Common Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025-2035

OECS

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

UBEC

Unleashing the Blue Economy of the Caribbean

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COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY

2025-2035

November 1, 2024

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY

To Increase Competitiveness Based on a Blue Economy Approach

An initiative of the

OECS

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

under the project

UNLEASHING THE BLUE ECONOMY
OF THE CARIBBEAN

funded by

WORLD BANK GROUP

THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS) is an International Inter-governmental Organisation dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean. Regional integration is the cornerstone of the OECS based on the belief that Member States are stronger together. Established by Treaty in 1981 and replaced by the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB) in 2010, the OECS, through the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU) is mandated to consolidate a single economic and financial space, for delivering among Protocol Member states, faster economic growth, sustainable development, enhanced global competitiveness, social inclusion and environmental protection. Within this mandate Article II of the Economic Union Protocol specifies closer economic relations among Protocol Member States in a plethora of cross cutting development issues, which includes tourism development.

TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

Based on its Treaty, the OECS Economic Union aims to unlock the development potential of OECS Member States through the implementation of targeted strategic-level policy interventions that promote regulatory convergence, policy harmonisation, and the building of resilience and economic competitiveness through innovative and inclusive development strategies.

Overall, the full implementation of the RTB by the OECS Commission in collaboration with the Economic Union Member States, is aimed at bolstering country-level interventions for structural transformation to more productive, knowledge-based economies with an expanding role for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Further, the objectives underlying the Economic Union that guide the work of the OECS Commission. support and mainstream the participation of women and youth in sustainable economic activities that are linked to innovation and activities in the digital economy.

OECS COMMISSION VISION & MISSION

In administering the mandate of the Economic Union, the Vision of the Organization is *"a better quality of life for the people of the OECS."* With this, its Mission is *"to drive and support sustainable development through regional integration, collective action and development cooperation."*

TOURISM MANDATE OF THE OECS ECONOMIC UNION

The tourism work of the OECS Commission is specifically guided by Article 21 of the Protocol of the RTB. Given the critical importance of tourism to all Member States and to livelihoods across the region, in pursuant to Article 21, the OECS adopted a Common Tourism Policy in 2011 to guide its work over the period 2012-2017. In keeping with the overall mandate of the ECEU, the OECS Common Tourism Policy aims at achieving balanced growth through tourism development that, via collaboration and synergies, improves the quality of life of its citizens.

While the underlying aim of the OECS Common Tourism Policy remains consistent, continuous evaluation and adjustments are needed to allow for the dynamic nature of tourism, changes in tourism trends, innovation and the advancement of the digital economy, as well as adjustments in global, regional and national development needs and focus. This is the first update of the Common Tourism Policy and will guide the work of the OECS Commission as it collaborates with Member States to ensure that tourism contributes to achieving the objectives of the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union.

FOREWORD

With tourism's growth and development enshrined in the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB) establishing the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union, our region has long recognised that the sector plays a pivotal role in the economies of all Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Member States. For instance, according to the World Bank (WB), for the six independent countries of the OECS, tourism contributes 39 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on average and accounts for some 11 percent of the region's jobs.

This updated policy reflects a renewed commitment by the region to collaboratively nurture and advance tourism that supports its vision for a better quality of life for its people and to positively impact livelihoods across the OECS. In line with the RTB, this OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy emphasizes balanced tourism growth and development that maximizes economic inclusion, empowers communities, builds micro-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises (MSMEs) and allows greater benefits to host communities.

We are pleased that within this update, there is a comprehensive and pragmatic range of policies that support sustainable tourism development across all its dimensions. The policies, therefore, support *economic sustainability* by allowing for a wide spread of the sector's economic benefits across our national economies. They support *cultural sustainability* that allows the region to showcase yet safeguard our cultural heritage. They further support *environmental sustainability* that allows us to utilise but simultaneously protect our natural resources and biodiversity, both on land and in our coastal and marine environment.

Notably, this update also recognises the common vulnerability of our region's tourism to climate change, natural disasters and other crises. On the upside, it also recognises the growth potential of the wider blue economy, namely marine, coastal and freshwater tourism activities. Importantly, as our Region continues on a pathway to competitiveness and growth, this updated policy has also highlighted various approaches to address climate and risk resilience and promote the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS).

We are particularly pleased to have had the input of stakeholders from all participating Member States in the development of this Common Sustainable Tourism Policy. For Member States, this policy can be utilised to strengthen their national tourism policy and programming frameworks. At the OECS Commission, this policy aligns with our current 2019-2028 OECS Development Strategy as well as our 2025-2030 Action Framework for the region

The Commission acknowledges the support of the World Bank in this updated OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy under its Unleashing the Blue Economy in the Caribbean (UBEC) project. We also recognise the continued support of the Bank to individual OECS countries in their efforts towards tourism development, ocean governance and sustainability.

Didacus Jules PhD
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OECS Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Policy for Transformative Development

The development of the OECS Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025-2035 occurred at a pivotal time for policy adjustments to support transformative economic development and to further boost competitiveness and economic growth across OECS Member States.

Not only did this process come on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters that have seen increased frequency and intensity in the OECS Region, but also at the midpoint of what was intended by the United Nations (UN) to be a transformational Decade of Action.

In this transformational decade, each country would ascertain their challenges and take steps to transition their policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks to address climate change, reduce risks and implement efforts to deliver on the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The OECS Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025-2035 (OECS 2025 CSPT) fits within the scope of the Decade of Action as it relates to regional tourism – the main OECS sector generally tied to economic performance and the achievement of wider development goals. The OECS 2025 CSTP is, therefore, themed throughout for transformative development.

Key Strategic Tenets

The OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025-2035 leads the theme for transformative development with an overarching and agreed vision for:

> **OECS Tourism that is Sustainable, Resilient, Innovative, and contributes to Inclusive Regional Economic Development.**
>
> **VISION**

The intended mission is:

> **MISSION**
>
> **To create added value for OECS Member States, its tourism industry, people, host communities, and visitors by working collaboratively and synergistically to advance inclusive, sustainable tourism development.**

With the vision and mission are strategic goals of the 2025 CSTP that, among others, aim to:

(i) Establish an enabling policy environment for the optimisation of sustainable and responsible tourism across the OECS;

(ii) Contribute to balanced growth and development of the tourism sector and economies in the OECS Economic Union; and

(iii) Support an improved quality of life in all Member States.

Underpinning the OECS 2025 CSTP are the following twelve (12) guiding principles:

2025 OECS CSTP: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1. Economic, Social & Environmental Sustainability
- 2. Climate Smart Actions
- 3. Disaster Risk Resilience
- 4. Supporting the UNSDGs
- 5. Inclusion
- 6. Innovation & the Use of Technology
- 7. Evidence-Based Decision-Making
- 8. Competent Human Resources
- 9. Visitor Satisfaction
- 10. Public Private Partnership
- 11. Regional Collaboration & Integration
- 12. Systematic Monitoring & Evaluation

Policy Thematic Development Areas

Central to the OECS 2025 CSTP are eight (8) thematic development areas that reflect and within which are grouped commonly identified needs, issues, and related topics seen by Member States to be necessary for the transformative development of tourism in the OECS.

THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS
(i)   Inclusive Growth & Income Distribution
(ii) Blue Tourism
(iii) Climate Change & Risk Resilience
(iv) Product & Niche Market Development
(v)   Biodiversity and Ecosystems Protection & Resource Conservation
(vi) Access & Transport Services
(vii) Tourism Destination Management
(viii) Institutional Capacity

Policy Statements

The main feature of the OECS 2025 CSTP are its eight common sustainable tourism policy statements that provide the consensus of Member States for each thematic development area (*box titled OECS 2025 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy Statements*).

Over the coming decade, tourism development and action strategies in the OECS will be based upon, emanate from and be guided by these policy statements, i.e.:

OECS 2025 COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY STATEMENTS

Inclusive Growth & Income Distribution

1. "Tourism Development across the OECS will optimize its contribution to **Inclusive Economic Development** through **equitable Income Distribution**".

Blue Tourism

2. "The OECS will increase the economic, social and environmental benefits from the promotion and sustainable use of **coastal and marine resources** for **blue tourism**".

Climate Change & Risk Resilience

3. "Tourism in the OECS will be **climate-smart and risk-resilient** by adhering to and mainstreaming **climate change** mitigation and adaptation principles and facilitating strategies to build **resilience** for the **risks** to which tourism is vulnerable".

Product & Niche Market Development

4. "The **tourism product** across the OECS will be **enhanced** and **diversified,** utilising appropriate **technology** to expand and attract higher spend niche markets while assuring **quality standards** of the products and services provided".

Biodiversity and Ecosystems Protection & Resource Conservation

5. "OECS tourism will ensure the **sustainable use** of the **natural environment and its ecosystems**, and effectively manage and conserve the **resources** it utilizes".

Access & Transport Services

6. "The OECS will support the development of cost-effective, energy efficient **transportation options** to facilitate a sustainable level of destination and attraction accessibility".

Tourism Destination Management

7. "An appropriate **destination management** framework will be in place to support the effectiveness of the region's 2025 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy across the OECS".

Institutional Capacity

8. "The OECS will ensure that tourism **institutional capacity** at the **national and regional levels** is well positioned to effectively and consistently **lead, manage and administer** the transformative development and sustainability of tourism across the region".

Policy Framework: Needs & Priorities

Each thematic development area and policy statement address common needs as identified in the overall OECS 2025 CSTP Framework. This framework is summarized in the form of a building structure *(diagram titled OECS 2025-2035 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework)* and highlights the:

(i)   overarching vision, symbolised by the roof, which all policies work towards;

(ii)   guiding principles that all tourism decision-making must consider - represented by the structure's foundation;

(iii)   common tourism development needs, comprising the walls; and

(iv)   policy thematic development areas and the key topics for policy directives, i.e. tourism development needs covering trends, development, issues and opportunities – as itemized in the windows.

OECS 2025-2035 COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY FRAMEWORK

REGIONAL STRATEGIC VISION

Sustainable, Resilient, Innovative Tourism promoting Inclusive Economic Development

OECS Tourism Development Needs

1. INCLUSIVE GROWTH & INCOME DISTRIBUTION
Community Tourism; MSME & Entrepreneurship; Youth Engagement and Empowerment; Value Chain Maximation & Inter-Sectoral Linkages

2. BLUE TOURISM
Blue Tourism Expansion; Coral Reef Restoration; Beach Use Panning & Coastal Zone Management; EIA; Marine Protected Areas; Marinas, Jetties & Mooring; blue tourism awareness building & Human Capital

3. CLIMATE CHANGE & RISK RESILIENCE
Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation; Alternate & Blue Energy; Carbon Neutral Tourism; Sargassum; Crisis & Risk Resilient Action

4. PRODUCT & NICHE MARKET DEVELOPMENT
Niche Markets- Cultural Heritage; Events & Festivals; Culinary; Regional Market Growth for Sustained Tourism; Increasing World Heritage Sites; Product Grading & Classification; Product Standards & Certification; Wheelchair Accessibility; Multi Destination and Product Marketing

5. BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION & RESOURCE CONSERVATION
Biodiversity & Ecosystem Protection; Waste Minimization & Management; Circular Tourism; Use of Plastics & Styrofoam; Improving Resource Use- water & energy conservation

6. ACCESS & TRANSPORT SERVICE
Cost effective Inter & Intra Regional Air Access; Ferry Services; Air/Sea/Ground Transport; Energy Efficient Transport

7. TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT
Research & Statistics (TSA); Use of Technology; Labour Market, People & HR Development; PPP/Destination Management Councils; Public Awareness & Sensitisation; Legislative Infrastructure

8. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
Strengthening National Tourism Agencies, Adding Value to the Tourism Function at the Regional Level; Public Agency Partnership Arrangements; Regional Partnership

OECS Tourism Development Needs

OECS
COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY
To Increase Competitiveness Based on a Blue Economy Approach
2025-2035

FOUNDATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Sustainable Development, Evidence Based Decisions; PPP; Collaboration & Integration; Systematic M&E

While issues and topics could be facilitated under one or more themes and policies, and there are cross cutting topics that must be considered in several or all areas, those best aligned for the purpose of each theme are clustered accordingly under each of the thematic development areas. Climate change and risk resilience, for example, are cross-cutting topics that must be considered in some form in all areas, while community tourism can be considered in most developmental areas given its ability to address a range of issues.

OECS 2025 CSTP Layout

The layout of the OECS 2025 CSTP, after the "Common Strategic Directions' are outlined, is according to each policy thematic development area with each following a similar format, i.e.:

(i)   Title of the Thematic Development Area

(ii)   Context

(iii) Key Considerations

(iv)   Areas for Common Policy Directives, and

(v)   Policy Directives made up of:

    (a)   A Lead Policy Statement, and

    (b)   Specific Policy Directives.

As part of the lead policy statements, specific policy directives are sub-policy guidelines for targeted and commonly identified needs. Specific policy directives under *"Inclusive & Growth and Income Distribution,"* for example, are related to common issues such as *Community Tourism*, *MSME & Entrepreneurship, and Youth Engagement & Empowerment etc.,* as identified in the respective "window" of the Policy Framework Structure. This is similar across the board in each window of the Policy Framework Structure.

The lead policy statements and specific policy directives function as the accepted guidelines for action and strategy development by the OECS Commission and Member States.

Implementation and Monitoring

The policy concludes with an outline of its Implementation and Monitoring Approach. Achieving sustainable tourism is recognised as a continuous process the requires the implementation of necessary measures and constant monitoring to determine that that desired impact is being achieved.

Tourism operates in a dynamic environment nationally, regionally and globally making constant review and adjustment of implementation measures and policy mandates necessary. In this regard, the Regional Task Force of Tourism and the OECS Inter-Divisional Committee will play a key role in the implementation and systematic monitoring of the OECS 2025 CSTP.

The OEC 2025 CSTP represents the Member State leadership required to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Policy achievement, however, will also require on-going engagement, sustained buy-in, collaboration, and informed participation of stakeholders as the Region takes full account of tourism's current and future economic, social and environmental impact, addresses the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities across the OECS.

Moving ahead, recommendation is made for the development and implementation of an action strategy with a linked stakeholder sensitization plan that:

(i)   demonstrates the practical applicability of the policies and the updated policy approaches to community tourism, resource use, heritage and biodiversity protection, and

(ii)   allows a common understanding of the updated concepts e.g. blue tourism and circular tourism, that are now led by policies under the 2025 CSTP.

Common Issues Common Policy

Notwithstanding the transformative approach adopted throughout, the OECS 2025-2035 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy recognises that tourism across OECS Member States is at differing stages in the development continuum and that policy implementation mechanisms at the national level are not all uniformed. The current needs addressed within the OECS 2025 Policy are, therefore, meant, like the previous policy, to reflect consensus and commonalities across the region. As such, this 2025 Policy maintains coverage of primarily those issues, opportunities and priorities that can best be addressed collaboratively with and through Member States with the support of the OECS Commission.

This OECS 2025 Policy, therefore, does not address each issue raised nationally by stakeholders nor specifically detail policies or country-specific interventions needed at the national level. It, however, still allows Member States with existing national tourism policies to realign policies as appropriate and to fine-tune for their specific situation. Those without documented sustainable tourism policies or that are in the development process will have a reference point for consideration.

As the OECS work towards transformative development and continued economic growth, this update will, like its predecessor:

- Lend to a common and minimum benchmark for all OECS national tourism policies;
- Reduce the fragmentation of tourism nationally; and
- Allow for more effective and meaningful engagement of stakeholders and implementation support nationally, regionally and internationally.

INTRODUCTION

Context

This updated version of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Common Tourism Policy, retitled as the "OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy", was funded by the World Bank (WB) as part of the support provided to strengthen the enabling environment for the blue economy, economic recovery, and resilience in the OECS under its "Unleashing the Blue Economy in the Caribbean" (UBEC) project.

Tourism, as a key source of foreign-exchange earnings and tax revenue for countries in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), is a significant part of the development strategy in the OECS. With the optimistic global forecast for a 5.5% per annum increase (WTTC, 2022) in Caribbean travel and tourism over the post pandemic decade 2022 to 2032, and with all of tourism's marine, coastal and freshwater activities forming part of the blue economy, tourism and the blue economy offer a source for expanded growth that can further economic development in the OECS Region.

This updated policy, therefore, broadens the scope of the 2011 OECS Common Tourism Policy to include the blue economy, while comprehensively addressing current common tourism development issues, opportunities and priorities across Member States.

Trends & Global Developments

The 2025 CSTP captures key trends and developments at the wider Caribbean and global levels that currently impact upon and are of common significance to the OECS. These include:

(i) *Post COVID-19 Trends*
     Policy adjustments consider post-pandemic trends that saw further shifts in global market and consumer demands, a heightened move towards more responsible and niche travel, and a period of continued transformation and rapid changes in innovation and the use of technology.

(ii) *United Nations 2030 Agenda & SDGs*
     2015 saw the start of global emphasis on the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) that stress people, planet, and partnership in the achievement of prosperity and peace. The SDGs balance three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. The overarching goal is to end extreme poverty, fight inequality, and ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

     While tourism can address all 17 SDGs, as highlighted in **Annex 1**, it has been specifically targeted in three, i.e., Goals 8, 12 and 14, related respectively to:

     - decent work and economic growth (Goal 8);
     - sustainable consumption and production (SCP) (Goal 12); and
     - the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources (Goal 14).

(iii) *Alignment with International Conventions and Protocols*
      Commitments to the global 2030 Agenda saw Protocols being signed by OECS Member States in related areas such as *climate change; biodiversity; marine protection, and wildlife protection*. Tourism policies must strike a balance between its own policies and the mandates of these protocols. This update, therefore, considers tourism in relation to the protocols signed by OECS Member States including:

      - 2015 United Nations Framework for Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the parent treaty of the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol, which aim to prevent dangerous human

interference with the climate system (covering Nationally Determined Contributions/Greenhouse Gas Emission);

- Glasgow Declaration for increased urgency to accelerate climate action in tourism;
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Cartagena Convention, i.e. the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR);
- Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

(iv) Climate Change & Risk Resilience Priorities

Attention to climate change and resilience to crises are highlighted globally, and specifically across the wider Caribbean and in the OECS where they are critical to the sustainability of tourism. Small island nations such as those in the OECS are among the countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and stronger and more frequent storms. Resilience to climate change and other crises – anthropogenic or natural are, therefore, guided by policy within this update.

(v) Economic Areas of Focus

Post 2015 has seen additional prominence given to various concepts of how the SDGs are best operationalised in the economy with the following identified for priority focus within this updated policy:

- Circular Economy: This conveys that production and consumption (SDG Goal 12) must be in a way that minimise the use of resources, cut waste and reduce carbon emissions. In the circular economy products are kept in use for as long as possible, by repairing, recycling or redesigning.

- Blue Economy: Linked to the SDGs are colour-coded categories used to describe different economic approaches. While all approaches incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development, each approach is grouped around particular economic activities.

Colours frequently referred to in the OECS are Green (Eco), Orange, Yellow and Blue. While all are addressed within the policy update, attention is placed on the blue economy, which focuses on coastal and marine activities – activities that are fundamental to OECS tourism and specific to SDG # 14 and to its *accompanied 14.7* target to *"Increase the Economic Benefits to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Less Developed Countries (LDCs) from the sustainable use of marine resources, including sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism"*.

(vi) Resilient & Inclusive Development

Also considered in this update are the focus areas of the May 2024 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) held in Antigua & Barbuda. These areas are summarised in Table A.

Table A: Key Issues & Priorities at SIDS4 2024

Under the theme "Resilient and Inclusive Development," the key areas of focus are seen as playing a critical role in transitioning tourism in SIDS into a sustainable and resilient model that places people and planet at its core.

4th International Conference on SIDS
27-30 MAY, 2024 - ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

#	KEY AREAS OF FOCUS
1	Localising the Supply Chain to Reduce Leakages
2	Protecting Biodiversity
3	Circular Consumption and Production
4	Better Data and Intelligence
5	De-Risking Investments
6	Innovative Finance in connection with Blue Carbon

POLICY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

To fully identify and align current common trends, development, issues and priorities in the OECS and to validate the relevance of the resulting policies, the process to develop the OECS 2025-2035 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy utilised a stakeholder-engaged approach.

Stakeholder Engagement

(i) Member State Engagement

As the key stakeholders, the policy development process engaged a total of some 538 persons in ten (10) Member States between the period October 2023 to February 2024.

In Member States, stakeholders engaged represented a range of vital public, private and NGO sector agencies, as well as civic and community groups across the spectrum of the travel and tourism industry sub-sectors and value chain. These included representative from:

(a)   the accommodation sector;

(b)   the food and beverage sector;

(c)   tourism-related transportation; (d) recreation, entertainment and attractions; and

(d)   meeting, incentives, conferences and event organisers as well as national tourism agencies responsible for tourism development and destination marketing.

Stakeholders also included agencies that are linked to or impact upon tourism development, some of which are responsible for tourism related assets. Impacting agencies, for example, ranged from those with responsibility for agriculture, fisheries, education, and labour to those responsible for environment and resource protection; economic planning, statistics, and infrastructure as well as those operating in the legal profession and the media.

Stakeholders in eight (8) OECS Member States contributed through on-site and in-person individual and group discussions, consultations and meetings while two (2) Member States contributed virtually.

(ii) Engagement of Key Regional Agencies

The updated policy was additionally informed by dialogue held with representatives of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in collaboration with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST); the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

(iii) Select Stakeholder Group Input

As part of the stakeholder-engaged approach two separate bodies along with the input of the OECS CEOs/Directors of Tourism were engaged in reviewing the content of the policy for strategic relevance, consistency and validity and to ensure that a suitably focused and common approach is taken. The two entities comprised:

- The OECS Regional Task Force of Tourism Permanent Secretaries; and
- The OECS Commission Inter-Divisional Policy Review Committee.

A special consultation was also held with the OECS Regional Task Force of PSs for their leadership on the common strategic direction for tourism that included the tenets of the OECS 2025 CSTP.

Desk Research

To further ascertain issues and priorities, desk research and document reviews were also key and ongoing aspects of the policy development approach.

In addition to the review of national tourism policies, strategic plans, economic planning documents and other reference material made available by stakeholders, pertinent documents reviewed to guide the update included the OECS Blue Economy Strategy and Action Plan, the World Bank (WB) OECS Blue Economy Tourism Analytics, the OECS Development Strategy 2019-2028 and the 2011 OECS Common Tourism Policy.

The work undertaken by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) as part of its Regional Tourism and Health/Travelers Health Program (THP) was also considered along with the CTO 2020 Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Development Framework (CSTPDF) against which the updated policy is also benchmarked (**Figure A**).

Figure A: CTO 2020 CSTPDF

The CTO 2020 CSTPDF with its seven areas for tourism policy and development, is a reference tool for policy development in the Caribbean. This tool specifically supports sustainable tourism and climate responsible policies, with climate smart action being mainstreamed across all of its developmental areas.

Policy Development Approach Summary

The process to develop the policy that highlights the approach taken is summarised in **Figure B.**

Figure B: 2025 Sustainable Tourism Policy Development Process
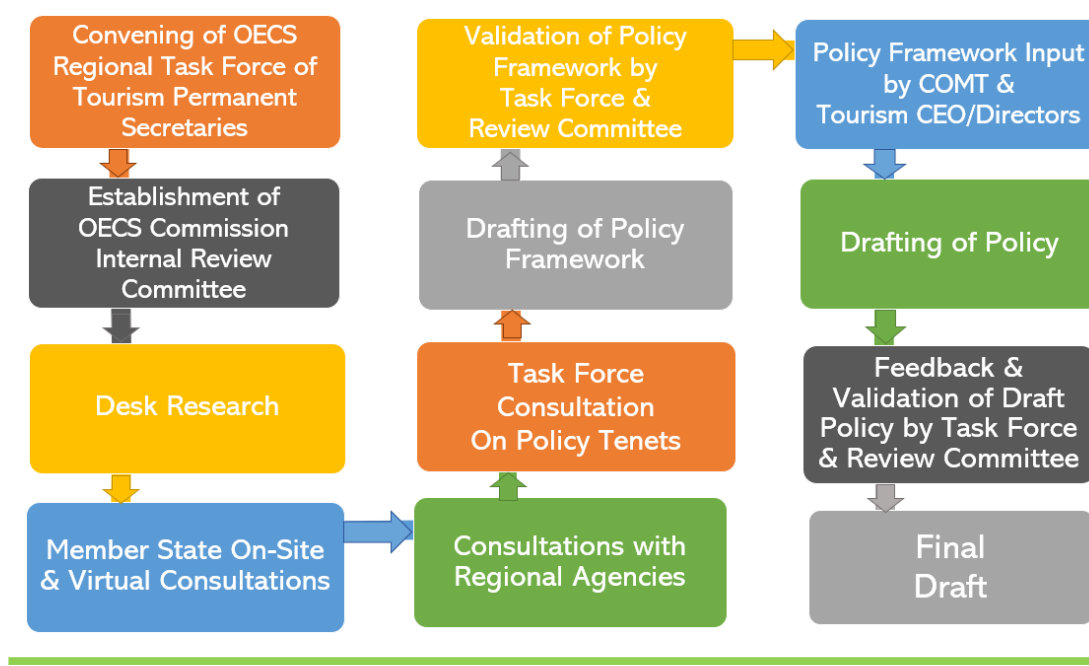
COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

COMMON STRATEGIC DIRECTION

VISION

MISSION

GOALS

PRINCIPLES
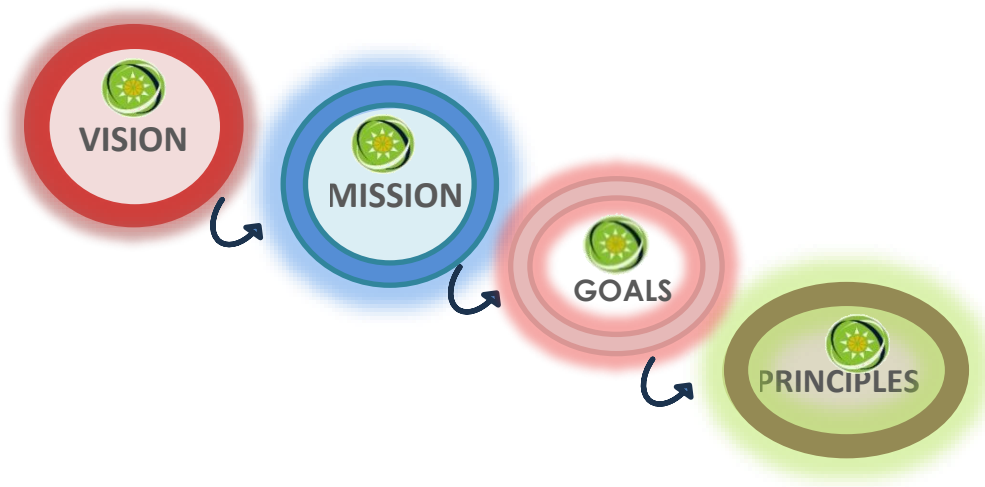
1. COMMON STRATEGIC DIRECTION

1.1   STRATEGIC VISION

The policy is guided by a strategic vision for:

> ***OECS Tourism that is Sustainable, Resilient, Innovative, and contributes to Inclusive Regional Economic Development.***
>
> **VISION**
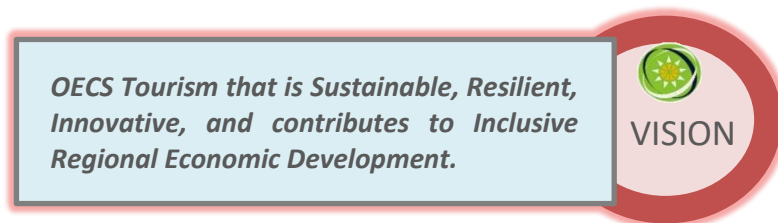
Indicated in the vision are five (5) significant concepts that reflect stakeholder consensus for the desired outcome of tourism development across the OECS. These are:

(i)   **Sustainable Tourism:**
Tourism that makes optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources for national development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnerships among government, the private sector and communities.[1]

(ii)   **Tourism Resilience:**
Tourism development that is quickly and efficiently able to recover from crises and the effects of hazards, shocks or other risk stressors - meteorological, geophysical, human or economic, so that its continued development is not adversely delayed or compromised.

(iii)   **Innovative:**
Tourism development that continually transforms creative concepts into tangible outcomes that improve efficiency, effectiveness or address unmet needs. Tourism in the OECS will, therefore, bring new ideas, methods, products, services and solutions that have significant positive impact and value.

(iv)   **Inclusive:**
Tourism that gives the opportunity for the people of each Member State to take advantage of tourism opportunities and to drive national ownership.

Visioned is tourism with national policies and frameworks that facilitate the skills development and investment necessary for nationally-owned tourism products and services, giving people, communities and the diverse range of stakeholders across the OECS the chance to drive ownership, local entrepreneurship and employment stability. Tourism in the OECS, therefore, recognises, promotes and facilitates:

- the diversity of national stakeholders including persons with disabilities, the elderly,

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[1] *CTO CSTPDF 2020. See **Annex 3**: Key Terms & Phrases for details.*

youths, indigenous people, and individuals living in remote or distant locations;

- access to and equal opportunity in decision-making and ownership;
- growth and opportunities in all of its sub-sectors and value-chain; and
- a wider spread of activities and benefits across national economies.

(v) **Economic Development:**
Tourism activities that are sustained all year round allowing all essential economic resources in each Member State to be available on an ongoing basis to its citizens. Tourism, therefore, ensures viable, short and long-term economic operations, providing economic benefits that are fairly distributed to all stakeholders. In effect, this helps with job creation, stable employment, income-earning opportunities, reducing unemployment, and enhancing people's living standards and the quality of life in host communities.

1.2   MISSION

The Mission centres around the broad task assigned to Member States and the OES Commission working collaboratively to implement the OECS 2025 CSTP over its validity period. It is based on achieving more than individual States can achieve on their own through synergy and collaboration among Member States and with the OECS Commission, i.e.:

> *To create added value for OECS Member States, its tourism industry, people, host communities, and visitors by working collaboratively and synergistically to advance inclusive, sustainable tourism development.*

MISSION

1.3   STRATEGIC GOALS

The strategic goals of the OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025 are itemized as follows:

General Strategic Goals

(i)   To establish an enabling policy environment for the optimisation of sustainable and responsible tourism across the OECS;

(ii)   To contribute to balanced growth and development of the tourism sector and economies across the OECS Economic Union; and

(iii)   To support an improved quality of life in all Member States.

Specific Strategic Goals

(i)   To improve tourism's competitiveness and increase the value that each Member State derives from tourism;

(ii)   To heighten tourism's effectiveness as a contributor towards achievement of the SDGs;

(iii)   To advance adherence to the commitments of the Region to climate change and to the role of tourism in supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation;

(iv)   To address risk resilience as a key part of tourism's sustainability in the OECS;

(v)   To ensure that tourism is led by a policy for biodiversity protection;

(vi)   To advance a circular tourism economy in the region;

(vii)   To heighten and support innovation and digitization in the tourism sector;

(viii)   To recognize tourism as a critical segment of the region's blue economy and to better poise the OECS to take advantage of blue tourism opportunities while protecting coastal, marine ecosystems;

(ix)   To optimise inclusive growth with focus on the engagement of youths; those that are less advantaged; community members; the indigenous and individuals in more remote locations in host destinations as well as to ensure gender equality in the tourism development;

(x)   To optimise linkages with other economic activities within host communities;

(xi)   To develop the human capital needed to support the continued development of all aspects of tourism development including blue and circular tourism aspects of Member States; and

(xii)   To better position National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) to effectively govern, plan, coordinate, manage, raise awareness and collaborate for destination development and tourism enhancement.

1.4   GUIDING & FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles are established as the foundation upon which all policy is based. These principles are, therefore, fundamental to decision-making and will, on one hand, be the leading principles underlying each policy and on the other, will guide the development of an enabling policy environment to support these underlying principles.

While guiding principles reflect the need of any given situation, there are elements that are generally consistent across all policies, strategies and plans developed to incorporate the 2015-2030 Global Sustainable Development Agenda and its SDGs. The 2030 agenda and the SDGs are grounded in the principles of sustainability, which is aimed at:

> *Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*.

For the OECS, the following eight (8) principles are set to guide policy, decision-making and actions in all elements of tourism development over the next decade:

(i)   ECONOMIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Tourism development across the OECS, regardless of the type or form, will adhere to the principles of sustainable development. OECS tourism must, therefore, demonstrate:

(1)   **Economic Sustainability:** All forms of tourism in the OECS must be economically sustainable. This translates into a tourism industry that is financially profitable, viable and competitive and/or meets the sustainable economic goal set by the tourism entity to the benefit of the country, tourism service providers and the local population.

(2)   **Socio-Cultural Sustainability:** While showcasing the cultural diversity and uniqueness of each Member State and allowing the local heritage and patrimony to be enjoyed, tourism will respect the cultural authenticity of OECS host communities, conserve the Region's built and

living cultural heritage, and respect the values and traditions. In so doing, socio-cultural sustainability will place importance on harmony as it protects the local way of life, cultural identity, and traditional heritage and practices in each jurisdiction in the OECS.

(3) **Environmental Sustainability:** This requires responsible use of the natural resources, which is a primary asset in the Region. Sustainable tourism in the OECS must, therefore, contribute to protecting its natural resources and biodiversity both on land and in the ocean, thereby ensuring that ecosystem functions are not damaged.

(ii) CLIMATE SMART ACTIONS

Tourism development in the OECS will be built on the quadruple bottom line of sustainable development, which recognizes that sustainability cannot be achieved without climate smart actions. Climate smart actions relate to tourism that increases resilience (adaptation), reduces or removes greenhouse gases (mitigation), and enhances achievement of sustainable tourism.

OECS sustainable tourism will, therefore, consider and demonstrate the "Quadruple Elements" of Sustainable Development which includes not only (1) economic; (2) cultural; and (3) environmental sustainability; but also (4) climate resilience.

This is of even greater significance to the OECS region whose geolocation makes it vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods, and which is compounded by the changing climate. Linked to this is the fact that the region's tourism product is dependent on its natural resources, which are highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change. Climate smart adaptation and mitigation actions must, therefore, be mainstreamed in all areas of sustainable tourism policy development.

(iii) DISASTER RISK RESILIENCE

The OECS is not only prone to climate-related hazards such as hurricanes, floods and droughts, but also to seismic activities that result in volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. In addition, as a sector that depends on the movement of people, tourism in the region is also subject to health hazards (the Covid-19 pandemic as a case in point) and other anthropogenic risks, hazards and crises.

Tourism in the OECS must, therefore, be able to resist, absorb, adapt and quickly and effectively recover from the effects of hazards, shocks or other stressors so that its sustainability is not compromised.

(iv) SUPPORTING THE SDGS

Tourism across the OECS must contribute to the 17 SDGs, with additional and specific underlying focus over the updated policy's validity period on:

- **Goal 8:** Decent work & economic growth (Community Tourism, Business & Linkages & Inclusion of e.g., Youths);
- **Goal 12:** Responsible consumption and production (Resource Use and Management); and
- **Goal 14:** Sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

(v)   INCLUSION

Tourism development in the OECS will be built on the principle of inclusion which requires attention to the diversity and range of stakeholders including communities, persons with disabilities, youths, elderly, and indigenous people, and a commitment to give access to and opportunity to all people irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or disability.

(vi)   INNOVATION AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Innovation and the use of technology play a crucial role in shaping and advancing the tourism industry around the world. Innovation in tourism is multifaceted, encompassing technological, environmental and experiential advancements.

Tourism in the OECS Region, has to be built on the adoption of innovative practices and a culture of innovation in all spheres of its development as innovation and the use of technology will be key contributors to the growth, sustainability, and competitiveness of destinations and businesses across the OECS.

(vii)   EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Combined with critical thinking, tourism decisions must consider and/or be based upon the best available evidence. Evidence-based practices guided by reliable data and trustworthy solutions contribute to more effective decisions and successful results. Evidence-based decision is, therefore, an agreed guiding principle in support of sustainable tourism and is an identified foundational element upon which tourism in the OECS should be built.

(viii)   COMPETENT HUMAN RESOURCES

Underpinning policies must be a suitably trained, educated, competent and capable workforce both in the wider industry/society and at national tourism organisations (NTOs) such as the Ministries responsible for tourism. Policies may fail or be weakened if human sources (HR) and the labour force in the region are not well positioned to support the actions that emanate.

Policies must, therefore, guide and be guided by HR development across the OECS supported by modernized educational institutions well equipped to training and education needed by the tourism sector.

(ix)   EXCEEDING VISITOR EXPECTATION

Sustainable tourism should maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction by ensuring a meaningful experience to visitors without compromising the natural, cultural and heritage resources utilised. Experiences should also seek to raise visitor awareness of the importance and use of destination resources, while providing a service that meets or exceeds visitor satisfaction or expectation.

(x)   PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP)

PPP is necessary to effectively implement sustainable tourism policies and initiatives. In fact, the composite nature of tourism requires the input of a broad stakeholder base that represents the entire tourism value chain *(definition in Key Terms & Phrases)* with a shared vision for tourism.

This tourism value chain ranges from micro, small and medium size enterprises that make up the major portion of businesses and entrepreneurial activities in the OECS tourism sector to the larger

private sector firms that have invested in the accommodation and other tourism sub-sectors. PPP is, therefore, critical and an underlying principle for achieving the policies for sustainable tourism development.

(xi)   REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION

Underpinned by the RTB, OECS Member States must continue to cooperate to address the challenges brought about by a diversified and dynamic tourism sector and an increasingly globalised tourism economy. By continuing to work towards integration on key issues where a regional approach gives added value, the efficiency and effectiveness of the OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy is enhanced and regional synergies can be realised.

(xii)   SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As sustainable tourism development is a process, systematic monitoring of policies, their implementation and impact is necessary. Based on the evaluation of the results, necessary preventive and/or corrective measures and adjustments can be made. Systematic monitoring and evaluation are guiding principles and foundational elements of the 2025 CSTP.

Figure 1 summarises the guiding and foundational principles upon which the OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025 and the resulting actions are to be based.

Figure 1: OECS Common Sustainable Tourism 2025 Summary of Guiding & Foundational Principles

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

INCLUSIVE GROWTH
&
INCOME DISTRIBUTION

2. INCLUSIVE GROWTH & INCOME DISTRIBUTION

2.1 CONTEXT

The OECS region is aware of the economic significance of tourism and the wide ranging and immense income-generating opportunities it provides. In the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), tourism is solidified as a key source of foreign-exchange earning and tax revenue for governments. This is emphasized by the individual contribution of travel and tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represented by the pre-pandemic baseline year of 2019 (Table 1[2]).

Table 1: OECS Countries Pre-Pandemic (2019) Travel and Tourism (T&T) GDP % Share

When separated from travel, World Bank (WB) data highlights that the tourism sector in their OECS Member States of Antigua & Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St, Vincent and the Grenadines, contributes up to 39% on average to GDP, and accounts for nearly 60% of exports and about 11% of regional jobs. OECS countries are among the countries most reliant on tourism in the world.

	Country/Economy Rank	2019 T&T GDP % Share
1	Antigua and Barbuda	83.3%
2	St Lucia	59.8%
3	Anguilla	48.7%
4	British Virgin Islands	44.4%
5	St Kitts and Nevis	43.6%
6	Grenada	43.6%
7	St Vincent and the Grenadines	40.5%
8	US Virgin Islands	28.7%
9	Dominica	26.8%
10	Guadeloupe	9.5%
11	Martinique	7.8%

Member States are also cognizant of tourism's capacity to extend its benefits beyond the sector due to its broad-based economic value chain (Figure 2) that requires a wide range of ancillary goods and services from other economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, construction, manufacturing and the creative industries. This requirement supports the growth of other productive sectors due to the linkages tourism value chain creates and influences the development of local entrepreneurship with further impact on reducing leakages of foreign exchange.

Figure 2: Tourism Value Chain

With its broad-based value chain, tourism also has a transformative and deep social footprint given its added capacity to contribute to livelihood opportunities for locals, to inclusive economic participation, and to a wider distribution of income across the economy. In this context, tourism has been shown to generate diverse social and economic benefits for the poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalized within society including youths, women, persons in remote communities and the vulnerable. With the post-pandemic forecast for

[2] (WTTC, 2022)

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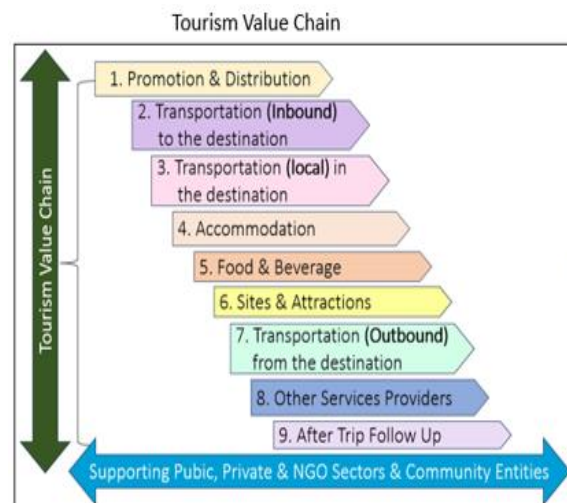
tourism to outpace the growth rate of the global economy in the coming decade, the Region anticipates the opportunities this will bring for economic development and expanded growth.

The challenge is:

- positioning the OECS Region for transformative growth in which the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed across communities, accrues to the people of the region, and optimizes the level of tourism economic benefits remaining at home in the region.

2.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require that:

(i)   income-generating opportunities from tourism are accessed by and meaningfully and broadly distributed throughout the society in every destination and host community across the region.

- A common priority in support of this requirement is community-based tourism (CBT) with policy directive at the regional level seen as very important by Member States to encourage further growth and effectiveness. CBT *(see **Annex 3**: Key Terms & Phrases)* as emphasized by CTO (CTO, 2019) is an important mechanism for addressing inclusive growth and income distribution due to its capacity to engage a wide cross-sector of the society within local destinations. CBT, for example, has the potential to include vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly targeted groups such as women, youths, and indigenous communities. It also acts as a pull-factor for visits to remote locations further benefiting community members residing in these areas.

(ii)   the income-generating opportunities tourism brings are maximised through appropriate monetizing and pricing of tourism sites and attractions.

- In the OECS Region there are numerous sites and attractions that are vested in and managed by public sector agencies. These sites and attractions are additional avenues for meaningful income generation but must be competitively priced for a mixed range of visitors accordingly. This is also important as there are usually high costs involved in conserving, protecting and maintaining these sites and attractions.

- With more responsible travellers, there is opportunity for visitor partnerships by way of competitively priced "visit & protect" fees that visitors are generally willing to pay. A strategy of partnership and engagement of local community members in site and attractions management can also support appropriate monetizing and pricing strategies to further improve income generation and optimisation of tourism's economic impact.

(iii)   youths are actively engaged in accessing tourism opportunities with greater levels of engagement in the sector.

- As the Region rethinks tourism, OECS Member States have drawn attention to the need to ensure that there is greater integration and involvement of the Region's youths in the tourism economy from, for example, increased participation in decision-making and entrepreneurship. Member States are, therefore, in agreement with the need to continually and actively engage youths - now making up an increasingly significant proportion of the available workforce across the region. Youths, as the next generation of leaders, must be continually brought together for discussions and to hear their

concerns and vision for their involvement in the sector. Young people must be beneficiaries of tourism's growth and active participants in tourism.

(iv) all elements of tourism value chain are supported in a way that optimises wider and broader-based participation and innovation in providing visitor experiences.

- Member States have recognised that tourism goes beyond accommodation and restaurants to the full compendium of products and services that cater to the visitor experience. A significant number of visitor activities take place in the destination visited with each activity adding value to the visitor experience. A marina or suitable mooring facility, for example, would add value to the experience of yachting visitors so too will the availability of provisioning services. Tourism value chain must be maximization by assessing visitor needs (by market) and providing a supportive environment to encourage business identification, innovation and development that enhances the full range of the visitor experience.

- While both foreign direct investment (FDI) and domestic private investment (DPI) are needed, encouraging CBT investments as a strategy can also support value chain maximization at the local entrepreneurship level. At the community level, dovetailing tourism with the blue economy, and the yellow economy, arts and crafts etc. to create more value must be further encouraged. This strategy will also optimise the amount of money that remains in the region via profits earned, wages, salaries and taxes, and can have an increased multiplier effect *(see **Annex 3**: Key terms & phrases)* on employment and income-generation, ultimately contributing to quality of life and prosperity.

(v) special focus be placed on encouraging and facilitating tourism entrepreneurship & micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) development

- MSMEs in Member States were not only involved in the accommodation sector but also in other tourism sub-sectors and auxiliary service areas such as tour operators and tour guides, restaurants, taxi, photography, and event planners etc. To further capitalise on the economic opportunities created by tourism, and to increase participation of private domestic investments across the region and specifically within communities, attention must, therefore, be given to regional programmes that recognise and support tourism MSME development, innovation and use of technology.

- Critical to this is capacity building for areas such as tourism product development, pricing and accessing tourism markets, finance and capital. Existing tourism entrepreneurial development tools such as that made available by CTO, can be utilised and adapted for OECS purposes. Also available for entrepreneurial development is the CTO Hospitality Assured tool that supports business and service excellence. This tool can be applied to a regional program specific to tourism businesses in any value chain or size category.

(vi) associated linkages that tourism has with other sectors are maximised.

- Improving sectoral linkages with tourism and addressing foreign exchange leakages continue to be common priority issues in Member States. Tourism service providers across the region require and must purchase a range of different inputs in-order-to and often before they can offer their services. These inputs may be sourced domestically, regionally or internationally. Member States are cognisant that sourcing domestically or regionally produced inputs helps to improve linkages with domestic providers by

boosting the thrusts for consumption and use of domestically and regionally produced goods and services. Improving linkages also tend to help lower the level of foreign exchange leakages from the economy. Notwithstanding, there is an awareness that Imported goods are often able to retail at lower prices due to economies of scale and lower input factor costs in production.

- Member States have recognised, however, that there is a place for higher priced locally produced goods that could be marketed based on health, organically grown or with high value-added properties. Rethinking intersectoral linkages post-pandemic, therefore, is necessary and innovative solutions and strategies must be identified that can improve tourism linkages with other productive sectors while reducing economic leakages from the Region.

