# BRIEFING NOTE #4
# Environmental & Sustainable Tourism

**MYANMAR TOURISM STRATEGIC RECOVERY ROADMAP (2020-2025)**
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> "Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisages as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems." *UNWTO*

## INTRODUCTION

The current crisis has offered us an opportunity to rethink and rebuild tourism in a more sustainable way despite all the difficulties Myanmar has faced over the past few months.

The key environmental issues in the country are impacted by economic, social, public health, access to clean, fresh water, energy demands, and intensification of agricultural links between our environment, economy and society.

This highlights the necessity of a sustainable future in tourism and to think broadly across economic, environmental, social and cultural areas and to take a long-term view.

It requires an integrated approach to policy and decision-making and for the government to act as a coherent integrated body rather than a number of parallel, sometimes conflicting, parts. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism can play a significant role in the sustainability of tourism development.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this briefing note is to set out the priorities for the sustainability of the environment in the tourism sector over the coming five years to balance the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. The actions and outcomes over five years will be organized to align with our priorities.

The intention is to boost Myanmar's economy by growing the value of domestic and international visitors. With COVID-19, we recognize the challenges of responding to global changes and growing sustainably.

## SUSTAINABILITY IN THE ENVIROMENT

[i]Environmental impacts affect everyone in the sector. Tourism's focus is on people and the places where they live, work and play, as well as on the natural world. The MTSRR aims to manage domestic tourism growth better in the immediate term and make sure all communities share the benefits.

> "Work together to build a tourism sector that works for everyone, where sustainability and innovation are part of everything we do" *UN Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili*

MTSRR strategic actions aim to improve planning and more sustainable funding to tackle the pressure of potential travellers, and by aligning with CERP, the government will take a more active role in tourism to continue to support national and regional economies, and create jobs.

MTSRR sets out key priorities which involve MoHT working more closely with related ministries, local government, communities and the tourism and conservation sectors. The priorities focus on improving productivity, protecting natural environment, culture and historic heritage, providing good visitor experiences, making sure communities are better off economically, and encouraging the growth of tourism around the States and Regions.

For a sustainable future, more focus on communities and social wellbeing means more investment in transport and tourism-related infrastructure. Sustainability in tourism will protect the heritage, culture and environment for future generations.

Over the past decades, the increase in tourist numbers has become one of the biggest conservation challenges; including climate change, impacts of invasive pests, habitat loss and degradation. But with good and clear policies, tourism can be a champion for the restoration of the natural environment in Myanmar.

At a regional level the MTSRR strategy will put added emphasis on improving destination management and visitor data so the industry has a better understanding where people travel, why they come, and what they want to do.

An investment strategy should decide where resources should be applied and inform spending from Government/CERP funds into tourism projects.

Tourism and conservation levies could be applied to international tourists for long-term funding where the money will split between facilities used by tourists such as roads, and conservation of existing eco and protected areas such as wetlands, forests and marine coastal areas.

MTSRR sets out the priorities of Tourism from the economic benefits of jobs and tax revenues, to positive and negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Whilst much work has been done to consider these different influences in isolation, very little is known about the overall impact tourism is having on destinations.

This is an important gap in knowledge which affects the industry's ability to manage its impact for the benefit of the destination – to protect the environment, benefit local people, and improve the customer experience.
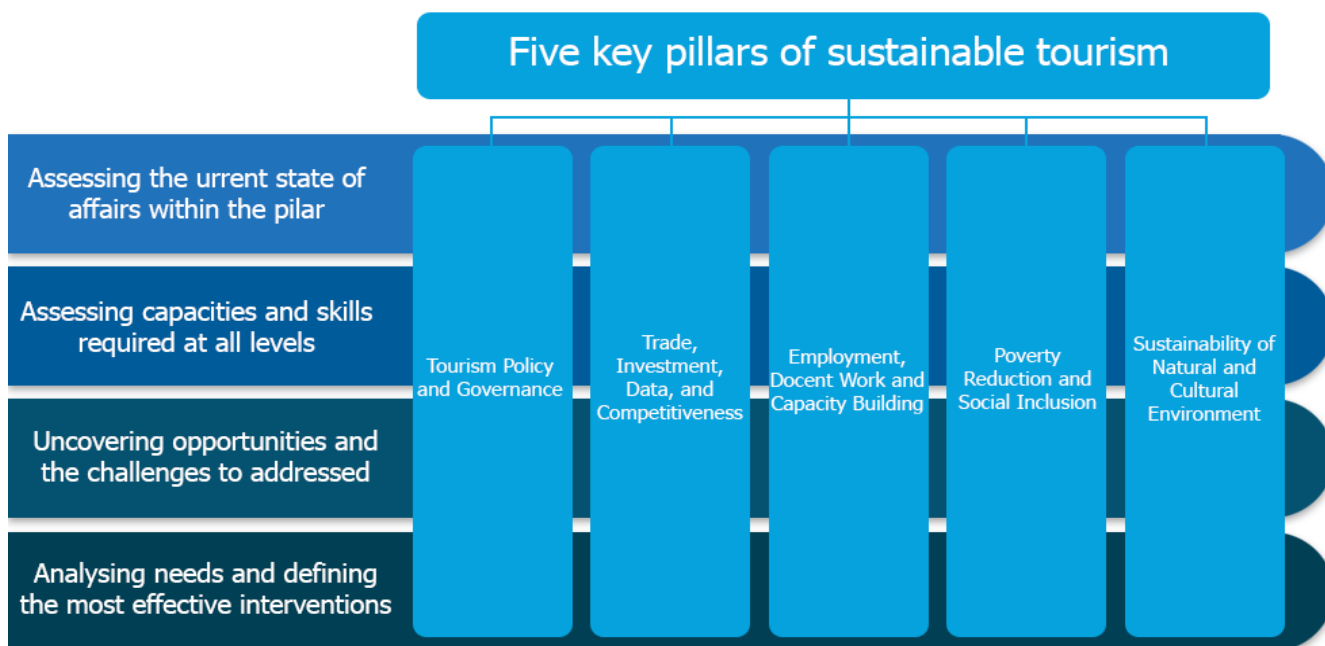
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- When managing and developing regions, places and tourism resources for a better sustainable future, it is important to foster partnerships for the benefits of tourism related-environment and heritage (including natural, historic and hidden places) as well as economic and community development which are important for sustainability goals. The recommendations here is to find a common understanding between conservation, management and a sustainable business approach.
- A guideline for all Tourism Stakeholders in the way forward to develop the sustainable future for tourism, heritage and the environment for protecting and safeguarding the benefits of the local communities.
- Environment and heritage are assets of mainstream and niche tourism products and are in the position to educate the visitors about the values of our natural and cultural and heritage places.
- Need to recognise and protect the values of natural and cultural places in order to enhance tourism product development and the management of places in the long term.
- Achieving sustainable tourism requires motivation, determination and a systematic approach to assist tourism, heritage, culture and environments' interest
- The process of the approach should integrate the needs of tourism, the environment and heritage when developing a sustainable tourism destination, tourism product or managing a place.
- The proper planning process should apply from the start to finish, or use in part if more appropriate followed in larger planning exercises such as regional planning process or by small interest groups such as DMOs or individuals wanting to promote a single attraction.
- To implement the Process Approach to assist the needs of the visitors, the environment, business and the local community based on MTSRR priorities in environment, heritage and tourism planning.

## CONCLUSION

For the long-term sustainable future, reimagine and rebuild destinations using triple bottom line approach, encourage businesses to build resilience through sustainable criteria or SDGs by bringing all stakeholders together to decide their tourism preferences in terms of desired outcomes.

From the aspect of economy, collect data to track the impact of tourism activities on local communities to streamline processes, assist MSMEs in their business recovery to offer valuable experiences and employment and monitor the KPIs to measure the tourism success according to high-value low impact.



Five key pillars of sustainable tourism

| Assessing the urrent state of affairs within the pilar | Tourism Policy and Governance | Trade, Investment, Data, and Competitiveness | Employment, Docent Work and Capacity Building | Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion | Sustainability of Natural and Cultural Environment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessing capacities and skills required at all levels | | | | | |
| Uncovering opportunities and the challenges to addressed | | | | | |
| Analysing needs and defining the most effective interventions | | | | | |

## REFERENCES

[i] UNWTO (2020) https://www.unwto.org/un-tourism-news

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MIMU

Myanmar Information Management Unit

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Myanmar

# Figure 1: Myanmar's 21 Designated Ecotourism Sites



| Sr. | 22 Designated Ecotourism Sites |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Alaungdaw Katthapa National Park |
| 2 | Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 3 | Hkakaborazi National Park |
| 4 | Hlawga Park |
| 5 | Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 6 | Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 7 | Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 8 | Inlay Lake Wildlife Santary |
| 9 | Kyaikhtiyoe Wildlife Santuary |
| 10 | Lampi Marine National Park |
| 11 | Lawkananda Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 12 | Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 13 | Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 14 | Myinghaywun Elephant Camp |
| 15 | Natmataung National Park |
| 16 | Panlaung-pyadalin Cave Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 17 | Phokyar Elephant Camp |
| 18 | Popa Mountain Park |
| 19 | Shwesattaw Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 20 | Thamihla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary |
| 21 | Wethtikan Bird Scanctuary |

Kilometers
0    75    150    300

Map ID: MIMU1204v01
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Projection/Datum: Geographic/WGS84

Data Sources :
MHT, MOECAF,WCS
Base Map - MIMU
Boundaries - WFP/MIMU
Place names - Ministry of Home Affairs
(GAD) translated by MIMU.

**Legend**

- Capital
- State Capital
- Primary Tourist Destinations
- Emerging/Potential Tourist Destination
- Border Entry Points
- International Airports
- CIQ Airports
- Domestic Airports
- River/Coast
- State Boundary
- International Boundary
- Road
- Railway

**Protected Area**

- Prioritised PAs for Ecotourism
- Other Protected Areas
- Self-Administered Zone
- Lake

CIQ Airport : Customs, Immigration and
Quarantine Airport