders to discuss ways to deliver more sustainable and inclusive tourism growth.

The event marks the occasion of the 100th meeting of the Tourism Committee and supports the future policy agenda of OECD member and partner countries. It aims to draw attention to the major advances made in the implementation of effective tourism policies and programmes, and to facilitate open discussions about long term objectives for tourism development, and how an effective, forward-looking, whole-of-government approach can help achieve these objectives.

More information: oe.cd/tourism

■ About the OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a forum in which governments compare and exchange policy experiences, identify good practices in light of emerging challenges, and promote decisions and recommendations to produce better policies for better lives. The OECD's mission is to promote policies that improve economic and social well-being of people around the world.

■ About the OECD Tourism Committee

The OECD Tourism Committee, created in 1948, acts as the OECD forum for exchange, and for monitoring policies and structural changes affecting the development of domestic and international tourism. It actively promotes the sustainable economic growth of tourism.

Fostering a Whole-of-Government Approach in Tourism

This session will examine country experiences fostering an integrated whole-of-government approach to tourism policy development. Topics of discussion will include steps to improve horizontal and vertical coordination within and between levels of government, private sector engagement, and how stakeholders can work together to ensure that long-term tourism strategies support sustainable and inclusive growth, and are successfully implemented.

Linking tourism with the broader policy agenda

Tourism is an important economic sector for many countries around the world and governments are developing active and innovative policies to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism growth. The linkages between tourism and other policies are many, and policy decisions need to consider the trade-offs and complementarities. Many countries consider an integrated whole-of-government approach to tourism as an essential component of a supportive government framework. These integrated approaches increase the policy coherence and the effectiveness of public and public/private actions in tourism.

Governments at all levels have an important role to play in the delivery of the tourism product, and they need to work in close partnership with the private sector. In order to sustain tourism growth and the associated benefits, governments must ensure that the right policies and delivery structures are in place. Many countries now have multi-year policies and plans to develop the tourism sector and to give strategic direction and focus to government policy at national and subnational level.

The role of central government in developing cohesive, effective tourism policy is vital, but governments face numerous challenges in crafting this policy. This is due in part to the fragmented nature of tourism which requires multiple central government ministries and different levels of government to undertake various roles in response to political, social, environmental and technological trends affecting tourism. For example, governments are involved in tourism in a variety of capacities including, marketing and promotion; border security; the regulation of markets such as aviation; planning regulations; controlling or managing tourism attractions such as national parks; skills development; and funding the development of roads and other infrastructure. In addition, in many countries there is an added level of complexity in that the full competence for tourism does not reside with central government. As such, there is often a significant role to be played in tourism governance at the subnational level.

An integrated whole-of-government approach in tourism is essential

Increasing interdependence and interconnectedness across and within economies (including between policy dimensions and objectives), have become a persistent characteristic of the global economy. In this interlinked policy environment, innovative approaches are required to identify emerging issues and trends, as well as trade-offs and synergies associated with developing policies to address multiple objectives.

Within this context, and due to its cross-cutting and fragmented nature, tourism policy development is an increasingly complex process, with longer time-scales and a wider

scope than in the past. Addressing the major and multi-faceted challenges faced by the tourism industry, including the infrastructure and skills needed to meet expected future demand, requires an integrated approach across departments and levels of government, with input and support from industry and the research community. Such an approach seeks to secure the longevity of tourism as an economic and social force by focusing on environmental sustainability, inclusiveness, diversification, innovation and strategic improvements to productivity.

It is clear that an integrated whole-of-government approach to the development of tourism policy requires stable platforms to co-ordinate actions, leadership from policy-makers at the highest level (in tourism and related policy areas, including, transport, environment, culture, economy, foreign affairs, skills, land-use etc.) and a focus on policies with a medium- to long-term perspective. Within this framework, specific considerations for tourism policy makers might include i) a better understanding of the unique inter-linkages, synergies and trade-offs between tourism and other policy areas; ii) seeking to more effectively demonstrate the value of the tourism economy to decision makers in related policy areas, and; iii) implementing institutional arrangements to establish and leverage policy synergies across ministries and levels of government, and engage with the private sector.

Effective governance for a whole-of-government approach in tourism

For whole-of-government policy approaches to be effective, they should recognise the importance of strong government-industry-civil society dialogue in the development, implementation, and monitoring phases. Developing a multi-actor system, that includes the private sector and civil society and greater horizontal and vertical co-ordination of relevant government bodies, requires consideration of the accepted elements of good governance, both at the central and subnational levels.

Effective governance practices include i) a clear definition of the roles and functions of the various levels of government in tourism; ii) the engagement of the tourism industry and civil society in the policy decision-making process; iii) the adopting effective engagement mechanisms to bring together the various actors (e.g. tourism strategies, contracts, joint committees), and ensure they have the appropriate tools and resources for implementation and monitoring.

Solutions to improve multi-level policy co-ordination must reflect the institutional and human capacities, law and regulatory environment, and specific tourism context of a particular country and region. It is important for institutions to have clear mandates, well-defined objectives, effective leadership and political support, and that policy outcomes are regularly evaluated.

Topics for discussion

- What role can tourism policy-makers play in developing an integrated governmental vision for tourism policies, including promotion?
- What steps or measures have been helpful in improving horizontal and vertical coordination across ministries and levels of government?
- How can the private sector work more closely with policy makers to foster greater collaboration and improve the impact of policy and promotion?

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- How can governments ensure that tourism strategies, used to engage and co-ordinate the activities of public and private sector stakeholders, support inclusive growth and are successfully implemented?

Further reading

- Haxton, P. (2015), "A Review of Effective Policies for Tourism Growth", *OECD Tourism Papers*, No. 2015/01, OECD Publishing, Paris.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js4vmp5n5r8-en>
- OECD (2012), "Tourism Governance in OECD Countries", in *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2012*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/tour-2012-3-en>
- OECD (2016), *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2016*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/tour-2016-en>

www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism

