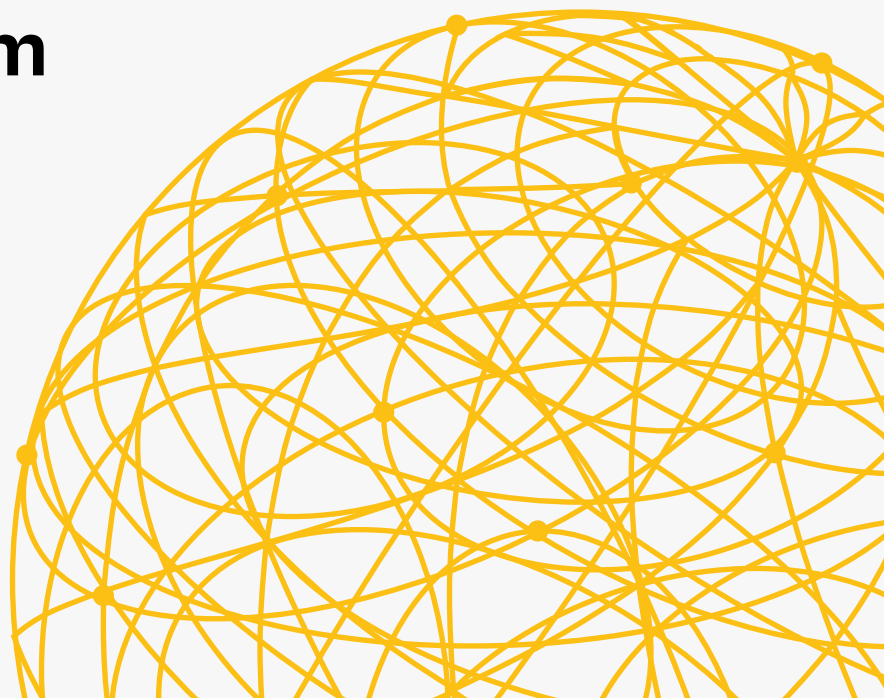




 Imagining an open
future for payments

An ecosystem approach to accelerating sustainable tourism



Executive summary

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Executive summary

More than four years after the COVID-19 pandemic brought travel to a standstill, international tourism is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. This is a welcome development for countries and communities that rely on tourist spending; it is also an opportunity to holistically address social and environmental challenges such as overcrowding, greenhouse gas emissions, and ecological deterioration.

It's important to understand that the responsibility of making travel and tourism (T&T) more sustainable should not sit with consumers alone. In [Accelerating sustainable tourism](#), we identified opportunities for the public and private sectors to collaborate in order to support consumers in making more sustainable travel choices. These recommendations were based on the finding that consumers want to travel more sustainably, but do not because of information barriers, high costs, and other factors.

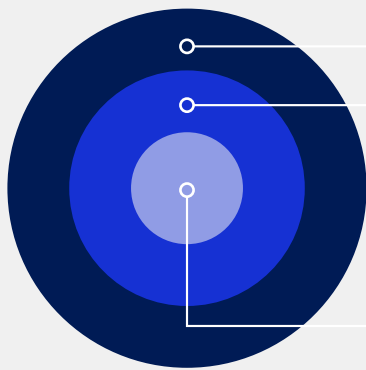
By addressing sustainability and decarbonization at a whole-of-economy level, governments can create a level playing field for businesses, make the large-scale investments that any single tourist destination likely could not, and make it easier for consumers to make more sustainable decisions.

In addition to policy efforts supporting consumers, there has been a rapidly evolving set of policy frameworks emerging around green claims and greenwashing. While policy efforts to prevent greenwashing and support consumers in shifting their travel choices are important, policymakers can utilize an even wider set of tools to improve the environmental footprint of T&T. By addressing sustainability and decarbonization at a whole-of-economy level—perhaps as part of a regional or national net-zero strategy—governments can create a level playing field for businesses, make the large-scale investments that any single tourist destination likely could not, and make it easier for consumers to make more sustainable decisions.

This paper provides a taxonomy of tools that policymakers at all levels have used to promote sustainability in the travel and tourism space. While this taxonomy is not comprehensive, it can serve as a tool for public and private sector players who must contend with the distinct social and economic circumstances of their region, country, or community. We recognize that policy initiatives will be driven by different levels of government depending on the issue and therefore have grouped policies into three categories: rules of the game, consumer options and engagement, and destination policy.

Given the global, cross-cutting nature of T&T, policy coordination with the private sector is critical. The most effective policies are part of a broad, coordinated approach that spans across industries, geographies, and levels of government and rely on public-private cooperation, creating a positive feedback loop. As policymakers consider how to accelerate sustainable tourism in their jurisdiction, we hope this taxonomy serves as a useful guide for selecting the right set of solutions for implementing an ecosystem approach.

Figure 1: Categories of sustainable T&T policies



Rules of the game

Not specific to the T&T industry, these policies help lay the groundwork for a more sustainable economy in general.

Consumer options and engagement

Not necessarily specific to the T&T industry, these policies ensure that consumers have the options and information necessary to make more sustainable choices.

Destination policy

Specific to the T&T industry, these policies help maximize the economic gains from tourism, while minimizing negative externalities.



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