

DUNMAN HIGH SCHOOL
Year 4 English 2023
Singapore Issues – Tourism



SOCRATIC SEMINAR – TOURISM

Essential Questions:

- **What should be done to address climate change due to tourism?**
- **Tourism helps sustain economies, but it could contribute to global warming in the long run. How could a balance be reached?**
- **How does tourism negatively affect local people's lives?**
- **What role can government tech play in tourism?**
- **What is the future of tourism?**

With reference to the attached resource material, as well as your own research, construct a reasoned response on this issue, paying particular attention to the depth, breadth and fair- mindedness of your views.

You are not limited to discussing the essential questions above. You may dig deeper into the issues by asking critical questions to your fellow panelists, or lead the discussion into a specific perspective or angle.

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Exhibit 1: This Is How Tourism Must Shift to Actually Address Climate Change

By Lebawit Lily Girma (November 14, 2022)

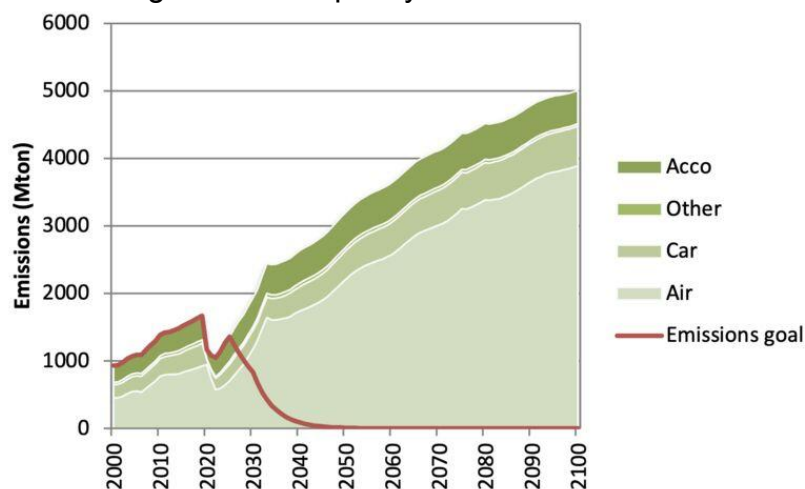
A new report released during COP27 reveals that only one scenario could possibly reduce emissions in time.

If you're concerned about climate change and wondering whether you should travel to far-flung places as often as you used to before the Covid-19 pandemic, it's a valid question. You're not going to like the answer.

An estimated 11% of global greenhouse gas emissions are due to tourism, and that's predicted to double by 2050, the year scientists have forecast as the tipping point for all sorts of ecological disasters. By then, our planet will have warmed 1.5C (2.7F) above preindustrial times. By the end of the century, the figure looks to be 2C (3.6F), with that half-degree making a huge difference. If emissions are left unchecked, this warming will accelerate, bringing forth a distinctly heightened level of cataclysmic weather patterns.

So how can tourism fix its emissions problem? It just needs 100% sustainable aviation fuels by 2050 to power air travel. It can grow, mostly by increasing the share of short-haul trips over time—from 69% in 2019 to 81% by 2050—while global travelers (that's you) rein in the number of long-distance flights you take every year ... until at least 2050.

Once everybody sticks to this impossible-to-imagine scenario, you can return to jetting back and forth across the globe with impunity. You could do it even more if you like.



Tourism as usual would double emissions from it by 2050. *Source: Travel Foundation, Envision 2030 Report*

Those are the unsurprising, yet troubling, findings of a report from the Travel Foundation released in alignment with COP27 in collaboration with the Centre of Expertise Leisure Tourism and Hospitality, Breda University of Applied Sciences, European Tourism Futures Institute, and Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions. It was shared exclusively with Bloomberg ahead of its release on Monday.

The longest-distance flights are defined as round trips of more than 9,941 miles—e.g., New York to Cairo, or London to Bangkok. They are the hardest to decarbonize, the report explains, which is why they must remain static at 2019 levels for the next 27 years in order for tourism to reach net zero. (Net zero means to curb emissions as close to zero as possible.) This is despite simultaneously increasing other modes of low-emission transport, such as electric cars, high-speed trains and hydrogen buses.

“Our hope is to spark further dialogue and to help destinations and businesses recognize that the business-as-usual scenario is not all that likely in the future,” says Jeremy Sampson, chief executive officer of the Travel Foundation. He notes that the report’s scenario comes with its own pain points and is not all that realistic.

The report focuses on movement from Point A to Point B and doesn’t take into account other huge sources of emissions in the travel industry, such as cruises or embodied carbon in hotel construction.

How It Was Calculated

Paul Peeters, professor of sustainable tourism transport at Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, performed simulations for the report using the “Global Tourism and Transport Dynamic Model” tech platform he developed in 2017, plugging in data he’s been gathering since 2005.

Peeters’s model considers the overall tourism industry, including all overnight trips—defined as at least one night away from home (international or domestic) for the purpose of vacation, business or visiting friends and relatives. It addresses up to 20 distances traveled, accommodation providers and major transport modes, minus cruise ships, through 2100. Seven optional factors are thrown into the simulation: sustainable aviation fuel, electrification and energy efficiency, infrastructure improvements, taxes, offsetting, travel behavior, and travel speed.

The first three (fuel, energy efficiency, infrastructure) reduced emissions the most, but even maximizing them was not sufficient to reach net zero by 2050 when accounting for the certainty that tourism will grow. Even maximizing all seven factors proved insufficient, Peeters says; hence the need to cap the growth of long-haul aviation at 2019 levels. “Technically, it can be done,” says Peeters. “The economy is growing. Your freedom to travel is basically the same, but the distances change. You should not fly six times per year from the US to Europe.”

Left unchecked, long-haul aviation is expected to quadruple its emissions by 2050 to reach 41% of total tourism emissions, the report shows. As it stands, long-haul flights are not yet back at 2019 levels, Peeters said in a statement.

The larger takeaway of the report: It may be possible to act now, but the near-impossible extremes required to reach net zero by 2050 simply confirm that the tourism industry faces crisis. Every sector of travel would have to throw all it has behind climate action without delay to make a dent in emissions. Travelers will need to think harder and care more about how and where they travel. Like most industries, tourism remains in slow motion as it begins to tackle its negative impact on a planet whose health is vital to it.

How This Affects You Now

After 18 years of relative inertia since the tourism industry made its first climate promises, 300 initial signatories, including the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the World Travel & Tourism Council, committed to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism in 2021 to halve tourism's emissions by 2030 and eliminate them to near zero by 2050. This is in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement among 196 countries to reduce global warming, and to which the US just recommitted.

As this push accelerates, travel businesses and destinations are beginning to change how they operate. They intend to lead travelers—you—to experience places and activities differently. Major holiday and tour operator TUI, for instance, began offering new sleeper train trips as a substitute for six short-haul routes in Europe. Tour operator Sunweb, in the Netherlands, is also focused on offering overnight train trips to Belgium and the French Alps this winter and to the south of France in summer 2023.

On a far more micro level, Ziptrek is the first adventure outfitter in Queenstown, New Zealand, to offer consumer-facing labeling to show customers what their emissions would be when selecting among competing zipline tours. "It's the right thing to do, and it's the trajectory of tourism," says Trent Yeo, executive director at Ziptrek Ecotours.

This is admirable. When it comes to climate change, we're all in this together. But it's minuscule in the face of the systemic changes governments and tourism boards need to enact. (Remember, nobody gets to New Zealand without taking a long-haul flight.)

The trick for the traveler will be to learn about your carbon footprint, if you don't already understand it, and to be able to sort among companies that are making a real effort versus those that are greenwashing their way into your travel decisions.

Booking.com, powered by climate-tech platform Chooose, will soon show carbon emission listings on flight and hotel results, allowing travelers to filter lower carbon emission results from a range, for instance. "It is to take it one step further and include individual travelers, who are the bookers, to understand their carbon footprints early on

in the decision process,” says Andreas Slettvoll, CEO of Chooose. Iberostar Group released its own ambitious decarbonization roadmap on Nov. 8 at COP27, which is partly marketing (it wants 60% of guests to choose the brand for its sustainability actions by 2025) and partly action (a 2030 net zero goal and nature-based carbon compensation projects at its 97 resorts across four continents).