- As a cross-cutting strategy, CBT can also improve linkages as the development and distribution of goods and services, local arts, crafts and cultural/heritage products to both locals and visitors specifically require backward and forward linkages between communities and the tourism sector. CBT is also a means of directly addressing the challenge of keeping more of tourism benefits "at home."

(vii) the local supply chain is positioned to support the needs of the tourism industry, while enhancing their position to sustain other local needs.

- The local supply chain is factored as part of tourism intersectoral linkages. Priority and specific focus, however, is placed on the supply of agricultural produce and associated products (and fisheries), which also play a role in food security across the region. Tourism development in the region was emphasized as a strategy by some OECS Member States to help offset a decline in agriculture and in agricultural exports. While tourism, as an export, helps the region with increasing foreign exchange, tourism linkages with agriculture is also a means for:

  (a) establishing a ready (export) market for boosting agricultural production and supply. The regional tourism industry – accommodation and restaurants – have noted their increased willingness to work with farmers in the local supply chain for available produce in the quantity and quality needed. There is heightened opportunity for regional strategies to broker this continued willingness and to enhance tourism/agricultural supply chain partnerships. Increases in agricultural supply can, in turn, be a means to increasing food production and influencing overall food security, and

  (b) diversifying the region's tourism product. The region has, for example, made strides in agro-tourism and culinary tourism development with increased emphasis on the use and showcasing of local agricultural and fisheries supply. Increasing visitor demands for authentic, local culinary experiences have provided an additional and renewed opportunity to further improve the local supply chain though tourism linkages with agriculture.

2.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Community-Based Tourism Growth and Effectiveness
- Youth Engagement and Empowerment

- Tourism Entrepreneurship & Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Development
- Value Chain Maximization
- Inter-Sectoral Linkages & Food Security

2.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

2.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

> Tourism Development across the OECS will optimise its contribution to Inclusive Economic Development through equitable Income Distribution.

2.4.2   Specific Policy Directives

(i)   **Community-Based Tourism for Inclusive Growth & Effectiveness**

- An internationally competitive, robust, inclusive, and sustainable community-based tourism sector will be facilitated across the region to benefit communities, youth, women, special groups and the most vulnerable through socio-economic development, income generation and job creation.
- Pricing and monetisation of sites and attractions to further support income generation and equitable distribution in destinations across the OECS will be addressed.

(ii)   **Youth Engagement & Empowerment**

- Champion the participation of youths across the region in tourism;
- Support regional youths in becoming the creators of innovative tourism experiences with a global impact.
- Focused attention will be placed on the involvement of youths in tourism and tourism - related and linked entrepreneurial and business activities to better position them for productive employment and income generation in the tourism sector.

(iii)   **Tourism Entrepreneurship & MSME Development**

- The establishment and commercial viability of tourism firms, MSMEs and entrepreneurship in both direct and indirect sub-sectors of the tourism value-chain will be supported. This support includes addressing the binding constraints they face which includes access to finance and capital.
- Community-based tourism groups, enterprises and entrepreneurial activities will be supported to provide sustainable, quality and viable community-based tourism products and experiences and entrepreneurial development.

(iv)   **Value Chain Maximization**

- Recognition and support will be given to emerging and new tourism value chain sub-sectors and activities including those in the marine and blue tourism economy.

(v)   **Inter-Sectoral Linkages & Food Security**

- Enhanced linkages between tourism and other economic sectors including agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, and the creative industries will be supported and the opportunities to stimulate cross-sectoral cooperation in individual States will be illustrated.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

BLUE TOURISM

3. BLUE TOURISM

3.1   CONTEXT

Tagged as being "Large Ocean States"[3], the OECS Region views its coastal and ocean space as a common heritage and asset in the sustainable development of the OECS Economic Union. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, for example, takes up a marine space of over 70 times the country's land area. Also, Antigua and Barbuda, with a land size of only 440 square kilometres (km^2), has an EEZ of 110,071 km^2, Grenada with a land size of 348.5 km^2, has an EEZ of 27,426 km^2, and Dominica, with a land mass of 750 km^2 and an EEZ of 28,985 km^2.

Managing and protecting the oceans have been a feature strategy within the OECS. This has been at the forefront of initiatives that actively engage Member States in regional and global efforts to sustain the health of the region's ocean system and productive resources.

Blue Economy

The blue economy has been a growing developmental area across the OECS since 2013 when the OECS Heads of Government adopted the Eastern Caribbean Regional Oceans Policy and Strategic Action Plan (ECROP SAP), which provides a framework that guides the planning and development of marine activities in the Eastern Caribbean region. Economic activities occurring in the coastal and marine environment that are undertaken in a sustainable and integrated manner and contribute to healthy ocean systems are part of the blue economy. Generally, the blue economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health[4]. The growing focus on the blue economy in the region is seen, for example, with:

- Dominica having in place its Blue Economy Scoping Study that provides some understanding of the possible opportunities that the blue economy presents, and a Ministry specifically for the inclusion of the Blue Economy in the promotion of growth and development in the country;

- Antigua and Barbuda currently establishing institutional arrangement to formalise and consolidate its work on blue economy matters having already been actively engaged in key initiatives under the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme; the OECD Sustainable Oceans for All Initiative; the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance;

- Grenada having a Blue Growth Coastal Master Plan and establishing its Blue Economy Ministry; and

- Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines all currently implement the WB UBEC project to support tourism development, ocean governance and sustainability.

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[3] Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (2020). "We Are Large Ocean States": Blue economy and ocean governance in the Eastern Caribbean. OECS Commission, Morne Fortune, Castries, Saint Lucia.
[4] (Millington, 2021) (see **Annex 3**: Key Terms & Phrases)

Blue Tourism

The coastal and marine environments are integral to the tourism product and activities offered in the region. Tourism coastal and marine activities occurring in the region include:

(i)	Cruises
(ii)	Yachting
(iii)	Recreational Boating
(iv)	Recreational Fishing
(v)	Scuba-Diving
(vi)	Snorkelling
(vii)	Marine Life Observation
(viii)	Water Sports – non-motorized including swimming and surfing and motorized including water-skiing and jet-skiing
(ix)	Recreational use of beaches (this is usually a free activity but includes the use of sunbeds, food and drink and souvenirs that are purchased by consumers).

These activities are in the region are traditionally concentrated along the coastlines, which exerts pressure on marine and coastal ecosystems that are already vulnerable to the effects of climate change and other natural and anthropogenic threats. Use of the coastal and marine space in the OECS, for instance, has seen over-tourism on beaches due to the high demand by, for example, cruise industry visitors. Stakeholders have also noted the impact on coral reefs and on other natural features that serve as attractions on the coast. Waste and pollution in coastal areas have further impacted the health of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Marine Tourism Must be Made Blue

Tourism coastal and marine activities in the region are, therefore, not automatically sustainable or "blue." However, if they (a) are sustainable, (b) are not damaging to the environment and local cultures whilst at the same time (c) being economically viable and contributing to livelihoods, then they become *Blue Tourism* activities. Therefore, it is not the activity that defines what a *Blue Tourism* activity is, but where it is located, how it is organised and operated, and the impact it has (Millington, 2021).

The coastal and marine space across the Region will continue to be pivotal as tourist arrivals increase in the coming decade. As an important sector operating within the blue economy space, tourism must now formally provide up-to-date regional policy leadership for the use and protection of the coastal and marine assets it promotes, and take responsibility for guiding the collaborative advancement of a blue tourism sector.

Policy guidance is also particularly important as post-pandemic trends are seeing heightened interest in new experiences that are more engaging with and protective of the environment. As tourism expands, opportunities for regenerative and restorative tourism also increase and must be captured by enabling policies.

The challenge, as highlighted in Figure 3, is to:

- foster an environment that allows existing tourism coastal and marine activities to fully move towards blue tourism as a meaningful part of the blue economy, while optimising the opportunities provided in the blue economy for blue tourism growth and expansion.

Figure 3: Transitioning to a Blue Tourism Economy

Source: World Bank/Acorn 2021 Report: Product Mapping, OECS Blue Economy Tourism Analytics by Kevin Millington

3.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require that:

(i)   renewed attention is given to increasing the economic benefits from the protective and sustainable use and management of the coastal and marine resources utilised for tourism;

(ii)   existing coastal and marine activities must be allowed to transition to blue tourism;

(iii)   the sustained and sustainable growth and expansion of blue tourism markets are optimised;

(iv)   emphasis is placed on advancing new regenerative tourism activities in the coastal and marine spaces across the Region;

(v)   coral reef restoration as a restorative and regenerative tourism activity will be specifically advanced for both tourism growth and for the positive impact that healthy coral ecosystems have, inter alia, on food security and jobs, beach nourishment and coastal protection.

(vi)   coastal communities and their members including youths and women, are meaningfully engaged in and sensitised on the use, management, monitoring and operation of blue tourism activities;

(vii)   visitor awareness is increased on their role in restorative and regenerative tourism and that increased opportunities are available for restorative blue tourism experiences;

(viii) beaches and coastal zone usage for tourism and recreation purposes are effectively planned and managed in keeping with carrying capacities and the need for multi-users while maintaining the integrity of the site;

(ix)   Environmental impact assessment be utilised as a common tool across the OECS for tourism developments along or in proximity to the coast;

(x)   designated marine protected areas to facilitate sustainable tourism recreational activities and to increase income generation for States are increased and formally established;

(xi)   the services and infrastructure (moorings, marinas, jetties) needed to support the tourism boating and cruising community and to protect the loss or degradation of blue carbon ecosystems such as seagrass beds, mangroves and other coastal and marine resources particularly in community coastal areas must be identified, supported, planned, managed;

(xii)   information on best practices and on blue tourism are shared with and among stakeholders; and

(xiii) human capital must be developed to support the jobs and income generating activities in the blue tourism economy[5].

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[5] *scarcity of capacity in the blue tourism field must be identified along with recommendations on how investments, including technical training programs, might be used to redress capacity shortfalls.*

3.3 AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Existing and New Blue Tourism Expansion
- Coral Reef Restoration
- Beach Use Planning and Coastal Zone Management
- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Environment Impact Assessment
- Infrastructure: Marinas, Jetties, Docks & Moorings
- Blue Tourism Awareness Building
- Blue Tourism Human Capital

3.4 POLICY DIRECTIVES

3.4.1 Lead Policy Statement

> The OECS will increase the economic, social and environmental benefits from the promotion and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources for blue tourism.

3.4.2 Specific Policy Directives

(i) Existing & New Blue Tourism Expansion

- Support the sustainable growth of existing marine tourism activities while encouraging the identification of new and innovative ideas that utilise blue tourism opportunities.

(ii) Coral Reef Restoration

- Given the importance of coral reefs, focused attention must be paid to supporting the increased involvement of the tourism sector in coral reef restoration.

(iii) Beach Use Planning & Coastal Zone Management

- To facilitate the expansion of blue tourism coastal activities, beach use planning and coastal zone management must be established and/or coordinated.

(iv) Marine Protected Areas (MPA)

- Encourage the creation of new MPAs while improving the management of existing MPAs.

(v) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- EIA must be established as a common OECS Member State tool for all tourism developments in coastal and near-coast regions to ensure that impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems are identified at an early stage and taken into consideration during the decision-making process. This ensures that negative impacts are avoided and mitigation measures are addressed at the planning phase.

(vi) Infrastructure: Marinas, Jetties, Docks & Moorings

- Promote investments in marina services and infrastructure needed to facilitate blue tourism operations, i.e., marinas, jetties, docks, moorings.

(vii) Blue Tourism Awareness Building

- Blue tourism best practice guide for tourism governance and management stakeholders will be developed and shared as part of an awareness building implementation strategy.

(viii) Blue Tourism Human Capital

- Identify the human capital needs and develop the human resources needed to support jobs and income generating activities in the blue tourism economy across the Region.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

CLIMATE CHANGE & RISK RESILIENCE

4. CLIMATE CHANGE & RISK RESILIENCE

4.1 CONTEXT

The effects of extreme weather events and changing weather conditions due to the impact of climate variability and change (CVC) are becoming more frequent and intense causing significant loss and damage to people, infrastructure, crops and livestock and also impact tourist arrivals. With the deep-seated connection between the tourism sector and the regional economy, when tourist arrival is negatively impacted, economic performance in the Region is also negatively affected. UNESCO, for example, reports that even moderate storms (that impact tourist arrivals) can reduce growth in Caribbean economies by about 0.5% of GDP (CTO, 2021).

CVC further affects the ability of the region to sustain its ecosystems, biodiversity and other natural and cultural assets that add to giving the region its competitive edge. Coral bleaching in reefs across the OECS have seen increases due to continued rise in water temperatures. Coastal erosion, which also damages coastal ecosystems together with increased sargassum, which is also linked to CVC, are noted across the Region.

Added to CVC, are natural disasters such as volcanoes, earthquakes and other anthropogenic risk and crisis - specifically those related to health and safety, that further impact tourism and consequently threaten economic performance, livelihoods and quality of life in the region.

Given the vulnerability of the OECS to natural and other disasters, climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and resilience issues are integrated into policy frameworks at the national and regional levels across the OECS, with the Region being signatory to key climate change conventions and protocols. Several Member States, therefore, have high-level policies for sustainable development, climate change and risk resilience that directly reference tourism.

As a common and priority issue, climate change and risk resilience must be integrated as part of tourism policy at the regional level. This is particularly significant as, although tourism is impacted by climate change, tourism activities also contribute to climate change. Its use of resources to support tourism and the CO_2 emissions and greenhouse gases (GHG) generated from the use of energy and as input into other resources used, contribute to global warming with a resulting impact on CVC.

Further Cause for Urgent Action

As parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), OECS countries have committed to applying concerted action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – mainly Carbon Dioxide (CO2) - across all sectors, including tourism. This reduction must be done in line with the UNFCCC's primary aim of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial level".

For the Caribbean, where climate change is a critical issue, the 2015 CARICOM Declaration for Climate Action, supports a "1.5 to Stay Alive" proposal to encourage limiting global warming to as far below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (IPCC, 2019) as possible to ensure the survival of the

Caribbean States and Territories.

For the tourism sector, a linked development that emphasises the need for tourism policies to lead and support climate smart responsibility is the April 2024 European Union (EU) Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D). The CS3D obliges EU companies to carefully manage social and environmental impacts along their entire value chain, including direct and indirect suppliers and their own operations, for which they must implement climate plans. This is likely to have an impact on tourism industry operators doing business with EU tour operators. At the operational level this has implications for the implementation of common national/regional environmental and climate smart certification, as verification of the climate responsibility of tourism sector operators.

The challenge is:
- ensuring that climate action, indicated as a specific goal in the 2015 UNSDGs and a key priority in the OECS, is mainstreamed across all tourism activities in the Region. A guiding principle, intrinsic in the OECS 2025 CSTP, is for greater synergies and collaboration at the regional and Member State levels to address climate change and risk resilience as they relate to the region's tourism sector.

4.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require that tourism implements measures to adapt to and mitigate against factors that contribute to global warming and CVC, and to reducing tourism's carbon footprint. Considerations in this regard may include:

(i) supporting actions that encourage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promoting a regional carbon offsetting program.

- CO2 emissions derived from tourism related activities are primarily generated by air travel, ground activities such as transport and electricity generation involved in the use or production of tourism services including heating, cooling, lighting, cooking, cleaning, pools and seawater desalination. **Figure 4** provides insights into the percentage contribution of various sub-sectors of tourism to CO_2 emissions.

Figure 4: Tourism Sub-Sector Contribution to CO2 Emissions
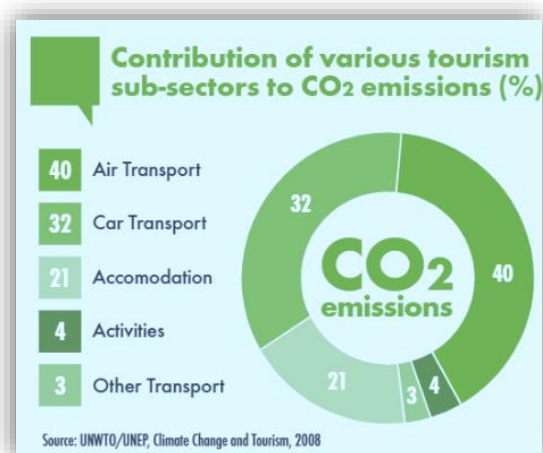
- While the **cruise tourism and yachting sector** have seen increased investments in solar energy powered vessels and while fossil fuel-powered cruise ships are giving way to new energy technology that reduces costs with less carbon emissions, a medium-sized cruise ship is recorded as emitting GHGs of that equivalent to those of 12,000 cars[6].

- A carbon offsetting program with cruise line companies and with the yachting sector may be an applicable regional approach to compensate for its carbon impact in the region.

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[6] (Garza, 2023)

(ii)   facilitating an environment that encourages the use of technological innovation and cost-effective alternative energy sources in the generation and efficient use and conservation of power.

- According to IMF data the single most important cost problem in the Caribbean is its' heavy dependence on expensive imported fossil fuels as the energy source (CTO, 2021). Today, available alternative energy sources have increased from solar and wind energy to include options such as geothermal, bioenergy, hydropower, hydroelectric, water, ocean and tidal energy.

- There is also an increasing range of environmental technology developed for the purpose of solving environmental problems that are applicable for widespread use in the tourism sector.   Such technology utilises less energy, produces less greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and generates less waste and waste water. Simple examples include carbon-scrubbing filters, water reduction systems, renewable energy solutions, energy efficient apparatus (e.g. bulbs, converter type air conditioning units), water and waste water treatment and recycling, biodigesters that are able to generate biofuel for use. Member States are also considering national alternative energy

(iii)   preserving or restoring existing natural sea defences, such as mangroves, wetlands and coral reefs given their ability to capture and store carbon.

- A regional tree planting program for the tourism industry can also act as a means of increasing carbon absorption and sequestration as well as efforts to maintain a pollution-free healthy ocean ecosystem given the role of the ocean in carbon sequestration.

(iv)   increasing public sector awareness in relation to climate change and the tourism sector.

- Building awareness such as the role of the ocean (as part of the blue economy) in carbon sequestration, and sharing information at the regional level among tourism Ministries and related agencies is important to empowering these entities to lead climate change action as they collaborate with stakeholder in the tourism sector across the region.

(v)   contributing to cross-sectoral solutions to the sargassum issue in the region

- the washing up of sargassum on beaches damaging several beaches in the Region causing tourism operations to be severely impacted and the health of community to be compromised[7].

The transformative approach regional priorities also require that:

(vi)   resilient to crisis
- The tourism sector across the region must be prepared for and resilient to health, safety and security risks as well as natural disasters (e.g., volcanoes, hurricanes, storms, flooding), human-induced (e.g., oil spills) hazards and other risk issues that impact the sustainability of tourism across the OECS.   Inter-agency collaboration at the wider regional level with agencies such as CARPHA and CDEMA must be enhanced.

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[7] *National sargassum management plans have been developed by the private sector in several OECS Member States including Saint Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the BVI, Anguilla and Montserrat but few have been officially adopted at the government level and even fewer are adequately funded or closely followed.*

4.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Climate Smart Action: Adapting to and Mitigating against Climate Change

- Energy: Alternate, Renewable & Blue Energy

- Carbon Neutral Tourism

- Addressing Sargassum Beaching

- Crisis and Risk Resilient Action

4.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

4.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

> Tourism in the OECS will be climate smart and risk resilient by adhering to and mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation principles and facilitating strategies to build resilience for the risks to which tourism is vulnerable.

4.4.2   Specific Policy Directives

(i)   Climate Smart Action

- Strategies to reduce the vulnerability of tourism across the OECS Region to the potential impacts of climate variability and change will be developed and collaborative actions taken.

(ii)   Energy

- Tourism in the OECS will utilise energy more efficiently, reduce dependence on the combustion of fossil fuels, and advance the use of renewable and blue energy.

(iii)   Carbon Neutral Tourism

- OECS tourism will be encouraged to support a carbon free environment and to compensate for its carbon impact through the use of carbon offsetting programmes and funding schemes.

(iv)   Sargassum

- Tourism will collaboratively bring attention to and develop solutions that address the issue and impact of sargassum in the OECS.

(v)   Crisis & Risk Resilient Action

- The health, safety, security and disaster risk issues that impact the sustainability of tourism in the OECS will be identified with appropriate strategies to allow tourism to resist, absorb, adapt and quickly and efficiently recover from the effects of hazards, shocks or stresses.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

PRODUCT &
NICHE MARKET DEVELOPMENT

5. PRODUCT & NICHE MARKET DEVELOPMENT

5.1 CONTEXT

The OECS tourism product comprises rich and uniquely diverse tangible and intangible resources that continue to provide a good match for the demand trends in international tourism both in the post-pandemic period and with the focus on the blue economy.

For competitiveness of the Region's tourism sector, experiences offered based on these resources must be continually developed, redesigned, rejuvenated, enhanced and promoted to:

(i)   penetrate growth in existing tourism markets, and

(ii)   expand into new markets.

This is well recognised across the OECS with all Member States continually striving to offer and promote increasingly distinctive and diversified products. In this regard, there is an increasing view for "Value over Volume" where Member States aim to streamline their tourism product to attract growing numbers of discerning stay-over visitors and niche tourists in a range of vertical markets with relatively higher average daily spends.

Figure 5 provides an indication of common niche tourism characteristics indicated as being available in Member States[8] (2011 Policy) that provided opportunities for further development of niche tourism.

Figure 5: OECS Common Niche Tourism Characteristics 2012-2017

	Birding	Diving	Fishing	Golf	Health/ Wellness	MICE*	Soft adventure	Wedding/ Honey-moon
Anguilla	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Antigua & Barbuda	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
BVI	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Dominica	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔
Grenada	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Montserrat	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	
St. Kitts	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Nevis	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
St. Lucia	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Source: OECS 2012-2017 Common Tourism Policy
*[*MICE= meetings, incentives, conventions & exhibitions]*

Niche products and markets that are currently and commonly prominent promoted across the region fall within the following categories:

- Romance, Weddings & Honeymoons
- Eco-Adventure & Nature
- Wellness
- Culinary, Cuisine & Dining

With a few Member States specifically highlighting:

- Yachting & Sailing
- Diving, Snorkelling & Water Sports

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[8] OECS 2012-2017 Common Tourism Policy

Priority in OECS Member States is now focused on developing and offering authentic products and experiences that are in line with the principles of sustainable, inclusive and climate smart tourism and which can generate higher visitor spend. It must be noted that inclusive tourism also requires product design or facilitation for differently abled individuals, for example, those requiring wheelchair access.

The region is, therefore, placing particular emphasis on, for example:

- Diversified products that include showcasing the unique culture and heritage in each Member State with visitors having deeper experiences into the life of host communities (community tourism).

- Events and festivals including sporting events and cultural festivals. These are also identified as playing a critical role particularly for intra-regional market expansion and penetration into the wider Caribbean tourism market. These markets are viewed as ones that can sustain operation of tourism year-round and specifically in low tourism periods in the Region.

In the blue tourism economy:

- Most Member States continue to have significant levels of cruise passengers and, while there are mixed views on the expansion of this market, there is a common desire to raise the average gross revenue per passenger. This must be done while providing a diversified range of destination products for this market and managing the impact of the mass number of visitors that converge on the destination when cruise ships are in port.

- The OECS offers an exceptional yachting product with world-class events and scope for further revenue generation. Understanding the needs of the yachting sector and challenges to be specifically addressed to ensure that it operates according to blue tourism principles and to expand this sector and the benefits derived are needed.

- Crew members on mega yachts, sailboats and cruise ships is a potential market that can be further targeted while in port. Special spending initiatives and opportunities that also ensure they are welcomed can be developed.

- Day cruising is another significant activity occurring in the marine area in the OECS especially in island-chain economies. Visitor spending by this sector can be increased based, in part, on the number of marine protected areas or zones as tourism products that are available for them to visit on any given day or for a return visit.

- There are increasing opportunities for coral reef restoration as a tourism product that is currently "under-tapped."

- There is also scope for regenerative tourism experiences related to mangrove and coastal wetlands.

Product Rating and Quality:

Linked to product and niche market development is the common struggle for a consistently high product quality and customer service standards that meet and exceed visitor expectations. Continual improvement in product quality and service standards is essential for the region to remain competitive.

Most OECS Member States lack formal tourism quality systems or accommodation classification systems. The benefits of such quality systems are to provide a level of quality assurance for

visitors and to stimulate product and service quality improvement through the objective benchmarking of visitor facilities and service standards.

There is, therefore, a need and opportunity for a common product rating programme that allows visitor awareness of the level of services and quality of facilities offered by tourism providers. Specifically, a common OECS rating system can, for example, classify accommodations - particularly community tourism and micro-small and medium size accommodations, on their quality – on-site facilities, amenities, quality of comfort and service and decorative features. A common regional tourism rating or classification scheme could help improve quality and enhance the visitor experience

Today all visitors have larger frames of reference to evaluate the quality of their experience. With access to the internet and, more specifically, to social media platforms, visitors are constantly assessing travel experiences. To also remain competitive and to reduce the vulnerability of the sector, integrating quality parameters into all aspects of tourism and its supporting product infrastructure across the OECS are linked necessities.

The challenge is:
- supporting, at the regional level, the increase in sustainable tourism products that focus on trending and developing niche markets e.g., heritage and culture, festivals and events and blue tourism; while enabling a common quality rating of key products so as to encourage consistency in product quality and to facilitate visitor understanding of the products offered.

5.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require:

(i)   developing and enhancing products and services to effectively cater to and support the opportunities available in the blue economy.

- This includes focus on the needs of an expanded yachting sector and the new demand for marine based experiences including coral reef restoration.

(ii)   recognising and actioning the negative impacts of cruise tourism while encouraging the development of products for cruise visitors.

- Cruise tourism impacts are varied and, as such, must be identified and appropriately actioned. Likewise, a range of diversified products must be made available to cruise visitors to support an increase in visitor spend and local distribution of visitors to reduce overcrowding of sites and attractions.

(iii)   developing, expanding and promoting niche markets that are likely to support inclusive and sustainable tourism principles and contribute higher per visitor spend than traditional leisure markets.

- These include community-based tourism experiences; culinary experiences; sports tourism; regenerative and wellness tourism, and heritage and cultural tourism. Included is a focus on sites and attractions with a potential to increase those recognised as World Heritage Sites.

(vi)   focusing on product development and promotion that can attract regional visitors and those in the wider Caribbean during low travel periods.

- Experience of stakeholders show that events and festivals bring larger numbers of Caribbean visitors and offer an opportunity for multi-destination experiences that can pick up the slack during periods of traditional periods of low travel.

(iv)   reassuring product quality through product standards, certification and rating classification.

- Tourism is, by its very nature, people-centred, and is primarily driven by international source markets demands, therefore, meeting internationally recognised levels of quality is required. Stakeholders support a grading and classification program to enhance visitor understanding and confidence in the quality and services provided.

(v)   maximising the use of technology to support market promotion and communication with the market.

- Technology has a critical impact on current travellers. Most tourists research and use digital/online channels to book travel. Credit cards or other digital payment methods are also used when they book online. Social media channels are also used to review, recommend and share experiences.

(vi)   addressing the issue of signage and digital infrastructure, e.g. internet access, available at key sites and attractions.

- ICT must be effectively integrated into all aspects of product development and efforts must be made to enhance technology adoption and use including new technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality.

5.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Capitalising on the Growing Yachting Sector
- Cruise Ship Capacity Demands
- Niche Tourism, Multi-destination & Joint Product Marketing
- Regional Market Growth for Sustained Tourism
- Product Grading and Classification
- Product Standards & Certification
- Signage and Technology Infrastructure

5.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

5.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

"The tourism product across the OECS will be enhanced and diversified, utilising appropriate technology, to expand and to also attract higher spend niche markets while assuring quality standards of the products and services provided."

5.4.2 Specific Policy Directives

(i) Capitalising on the Growing Yachting Sector

- As an attractive world region for yachting, the demands of this growing sector will be effectively tapped and expanded with suitable infrastructure and services to support and increase the income from the long-stay yachting segment, including opportunities to build and or improve capacities to provision and repair yachts.

(ii) Cruise Ship Capacity Demands

- The Region will consider and address the capacity demands and increased environmental impacts placed on destinations by the new generation of mega cruise ships. Specific attention will be placed on cruise ship infrastructure and the need to address crowding, traffic and flow management issues as well as carrying capacity limits that may occur when cruise ships are in port. This includes carrying capacity of beaches and at sites and attractions.

- Continued assessment of the onsite product offerings available for cruise, yacht and other maritime passengers and crew must be carried out. Product offerings for this blue economy visitor market must be enhanced or developed to facilitate increased visitor choices and spend.

(iii) Niche Tourism, Multi-Destination & Joint Product Marketing

- Focus will be placed on tourism niche markets that are likely to support inclusive and sustainable tourism principles and contribute higher per visitor spend along with the equivalent tourism experiences that cater to each market[9]. In this regard, the Region will continue to collaborate on joint marketing efforts for economies of scale and to capture an increased share of these markets.

(iv) Regional Market Growth for Sustained Tourism

- Greater attention will be given to attracting the wider Caribbean market as a strategy to also sustain tourism on an all-year round basis.

(v) Product Grading & Classification Program

- An OECS regional product grading and classification scheme for accommodation facilities and tour operations will be established.

(vi) Product Standards & Certification

- Consideration will be given to the development of a common recognition and certification program for regional tourism products that meet recognised environmental (& climate smart) standards.

(vii) Signage and Technology Infrastructure

- Considerations will be given to the development of a common signage programme for visitor sites and attractions with allowances for the use of multiple languages and new technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality.to both enhance visitor experiences and increase visitor spending.

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[9] These will include community-based tourism experiences; culinary experiences; and heritage and cultural activities and sites including an increase of recognised World Heritage Sites.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION &
RESOURCE CONSERVATION

6. BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

6.1 CONTEXT

Tourism in the OECS heavily depends on the Region's natural environment and specifically on the healthy and diverse biodiversity and ecosystems offered by the region. In fact, the marine, coastal, and terrestrial resources within the OECS are established pull-factors for visitors to the Region with bird watching, wildlife observation, diving and coral reef exploration, recreational fishing and cruising only a few of the experiences and interaction that visitors have with the region's natural environment. To service the visitors that arrive on the Region's shores, the tourism industry must also utilise resources such as energy, energy and other products which results in emissions and waste generation all of which go back into the environment in one form or another.

Use of the Region's ecosystems and natural resources by tourism have by no means been without negative impacts or pressure placed on the very attractions that pull visitors to the Region and the resources that support the tourism industry. With the annual growth projected for tourism in the coming decade, demands on the Region's ecosystems and resources will continue to increase, and can add further pressure and threats to the integrity of these resources. Tourism, therefore, has a specific responsibility to protect, conserve, safeguard and responsibly utilise the Region's natural environment and resources.

These resources not only support tourism, but are also part of the life-support systems upon which the people of the Region depend. Conserving biodiversity and ecosystems and responsibly utilising resources is, therefore, also about safeguarding natural systems that purify the waters, recycles oxygen, carbon and other essential elements; maintain the fertility of the soil; provides food from the land, freshwaters and marine environments; and safeguards crops, livestock and livelihoods.

Biodiversity Conventions & Tourism Policy

Tourism in the OECS must play a key role in supporting the goals of CARICOM's Biodiversity Strategy, which forms part of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity – with an overarching vision that "by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people."

The Region also, still remains guided by the "St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS," which sets the regional strategy for environmental management in the OECS region.

Tourism policy development at the regional level In the OECS must, therefore, provide the operating guideline for actions that are necessary to ensure that tourism contributes to protecting the Region's invaluable resources in support of the Conventions to which the Region is a signatory.

The challenge is:

- making sure that the region's tourism sector effectively applies the principles of sustainable tourism, environmental stewardship and circular tourism in all aspects of its planning and operation to safeguard the resources upon which the people of the region and tourism depend.

6.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require consideration of:

(i)   The Marine, Coastal and Fragile Natural Environments

- While even quite low levels of development and visitation can threaten biodiversity, badly sited development, over-use by tourists and poor waste management and subsequent pollution has led to serious loss of amenity and natural habitats. Environmental protection, ecosystem preservation and biodiversity conservation in the OECS are, therefore, necessary considerations for its sustainable tourism development and growth.

(ii)   Planning & Assessment

- Tourism development in the OECS should include careful planning and assessment of tourism's development in and use of sensitive areas. The application of environmental impact assessment for all tourism development is necessary especially as most tourism activities and investments are along the coast or in proximity to vital ecosystems.

(iii)   Overtourism:

- With the growing number of cruise ships and other visitor arrivals to the region, attention should specifically be given to the demand during peak periods, for the use of beaches and other key natural and heritage attractions and sites.   Carrying capacity considerations must factor as a resource management and monitoring strategy to avoid "over-tourism" and the eventual degradation of resources, and also to support responsible use.

(iv)   Effective Waste Management

- In 2018, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) reported that untreated and improperly treated domestic wastewater (sewage) are prevalent coastal pollutants in the Caribbean[10].

- Integration of waste treatment measures (solid waste and waste water) according to established good practices into the management practices of tourism enterprises are, therefore, necessary. This is particularly important as home-stays and community-based visitor accommodation that operate on a domestic level are a featured aspect of tourism development in the OECS in the next decade and will continue to increase.

(v)   Circular Tourism

- Linked to waste management is the industry's generation and consumption of resources (production and consumption). The tourism sector generates an average of 1–2 kg of solid waste per tourist, per day[11] with one-third of all food produced lost or wasted along the food supply chain, particularly at the end of the supply chain, in hotels and

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[10] *Food and Agriculture Organization (2018), Food Loss and Waste in the Global Food Supply, Maryam Rezaei and Bin Lin, available at: http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt300e.pdf (8/29/2018) in CTO 2020 CSTPDF*
[11] *The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Synthesis Report for the Caribbean strategy for the implementation of the biodiversity cluster of MEAs, 01.03/18 in CTO 2020 CSTPDF*

restaurants[12]. Solid waste produced by the industry invariably ends up as landfill with a potential for pollution that can negatively impact marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

- With tourism dependent on healthy and vibrant ecosystems and biodiversity, tourism must be positioned to adopt circular tourism principles. This moves the industry from the traditional "3Rs" – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, to "6Rs" - Reuse, Recycle, Redesign, Remanufacture, Reduce, and Recover to ensure that products are continually utilized.

(vi) Plastics and Styrofoam

- While advances are being made by OECS Member States to reduce and/or ban the use of plastics and Styrofoam, the use of these types of products are still of concern. Reports from CTO are that 23-30% of landfills are dedicated to plastics including Styrofoam in the Caribbean.

- The production of plastic is one of the most energy-intensive manufacturing processes in the world and it is well known to alter habitats and natural processes, reducing ecosystems' ability to adapt to climate change, directly affecting people's livelihood, food production capabilities and social well-being.

(vii) Improving Resource Use

- Considerations must go into integration of water conservation and energy efficiency practices into all aspects of the tourism value chain for instance via measures such as tax incentives and subsidies related to green materials and responsible practices.

6.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Biodiversity and Ecosystems Protection

- Waste Minimization and Management

- The Use of Plastics & Styrofoam

- Improving Resource Use

- Environmental Planning, Management and Assessment

6.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

6.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

> OECS tourism will ensure the sustainable use of the natural environment and its ecosystems, and effectively manage and conserve the resources it utilises.

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[12] *United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization (2011), Tourism: Investing in energy and resource efficiency, UNEP, Nairobi, available at: http://sdt.unwto.org/content/publications-22 (25-11-2016) in CTO 2020 CSTPDF*

(i)   Biodiversity and Ecosystems Protection

- Tourism in the OECS will place priority on biodiversity protection, ecosystem preservation and environmental and resource conservation to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and to halt the loss of biodiversity.

(ii)   Circular Tourism

- OECS tourism will adopt the principles of circular tourism and the innovative use of technology to support the sustainable resource production and consumption.

(iii)   Plastics & Styrofoam

- The use of plastics and Styrofoam by the tourism sector is banned and replaced with eco-friendly options, manufactured from renewable resources, containing biodegradable materials, and those that are easily reused or recycled.

(iv)   Improving Resource Use

- OECS tourism will engender sustainable patterns of resource use as it relates to water conservation and energy efficiency.

(v)   Environmental Planning, Management and Assessment

- Implement using a participatory approach, effective planning, management and monitoring of the environment in which tourism takes place. Instruments should include the mandated use of Environmental Impact Assessment and Carrying Capacity Analysis.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

ACCESS & TRANSPORT SERVICES

7. ACCESS & TRANSPORT SERVICES

7.1 CONTEXT

Access to destinations must occur for tourism to take place and for its continued growth and expansion. Inbuilt in tourism, therefore, is the movement of people, making transportation access an essential requirement. For the OECS, given its geographic structure, access must be based on the right combination of air and sea transport. Ground transportation is also an additional factor in accessing tourism sites and attractions while at the destination.

OECS Member States feel a strong sense of vulnerability when it comes to the availability of reliable, efficient, and affordable transportation access both into the and within the OECS Region. While other forms of access are important, such as by cruise ship, yachts and ferry services, Member States have placed priority on access by air.

Although air access to the region from its key and traditional source markets – North America and Europe, can still be improved, the priority across the region is placed on the ease of intra-regional travel for island-hopping and multi-island tourism experiences when visitors are in the region, and inter-regional access from the growing tourism market in the wider Caribbean and CARICOM countries.

For such intra and inter-island travel, access by sea, utilising existing, expanded and new ferry services is also an important factor in the regional transport mix. In fact, the use of ferries and water taxis are common in both archipelagic Member States and the ones that are non-archipelagic.

These forms of transport are used for passenger movement between islands, across waterways and to various locations around an island. Ferry services for tourism purposes are also part of the blue tourism economy and can support tourism's blue economy expansion and growth.

The challenge lies in:
- effectively and quickly addressing the issue of destination access, which is impacted by a variety of external factors and requires collaborative input at the wider Caribbean regional level for effectiveness.

7.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require consideration of:

(i)   Air Travel Cost

- The high cost of regional air travel is a major impediment for inter and intra-regional travel;

(ii)   Regulatory Framework

- The regulatory framework across the CARICOM Region for air transportation is not integrated. Different laws, regulations and regulatory practices add to airline costs and

air travel regulations;

(iii) **Peaks & Troughs in the Tourism Industry**

- A perceived seasonality in the Caribbean tourism sector means that there are peaks and troughs in the levels of demand for regional air travel. Tourism must facilitate a product that will require year-round air travel;

(iv) **Air Service Agreements (ASAs)**

- CARICOM Agreements have expanded the scope for airlines owned by CARICOM nationals to provide air services throughout the Community. It allows for no restriction on routes, capacity or traffic rights and is designed to facilitate increased intra-regional travel.

- Notwithstanding, there remains a tendency towards relatively liberal approaches to ASAs with third countries (e.g., Canada, US and UK). Within the region, however, there are fairly restrictive approaches. For example, Multilateral Air Service Agreements (MASA) do not currently allow for cabotage rights (the freedom to pick-up and drop-off passengers between different points in another member country);

(v) **Improving Access Collaboratively**

- While Member States can and do individually address air access, the best strategy continues to be a collaborative effort at the OECS and the wider Caribbean (CTO and CARICOM) levels, as this would be much more effective, far-reaching and sustainable;

(vi) **Ferry Services**

- The feasibility of scheduled, high speed, multi-functional ferry services that would promote inter and intra-regional tourism must be explored. Such services are likely to also facilitate linkages and economic integration between Member States.

(vii) **Tourism Transport and Climate Change**

- All forms of transport in the tourism transportation mix have an impact on the environment. All forms of tourism transportation invariably emit heat, noise, particulates and gases that contribute to climate change.

- UNWTO's 2018[13] sustainable tourism reviews place air travel among the main tourism contributors to global warming - being responsible for 40% of the total tourism sector carbon emissions.

(viii) **Water Taxi**

- Water taxing is an important form of employment in the region that services both the tourism industry and the local transportation system. It is also a key part of the blue economy tourism product.

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[13] *UNWTO: Sustainable Development of Tourism; http://sdt.unwto.org/content/faq-climate-change-and-tourism*

7.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Wider Regional Collaboration for Improving OECS Destination Accessibility
- Addressing cost-effective Inter Regional and Intra Caribbean Air Transport Services
- Ferry Services as an access mechanism and for growth of the blue tourism economy
- Encouraging Energy Efficient Transportation Services and addressing Climate Change
- Water Taxi Capacity Building

7.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

7.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

> *"The OECS will support the development of cost-effective, energy efficient transportation options to facilitate a sustainable level of destination and attraction accessibility."*

7.4.2   Specific Policy Directives

(i)   **Wider Regional Collaboration**

- The OECS will work collaboratively and in partnership with the wider Caribbean to facilitate a sustainable level of destination access within and to the OECS Region particularly from the wider Caribbean.

(ii)   **Inter- and Intra-Caribbean Transport**

- Efficiency and cost effectiveness of air transport will be major considerations in new air transportation services and specifically in the opening of new air routes.

(iii)   **Ferry Services**

- Ferry services will play an expanded role in tourism access to and within the OECS Region and opportunities to expand and or develop this service will be facilitated.

(iv)   **Energy Efficient Tourism Transportation**

- The region will place emphasis on energy efficient and cost-effective destination ground and other transport services that support GHG reduction while enhancing the region's tourism products and experiences. Essentially, tourism transportation must support energy efficiency to reduce GHG and for climate change resilience.

(v)   **Water Taxi Capacity Building**

- Support training and awareness building for owners and operators of water taxis in "green boating" to enable a full understanding of environmentally friendly boating and its benefits.
- Develop a regional certification program for certifying water taxi operators in environmental practices and service excellence.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

TOURISM
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

8. TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

8.1   CONTEXT

Maximising the positive effect of tourism on national economies across the region is supported by an enabling environment that helps to strengthen the regional's capacity for tourism development across the destinations of the Eastern Caribbean. This enabling environment comprises the factors and resources at the region's disposal that will increase the effectiveness of the 2025 policy's implementation. Relevant factors and resources include:

Destination Eastern Caribbean

- Research & Statistic for Evidence-Based Decision-Making: This is to enable timely and relevant data to improve measurement and to support monitoring of tourism performance and impact. It also facilitates more effective tourism decisions-making.

- The Labour Market & Competent Human Resources: The local labour market available for tourism in a few Member States is a challenge and, in these cases, external labour support is sometimes necessary. Ensuring that a regional labour pool is available and competent enough to support tourism development across the region is, therefore, necessary.

- Innovation & the Use of Technology: Tourism is an information intensive industry and innovation along with developments within ICT are revolutionising the way in which tourism businesses are operating. Visitors to destinations also expect certain infrastructure that is now considered commonplace, for example, internet access at sites and attractions, which must be part of the technology infrastructure at destination.

- Public Awareness & Sensitisation: Policy implementation and achievement is strengthened with increased public and stakeholder understanding and awareness.

- Stakeholder Leadership & Inclusion for Public/Private Partnership: Stakeholder involvement in decision-making can be utilised as a tool for sustainable tourism development. It can bring together stakeholders with different objects, skills and resources in formal arrangements to support destination management and the work of all national tourism agencies.

- A Supporting Legislative Infrastructure & Incentive Regime: Implementing some of the policies within the OECS 2025 CSTP may require that legislative authority is in place at the national level to provide the authority needed for implementation.

The challenge is:
- facilitating the implementation of destination management practices in a timely manner given varying infrastructure in each Member State.

8.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require that common tourism issues linked to governance and destination management are addressed.   Governance and destination management capacity priorities issues for consideration across the region cover:

(i)   **Research & Statistics:**   Mobilisation of data that demonstrates tourism's impacts and supports data-driven decision making;

(ii)   **People Development:**   Tourism is considered a people-centric, labour-intensive industry. Labour and human resource development continues to be an issue that requires ongoing national and regional input. This is particularly important for the emerging and expanding tourism sectors such as blue tourism and for servicing existing areas of tourism development. Regional collaboration and input must, therefore, continue to be a consideration at the regional level.

(iii)   **Technology**: Information communications technology (ICT) is a critical part of the enabling environment for sustained economic growth. Tourism is an information intensive industry and developments within ICT are revolutionising the way in which visitors and tourism businesses are operating.

(iv)   **Public & Stakeholder Awareness:** Considerations must go into continually building public and stakeholder awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism and its link, usefulness and applicability to climate change, disaster risk management and the UNSDGs. The language-shift, and the protocols in these areas are advancing at a faster rate than the knowledge base and uptake in the tourism sector – public and private.

(v)   **Stakeholder Leadership:** Stakeholders in tourism are wide-ranging. Key and ongoing participation, however, should be targeted to the involvement of public sector agencies that impact upon tourism, tourism industry associations that represent the interests of tourism value chain members and other NGO that play a role or that can influence tourism development.

Partnerships and stakeholder coordination bodies, supported and referred to by WTTC as Tourism Destination Councils, is a measure utilised for such stakeholder input and leadership. These Councils support destination management, policy implementation and address destination development matters.

(vi)   **Policy & Legislative Infrastructure:** This infrastructure gives further authority and clout at the national level to support implementation of all areas of tourism development identified within the OECS 2025 CSTP. This will allow, for instance

- the ease of collection of data and statistics for Tourism Satellite Accounting from all entrepreneurs in each area of the tourism value chain and from other are related public and NGO sector agencies, and

- the update of the non-fiscal concessions that encourages the use of technology and new areas of tourism development e.g., community tourism & Tourism MSME development, blue tourism, circular tourism, tourism councils for stakeholder leadership, ecosystem and biodiversity protection.

Essentially, this calls for the availability of a supporting regulatory framework at the national level in support of the OECS 2025 CSTP;

8.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Tourism Research and Data
- People Development and The Labour Market
- Technology
- Awareness & Sensitization
- Stakeholder Leadership
- Legislative Infrastructure

8.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

8.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

> *"An appropriate destination management framework will be established to support the effectiveness of the 2025-2035 Common Sustainable Tourism Policy across the OECS".*

8.4.2   Specific Policy Directives

(i)   **Tourism Research and Data**

- Tourism in the region will utilise tourism satellite accounts (TSA) and other statistical and research data and industry intelligence to issue relevant, timely and up-to-date information that supports effective tourism planning and decision-making.

(ii)   **People Development**

- Collaboration for regional human capital development will continue to ensure that competent human resources are available in traditional and emerging sectors including in blue tourism.

(iii)   **Technology**

- The region will continue to advance the use of technology and innovative practices in sustainable development and growth.

(iv)   **Stakeholder Awareness & Sensitization**

- Stakeholder awareness and sensitization of sustainable tourism development will be ongoing over the validity of this policy.

(v)   **Stakeholder Leadership (Destination Management Councils)**

- Stakeholder engagement will be inclusive and meaningful with public, private sector entities, businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) relevant to the area of focus formally working together to identify and address destination issues and concerns.

(vi)   **Legislative Infrastructure**

- Legislative and supporting incentive frameworks will aid the growth of common areas identified for tourism development.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

9. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

9.1 CONTEXT

As a critical part of destination management capacity, the importance of institutional capacity and arrangements warrant specific and separate attention.

Effective Institutions for Policy Implementation

Sustainable tourism development and the advancement of an appropriate national and regional enabling environment must be effectively coordinated, administered and guided nationally by the Ministries responsible for tourism and at the regional level by the OECS Commission.

At both the regional and national levels, there must be suitable institutional structures that are effectively and relevantly staffed and resourced to provide the management and implementation support that are needed and required by the OECS 2025 CSTP.

The updated policy also demands that the institutional services provided at the regional level to national tourism ministries and related tourism agencies are reviewed and adjusted. A suitable and dedicated team must, in turn, be mobilised to facilitate the adjustments and increased demands placed on the tourism institutional functions at the regional level. The same holds for national level Ministries responsible for tourism, as the OECS 2025 CSTP would require institutional review and organisation for effective policy implementation.

Collaborative Arrangements

Nationally: Tourism is considered a cross-cutting developmental area that impacts upon and is impacted by the policies and work of other public sector agencies. Neither tourism nor these other agencies can act or operate in silos if sustainable and blue tourism are to be further advanced and transformed in the coming decade. Achieving sustainable development and the growth of tourism, therefore, requires that tourism is factored into the agenda of a range of other public sector agencies and that suitable arrangements are in place for collaboration and the input of tourism.

Regionally: Similarly, within the OECS Commission, and also as a cross cutting developmental area, tourism impacts and is impacted by the work of all divisions. Ongoing collaboration with all divisions will be needed to fulfil the tourism agenda as set by this updated policy.

Wider-Region: Likewise, at the wider Caribbean regional level, ongoing formal institutional collaboration will be necessary to provide additional support to the implementation of the OECS 2025-2035 CSTP.

Funding

Critical to the institutional capacity and policy implementation is the need for increased funding. Inadequate funds or lack of funding can stymie or limit the capacity and range of policy implementation.

The challenge is:

- ensuring that adequate and relevant institutional capacity, which include a well-trained, sensitized and equipped staff with the required staff size and resources, are available to effectively support the collaborative implementation of the OECS 2025 CSTP across the region in each Member State.

9.2   KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The transformative approach and regional priorities require that:

(i)   focus is placed on the institutional capacity of national ministries responsible for tourism to ensure that they are effectively organised and suitably and adequately staffed to lead the transformative growth and development of tourism in the next decade.

(ii)   the institutional capacity of national tourism agencies is strengthened to implement the 2025 CSTP. Training and development for staff at all national Ministries and related agencies across the region are a critical aspect. Strengthening the institutional capacity to implement the OECS 2025 CSTP, therefore, calls for a sensitization and staff development plan for national tourism agencies that, inter alia:

- Demonstrates the practical applicability of the policies and the updated policy approaches to community tourism, resource use, heritage and biodiversity protection;

- Allows a common understanding of the updated concepts e.g. blue tourism and circular tourism, that are now led by policies under the OECS 2025 CSTP, and

- Provides relevant ongoing institutional capacity building through staff training and development on areas that are of common relevance to sustainable and inclusive tourism development cross Member States.

(iii)   tourism is mainstreamed in all productive sectors of national economies across the region with focus also placed on ensuring that effective and formal arrangements are in place with other public sector agencies that impact upon sustainable tourism.

(iv)   the existing institutional structure at the OECS Commission is effectively utilised to advance and implement the updated policy and specifically to deliver on its new mandate. Attention must, therefore, be paid to:

- Institutional and staffing capacity of the OECS Commission related to its work in tourism against the functional requirements and demands of the updated policy. Functional requirements, for example, notes that:

  - Information Resource: The tourism desk at the OECS Commission, with a built database of documents can be a resource for information needed by tourism ministries across the region. This includes in-State documents that impact upon tourism but may not be directly in the tourism domain, e.g. documents from fisheries that impact upon tourism, but are available at the regional level.

  - Information Sharing: Given the knowledge generated at the regional level by the OECS Commission, the tourism function would be positioned to broker discussions among national tourism agencies for knowledge and information sharing purposes particularly in cases where information may be available but may not yet be in the public domain.

  - Templates: Templates for common documents that are used by all OECS Ministries of tourism can also be available and provided by the OECS. This could range from a template for a national tourism policy that outlines common baseline elements that should be included in all national tourism policies across the region and a common template for the development of a tourism development legislation to templates for job descriptions/functions for key positions needed by national tourism agencies

with suggested minimum qualifications and/or compensation packages.

- Ensuring continued cooperation between Divisions with increased collaborative efforts to implement the updated sustainable tourism policy. For effectiveness and to heighten the implementation success of the updated policy, tourism must be mainstreamed in the strategies of each Division within the Commission;

- Ongoing formal arrangements such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be considered with agencies at the wider-Caribbean regional level that can support the work required to implement the various policies within the 2025 CSTP, and

- Engaging and briefing the Council of Ministers, not only for Tourism, but also for other sectors that impact upon or influence tourism, on matters related to tourism and how tourism is meeting the objectives of their individual Ministers and the need to include tourism in their policy agenda e.g., Climate Change Policy with an aspect devoted to tourism; Environment & Biodiversity with an element featuring tourism; Infrastructural Development with an aspect that identifies tourism needs etc.

(v)   funding opportunities consider the needs of the OECS 2025 CSTP and are allocated accordingly.

9.3   AREAS FOR COMMON POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Institutional Capacity of National Ministries of Tourism
- Stakeholder Sensitization and Team Development Strategy
- Inter-Agency Arrangements at the National Level
- Institutional Capacity of the OECS Commission Tourism Function
- OECS Tourism Knowledge and Resource Centre
- Heightened Inter-Divisional Collaboration at the OECS Commission
- Formal Arrangements at the Regional and International Levels
- Grant Funding Mobilisation

9.4   POLICY DIRECTIVES

9.4.1   Lead Policy Statement

"The OECS will ensure that tourism institutional capacity at the national and regional levels is well positioned to effectively and consistently lead, manage and administer the transformative development and sustainability of tourism across the region."

9.4.2   Specific Policy Directives

(i)   Institutional Capacity of National Ministries of Tourism

- Advocated for will be the review of institutional and staffing capacity of the National Tourism Organisation (NTO), i.e. Ministries responsible for Tourism, against the requirement for the transformative growth and development of sustainable and blue tourism for strengthening or adjustments accordingly.

(vi)   Stakeholder Sensitization and Team Development Strategy

- A common stakeholder education, sensitization and team development strategy for national tourism agencies in support of the OECS 2025 CSTP will be collaboratively developed and implemented.

(ii)   Inter-Agency Arrangements at the National Level

- Advocated support for government authorised formal arrangements with public agencies at the national level for the collaborative inclusion and input of tourism.

(iii)   Institutional Capacity of the OECS Tourism Function

- Institutional and staffing capacity for tourism at the OECS Commission will be assessed and adjusted based on the new demands of the updated policy.

(vii)   OECS Tourism Knowledge and Resource Centre

- To support Member States in the implementation of the OECS 2025 CSPT and in the continued development of sustainable tourism, an OECS Tourism Knowledge and Resource Centre (online) will be introduced and established as part of the services provided at the regional level (OECS Commission).

(iv)   Heightened Inter-Divisional Collaboration at the OECS Commission

- Strategic linkage and ongoing collaboration between tourism and all other divisions at the OECS Commission will be heightened so as to ensure the successful implementation of the OECS 2025 CSTP.

(v)   Arrangements at the Regional and International Levels

- Formal MOUs with key identified regional and international development agencies that can support the implementation of the OECS 2025 CSTP will be signed.

(viii)   Grant Funding Mobilization

- Grant funding that includes support for both the technical and development aspects of sustainable tourism as required by the OECS 2025 CSTP will be mobilised as far as possible.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

10.POLICY IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

10.1   VALIDITY PERIOD FOR IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- **Validity:** This Common Sustainable Tourism Policy has a validity period of ten (10) years from 2025-2035.

- **Implementation:** Over the validity period, the policy must be effectively executed by identifying and implementing suitable strategies and related programmes and actions.

- **Monitoring:** Likewise, over the period 2025-2035, changing trends, needs, priorities and developments at the national, regional and global levels must also be considered. These[14] along with the implementation strategies must be continually monitored. Accordingly, where needed over the validation period, policies and strategies must be adjusted to ensure that tourism remains suitably positioned for continued competitiveness as it leads transformational development in the OECS.

10.2   IMPLEMENTATION

Critical to the success of the OECS 2025 CSTP is moving from Policy to Programme implementation. This is best done according to an implementation phase that considers policy priorities, strategic approaches and actions. While some priorities, approaches and actions will be influenced by funding availability or funding focus requirements, they can also direct where and when funding and efforts should be targeted over the implementation phase.

Implementation Phase

The implementation phase for actions is divided into two phases as indicated below. The end of phase one serves as a key evaluation point to monitor implementation success and to adjust for any additional considerations. Importantly, as Phase 2 starts at the end of the 2030 global agenda, it is a key evaluation point to consider any changes that may emanate at that time.

Phase 1:
- Short Term:1 - 24 months (1-2 years)
- Medium Term: 24 – 60 months; (2-5 years) and

Phase 2: (Key Evaluation Point)
- Long Term: 60 - 84 months (5-7 years), and
- Final Term: 84 – 120 months (7-10 years)

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[14] *Current developments include the mounting geopolitical tensions that could possibly create fresh near-term hazards for the world economy - World Bank: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/01/09/global-economic-prospects-january-2024-press-release.*

Implementation Approach: Key Considerations

- There is no singular approach to implement any given policy within the OECS 2025 CSTP. Approaches and strategies can, therefore, take many forms all of which must be adjusted as needed based on achievements as a policy is executed.

- A singular approach may, however, simultaneously support the implementation of one or more policy directives.

- All approaches must consider the OECS 2025 CSTP Guiding Principles and seek to strengthen principles in its implementation in which it may be weak.

- Implementation may require that focus, in some instances, is placed on a specific area that may not be clearly apparent within any given policy directive but is still within the overall CSTP. This is particularly significant for funding purposes. For example, project funding may be available for "Solid Waste Management." Given its importance to circular tourism, actions can be developed related to a solid waste management program for tourism across the region. This, for example, will support the implementation of the policy for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Protection & Resource Conservation.

- Full implementation of any given strategy or action may spread over one or more terms even if identified for implementation in a specific term. For example, an action identified for short term implementation may start in the short term and results may be seen immediately. Full implementation and impact may, however, also spread over the medium term.
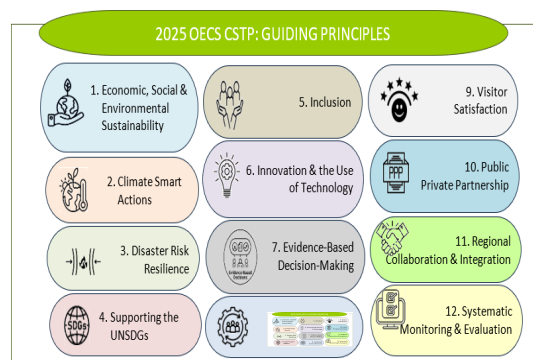
Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 summarize the top three approaches that should be considered in the implementation of this updated policy, i.e., (1) Community-Based Tourism; (2) Tourism MSME Development; and (3) Tourism Coral Reef Restoration. Each of these strategies allow several policies to be addressed simultaneously, while addressing critical issues within the region.

Table 2: Top Implementation Strategy, Approaches and Actions #1: Community-Based Tourism Development

Policy Directive	Benefit	Thematic Development Areas	Approaches and Actions for Consideration	Implement/ Support	Phase
Community-based Tourism (CBT) Development	Capacity to: • address several critical thematic development areas and their respective lead policy areas simultaneously. • support innovativeness • include youths, women, remote communities	**PRIMARY:** 1. Inclusive Growth & Income Distribution 2. Product & Niche Market Development **OTHER:** 3. Blue Tourism 4. Climate Change & Risk Resilience	• Build an OECS CBT Brand that operates according to common standards so that CBT can be effectively integrated into national level development and marketing programs. • Development of a model CBT Legislation for Member States • Developing information and awareness programmes and tools to inform and encourage communities about opportunities and general requirements, criteria and standards for implementing CBT • Development of a tailored OECS Community-Based Tourism Toolkit adapted from that of CTO to the OECS context focusing on common standards for CBT and configuring training and capacity building tools for communities • Draft Common TORs/Job Descriptions for the position of a Lead & a Support/Assistant CBT Officer at National Tourism Ministries	**Lead Agency** • OECS Commission **Implement:** • Member States	Phase 1 with Results starting in the short Term

Policy Directive	Benefit	Thematic Development Areas	Approaches and Actions for Consideration	Implement/ Support	Phase
	and inland or coastal communities • create linkages & maximize value chain	5. Biodiversity & Ecosystems Protection 6. Tourism Destination Management	• Provide training for identified officers • Provide training and mentorship to a pilot CBT groups in effective CBT development, management & operation • Support each Member State in identifying infrastructure and other assets needed to support CBT • Facilitate regular discussions at the Regional Task Force level for exchange and sharing to build synergies for collective support and decision-making in advancing CBT nationally and regionally • Categorise sites and attractions and establish a common programme for monetisation ("user fees") of tourism sites and attractions that are owned or controlled by public agencies		

Table 3: Top Implementation Strategy #2: Tourism MSME Development

Strategy	Benefit	Thematic Development Areas	Approaches and Actions for Consideration	Partners/ Implement/ Support	Phase
Tourism MSME Development & Entrepreneurial Development	• A strategy that can draw on other policies and thematic development areas for effectiveness • Important strategy to build economic capacity, ownership and inclusive decision making • Can build market ready tourism businesses and increase competitiveness	PRIMARY: 1. Inclusive Growth & Income Distribution OTHER: 2. Product & Niche Market Development DRAWS ON: 3. Risk (Crisis) Resilience 4. Blue Tourism 5. Resource Conservation	Considerations may include formulating a common tourism MSME programme and tool specifically tailored to the needs of the OECS. Action to be considered are: • Development of a tailored and common OECS Business Development, Mentorship and Apprenticeship programme to specifically support the development of tourism MSMEs in Member States and to target youth entrepreneurs • Develop the capacity of a pilot group of MSMEs in each Member State. Areas of capacity development may include-product development and pricing; crisis management; expanding access to the visitor market; financial ability; digitalization & innovation, resource use and conservation etc. • Build capacity of Ministries responsible for tourism to utilise the tool and in supporting Tourism MSME development (in collaboration with other relevant public agencies- for a strengthened institutional framework) • Support the establishment of common concessions to incentivize Tourism MSMEs	Lead Agency • OECS Commission Implement: • Member States Support • CTO • OAS/UWI (Crisis Resilience & Communi-cation for MSMEs- best practice)	Phase 1: Short Term & Medium Term

Table 4: Top Implementation Strategy #3: Coral Reef Restoration

Strategy	Benefit	Thematic Development Areas/Policy	Approaches and Actions for Consideration	Partners/ Implement/ Support	Phase
Coral Reef Restoration	A key activity that supports: • Biodiversity and ecological balance • Coastal Protection from erosion and storm surges • Fisheries and Food Security • Diversification of visitor activities	PRIMARY: 1. Blue Tourism OTHER: 2. Biodiversity & Ecosystems Protection 3. Climate Change & Risk Resilience	Coral restoration is a relatively new field with a science foundation. Considerations may include supporting Member States by: • Working with stakeholders, adopt a common OECS Model for Tourism involvement in Coral Reef Restoration that helps to advocate for, guide, support and encourage coral reef restoration by the tourism sector • Collaborate with regional agencies e.g. TNC, CAST, PIMS that are involved in tourism and reef restoration to support this effort in the OECS	Lead Agency • OECS Commission Implement: • Member States Support • TNC	Phase 1 Short to Medium Term and Phase 2

Strategy	Benefit	Thematic Development Areas/Policy	Approaches and Actions for Consideration	Partners/ Implement/ Support	Phase
	• Climate resilience	4. Product & Niche Market Development	• Boker engagement and collaboration of stakeholders – NGOs, Public/Private, Local Communities etc. to develop coral restoration packages for promotion • Recognise tourism business leadership in coral restoration at the regional level • Collaborate to establish and implement an awareness building and sensitization strategy that also allows formal partnerships among relevant public agencies (environment/ fisheries/tourism etc)		

Annex 4 list areas that may be considered in the development of a strategic action implementation plan.

10.3 MONITORING MECHANISM

Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process requiring implementation of a range of strategic actions and constant monitoring to determine that the desired impact is being achieved.

Given the very dynamic and diversified nature of tourism, sustainable tourism policies, practices and approaches must, therefore, be continually reviewed for relevance and consistency with the changing needs of the sector at the nationally, regionally and globally levels.

The Regional Tourism Task Force and the OECS Inter-Divisional Committee will remain a key part of the implementation and monitoring mechanism of the OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy 2025-2035. Systematic monitoring of the policy, its resulting actions and implementation will, therefore, be led accordingly by the Regional Task Force and the Inter-Divisional Committee.

10.4 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In alignment with the mandate of the RTB, an inherent aspect of the OECS 2025 CSTP strategic goals is inclusive and balanced economic growth. This goal includes improved economic benefits, greater community participation and a harmonious balance between economic benefits and preservation of natural and cultural resources. Key performance indicators (KPIs) should, therefore, demonstrate that the overall outcome of the interventions taken to support the achievement of this policy effectively support economic growth of the region's tourism sector in a balanced and inclusive manner.

In this regard, measurable macro-economic indicators must be among the KPIs utilised to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the OECS 2025 CSTP. **Improvements** in the following data at the end of the policy's validity period (all things being equal) should, therefore, be considered as KPIs of the performance of tourism in the region and, by extension, the effectiveness of the policy, i.e.:

(i) Tourism Contribution to GDP

(ii) Overall Visitor Arrivals to the Region

(iii) Visitor Expenditure

(iv) Employment, and

(v) Tourism MSME in operation

While these data may not provide a complete picture of preservation of resources, they can be utilised as a guide as:

(i)   All outputs related to this policy are required to consider and take appropriate actions to ensure protection of the natural and cultural resources utilised;

(ii)   At the project intervention level relevant KPIs must also be utilised to indicate positive impact on the environment and cultural resources;

(iii)   Tourism macro-economic data is currently collected in each Member State and is generally easy to access.

Interventions to improve tourism statistical and data collection across the region are identified as part of the destination management directives within this policy. Such interventions should allow an additional range of data to be available. This can, in turn, allow for a better demonstration of the effectiveness of the policy in achieving balanced and inclusive tourism growth.

As a guide to support decision-making and resource allocation, to track progress and effectiveness, and for benchmarking purposes, **Table 4** summarizes KPIs for consideration that can currently be measured.

Table 4: OECS 2025 CSTP – General KPIs

#	Area	Success Indicators	Assumptions
1	OECS 2025 CSTP	• **Policy Endorsement:** All Member States officially endorse and adopt the OECS 2025 CSTP • **Strategic Action Plan:** Development of a short-term, a medium-term and a long-term OECS 2025-2035 CSTP strategic action plan(s)	• The OECS Commission will receive the funding and collaboration needed to implement actions identified in the strategic plan • Each Member State will participate in the policy interventions that are implemented • Member States accurately gather and share tourism performance data
2	Policy Thematic Areas	• **Number of Programmes Implemented:** At least two actions are implemented in each policy thematic area over the validity period of the Policy.	
3	Inclusive Growth & Income Distribution	**Improvement in Member State Tourism Economic Performance Data, i.e.:** • Tourism Contribution to GDP • Overall Visitor Arrivals to the Region • Visitor Expenditure • Employment **Inclusive Growth & Community Tourism:** • Number of Tourism MSMEs operational	

10.5   COMMITMENT & COLLABORATION

A key focus of this policy is the need to deliver economies of scale, share intelligence, and collaborate to achieve greater impact to improve the region's competitiveness and enable it to compete more efficiently for tourism.

Commitment and collaboration are, therefore, fundamental to the implementation of the policy. By collaboratively working towards integration on key issues where a regional approach gives added value, the efficiency and effectiveness of the OECS 2025 CSTP implementation will be enhanced and regional synergies can be realised. Commitment and collaboration must take place on several levels, i.e.,

(i)   (a) Regional Bodies: Collaboration with other regional bodies, according to their roles and spheres of influence. These include working with, among others, CARPHA, CDEMA, CTO

and CHTA at the regional level. Linked to this collaboration are the tools produced by regional agencies that may be utilised to effectively implement the OECS 2025 CSTP, i.e.,

- Caribbean Tourism Climatic Bulletin issued jointly by the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology & Hydrology (CIMH), the CTO and the CHTA (CIMH, 2019);

- Caribbean Climate Online Risk & Adaptation Tool developed by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCORAL by CCCCC);

- Tourism Health Information Surveillance System (THiS) developed by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA);

- Regional Surveillance Guidelines for response to travel related Public Health Illnesses in Stay Over & Sea Arrivals and Passenger Ship Surveillance Data – as part of the Tourism Health Information Monitoring and Response System (THMRS) (by CARPHA) (CCCCC, 2019);

- Multi-Hazard Risk Management Guide for the Caribbean Tourism Sector (by CTO); and

- OAS Crisis Resilience Tool & Communication Strategy for MSMEs.

(b) International Bodies: Likewise, collaboration at the international level is critical. These include agencies such as the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWO). For example, the knowledge and support that the UNWTO provides to its members and partners are critical in advancing sustainable tourism and in ensuring that there is partnership engagement in decision-making on matters that impact tourism development globally and regionally.

(ii) Member States: Individual Member State commitment to implement this policy must be based on compliance with Article 9.8 of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre by the OECS Council of Ministers: Tourism. This Article asserts that decisions by the OECS Council of Ministers are binding on Member States, provided that it is within the sovereign competence of Member States to implement them.

At the Member State level, collaboration is also needed between and among Member States. For effectiveness, such policies will require the close collaboration of the Member States that will be implementing identified policies and resulting programmes or actions. If or when there is policy uptake by other Member States further sharing and expanded collaboration related to that policy will be necessary.

(iii) OECS Commission: The resulting work herein is factored as a part of the OECS Commission pursuant to Article 1 of the RTB.

10.6   MOVING FORWARD

The Policy should be thoroughly reviewed at the latter part of 2030 given the end of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda when global review of the SDGs will take place and when additional or new areas of focus may be emphasised.

The OECS 2025 CSTP represents the Member State leadership required to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Policy achievement, however, will also require on-going engagement, sustained buy-in, collaboration, and informed participation of stakeholders as the Region takes full account of tourism's current and future economic, social and environmental impact, addresses the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

COMMON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY 2025-2035

ANNEXES

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM, A GLOBAL COMMITMENT
UNWTO ON HOW TOURISM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNSDGS

SDG 1 –NO POVERTY: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills requirement and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women.

SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER: End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture Tourism can spur sustainable agriculture by promoting the production and supplies to hotels, and sales of local products to tourists. Agro-tourism can generate additional income while enhancing the value of the tourism experience.

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Tax income generated from tourism can be reinvested in health care services, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality and preventing diseases. Visitor fees collected in protected areas can as well contribute to health services.

SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. Tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness. A skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect jobs for youth, women, and those with special needs, who should benefit through educational means.

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Tourism can empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from MSMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society.

SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Tourism investment requirements for providing utilities can play a critical role in achieving water access and security, as well as hygiene and sanitation for all. The efficient use of water in tourism, pollution control and technology efficiency can help safeguard our most precious resource.

SDG 7 – AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. As a sector, which is energy intensive, tourism can accelerate the shift towards increased renewable energy use in the global energy mix. By promoting investments in clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce greenhouse gases, mitigate climate change and contribute to access of energy for all.
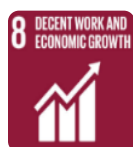
SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism's positive socio-economic impacts.

SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. Tourism development relies on good public and private infrastructure. The sector can influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative and resource-efficient and moving towards low carbon growth, thus attracting tourists and other sources of foreign investment.

SDG 10 – REDUCED INEQUALITY. Reduce inequality within and among countries. Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is an effective means for economic integration and diversification.

SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.

SDG 12 – RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.

SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. Tourism stakeholders should play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

SDG 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.

SDG 15 – LIFE ON LAND. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss. Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.

SDG 16 – PEACE AND JUSTICE, STRONG INSTITUTIONS. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions. As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies.

SDG 17 – PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOAL. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing **are at the core for achieving the 2030 Agenda.**

ANNEX 2:

ACRONYMS

AB	Antigua and Barbuda
A&B	Antigua and Barbuda
Actg.	Acting
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
ASAs	Air Service Agreements
BVI	British Virgin Islands
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CAST	Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CCORAL	Caribbean Climate Online Risk and Adaptation Tool
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
CHENACT	Caribbean Hotel Energy Action Project
CHTA	Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association
CIMH	Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology
COMT	Council of Ministers Tourism
CS3D	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
CSTPDF	Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy & Development Framework
CROP	Caribbean Regional Oceans Policy
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organisation
CVC	Climate Variability and Change

CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
DDA	Discover Dominica Authority
DPI	Domestic Private Investment
EARID	Economic Affairs & Regional Integration Division
ECCB	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
ECEU	Eastern Caribbean Economic Union
ECROP	Eastern Caribbean Regional Oceans Policy
EDU	Economic Development Unit
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EU	European Union
F&B	Food and Beverage
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resources Development
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC:	International Panel on Climate Change
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTA	National Training Agency

NTO	National Tourism Organisation **OAS** Organisation of American States	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
ORTCP	OECS Regional Tourism Competitiveness Project	UNFCCC	United Nation Framework for Convention on Climate Change
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	UNWTO	World Tourism Organisation
PPP	Public Private Partnership	USA	United States of America
PS	Permanent Secretary	VR	Virtual Reality
RTB	Revised Treaty of Basseterre	WBG	World Bank Group
RIU	Regional Integration Unit	WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
SAP	Strategic Action Plan	WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production		
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals		
SIDS	Small Island Developing States		
SIDS4:	4th International Conference on SIDS		
SKN	St. Kitts and Nevis		
SLU	Saint Lucia **SVG** St Vincent and the Grenadine		
THiS	Tourism Health Information System		
THMRS	Tourism Health Information Monitoring and Response System		
TUI	Tourism Union International		
UN	United Nations		
UBEC	Unleashing the Blue Economy in the Caribbean		
UMO	World Meteorological Organisation		

KEY TERMS, PHRASES & WEBSITES

#	TERM & PHASE	DETAIL
1	BIODIVERSITY	The variety and variability of all living organisms, including genetic variability within species, and the variety and diversity of species, communities of living organisms and the ecological processes which they influence or perform.
2	BLUE ECONOMY	Economic activity that sustainably uses the sea and its surrounding coastlines as input.
3	BLUE TOURISM	The coming together of the blue economy and tourism. Tourism activities undertaken in coastal and marine areas that preserves the health and sustainable use of ocean resources, facilitates the involvement of local communities and produces economic value and benefits to local economies
4	CARBON SEQUESTRATION	The process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and depositing it in a reservoir.
5	COMMUNITY TOURISM	A collaborative approach to tourism in which community members exercise control through active participation in appraisal, development, management and/or ownership (whole or in part) of enterprises that delivers net socio-economic benefits to community members, conserves natural and cultural (heritage) resources and adds value to the experiences of local and foreign visitors, This encompasses both tourism activities in a community and goods and services supplied to the tourism industry by one or more community members (CTO, 2019).
6	DESTINATION MANAGEMENT CAPACITY	The combination of the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organisation, community or society to manage and strengthen tourism development and economic growth of the destination. It may include the governance framework of policies and legislation, infrastructure, institutional arrangements and partnerships, human knowledge and skills, technology availability and utilisation, and other collective attributes such as social relationships, leadership and management.
7	EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ)	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea defines the EEZ as a sea zone over which a state has exclusive rights in relation to the exploration and use of marine resources.
8	FOOD SECURITY	The state of having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

#	TERM & PHASE	DETAIL
9	MULTIPLIER EFFECT	The impact of extra expenditure introduced into an economy. It looks at how many times money spent by a tourist circulates through a country's economy.
10	OECS MEMBER STATES	All parties of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (the Treaty) establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union outlined in Articles 3.1 and 3.2 of the Treaty – both full Protocol and Associate Members, i.e., Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; British Virgin Islands; Dominica; Grenada; Guadeloupe; Martinique; Montserrat; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
11	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	The UNWTO (UNWTO, n.d.) summarises sustainable tourism as *"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"*. Therefore, sustainable tourism should: 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.
12	SUSTAINED VS SUSTAINABLE	**Sustained:** Maintained at length without interruption or weakening. It refers to a factual situation in the past or from the past to the present. E.g., the tourism industry is still seasonal which means that it is interrupted and not sustained during every month of the year. **Sustainable:** Used more theoretically to talk about the present and the future. Sustainable considers the economic, cultural and environmental consideration of an activity to ensure that it does not compromise its ability or capacity to be available in the future. E.g., tourism is capable of continuing as measures are taken not to damage its resources.
13	TOURISM VALUE CHAIN	The tourism value chain is the full range of activities that are required to facilitate visitors. In effect, it is a system which describes how private sector firms in collaboration with government and civil society receive or access resources as inputs, add value through various processes (planning, development, financing, marketing, distribution, pricing, positioning, among others) and sell the resulting products to visitors.

KEY WEBSITES

(Useful Tools- Climate Change & Risk Management)

#	Agency/Tool	Website
1	IPCC: Global Warming of 1.5°	IPCC https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/11/SR15_Chapter1_Low_Res.pdf
2	CIMH: Climate Bulletin	https://rcc.cimh.edu.bb/files/2018/01/Caribbean-Tourism-Climatic-Bulletin_product-sheet.pdf
3	CCCCC: Caribbean Climate Online Risk & Adaptation Tool	https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/caribbean-climate-chage-tools/tools/
4	CAPHA: Tourism Health Information System	http://this.carpha.org/
5	CARPHA: Tourism & Health Programme	http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Tourism-and-Health-Programme
6	CTO: Caribbean Tourism Support Tools & Programmes	ctobarbados@caribtourism.com

END OF POLICY DOCUMENT