Eco-Efficient Marketing

Because consumers alone will not solve anything, governments, hotels, tour operators, cruise operators and the aviation industry need to lead with additional policies to encourage better decision-making.

To that end, the Netherlands is considering an eco-efficiency index of its visitors, says Ewout Versloot, a sustainability strategist working with the tourism board. This means dividing the amount of revenues a tourist brings in by the amount of carbon dioxide emissions the tourist triggered traveling there. That index would indicate which long-haul market the government should direct marketing dollars toward to help reduce emission impacts.

“If we realize that we might be less dependent on long-haul source markets, maybe we can identify those markets that might be most valuable to us,” Versloot adds, noting this approach is part of the Netherlands’ road map to climate neutral tourism that was released in September. Peeters agrees. Finding markets that are a little shorter haul is desirable; even a 10% reduction in emissions is a welcome achievement for destinations, he says. Tour operators might also change the destinations they offer, particularly to travelers generally focused on booking any “sun and sea” experience rather than a specific place.

Winners and Losers

This sort of destination picking required by the Travel Foundation’s report brings up the inevitable inequities that tourism-dependent destinations and regions in the Global South would face—for instance, Barbados, Indonesia and Thailand, as well as all of Africa and South America. When richer countries are the main culprits in emitting carbon dioxide, who should bear the economic loss of diverting tourist dollars to destinations closer to them?

“Do we need to cap the Global South or do we need to cap some of the highest-volume airports in that long-haul aviation? This is exactly the discussion we need to be having in this unprecedented, collaborative way,” says Megan Morikawa, global director of sustainability at Iberostar Group. “If we’re making assumptions on who the winners and losers should be, we’re going to end up making decisions that might make equity issues even worse.”

As it stands, destinations in the Global South are already feeling outsized human impacts from climate change and vainly awaiting compensation from richer nations. Exacerbating the problems are a lack of access to greener technologies that Europe can access and to funding for tourism businesses to adapt and decarbonize rapidly.

For Kyle Mais, chairman of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, this concerns destinations that are farther from the US—the region’s main visitor—than say, Jamaica is. “There will be difficult conversations out of COP27, but we stand ready to play our part.”

“Tourism ‘as a force for good’ should be stripping out carbon,” the Travel Foundation’s Sampson says. “A shift to less flying around during a period of time has the potential to make tourism genuinely more local and a better experience for visitors. This type of tourism can also deliver better benefits for the community while reducing some of the unintended burdens from tourists.”

What’s clear from this report is that drastic changes are needed from the tourism industry: Individual travelers should question their choices, such as long-haul trips, but it’s the travel industry that needs to let go of the status quo. For now, even in the face of a climate crisis that’s increasingly impacting destinations, the sector is making big promises while changing little under the hood. Without meaningful progress, your trips of a lifetime may become exactly that—viable only as you live and not for the generations to come—and your bucket lists a pipe dream.

Reference: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-14/how-tourism-can-hit-net-zero-by-2050-an-unrealistic-but-not-impossible-solution>

Exhibit 2: ‘Tourism is all-consuming’: How Airbnb’s ethical rival is letting communities decide how much tourism they can take

GREG BARRADALE (7 Mar 2023)

When he goes to visit family in South Africa soon, Douglas Racionzer will be renting out his room. You might think of doing this on Airbnb, or on the sly through Facebook groups so your landlord doesn’t notice. Instead he’s turning to Fairbnb.coop – a rival to Airbnb which has launched in the UK and sells itself as a way to tackle over-tourism while funding local projects.

Racionzer’s room, in Stratford, east London, costs him £600 a month. To cover his costs, he’s planning to rent it out for £30 a night, making it significantly cheaper than local alternatives. Fairbnb.coop adds a 15 per cent commission, similar to Airbnb, but the difference is half goes to selected local charities and projects. One of these is the Big Issue Foundation, the Big Issue’s charity which supports people who sell the magazine.

“That’s a sustainable income stream for local projects,” Racionzer says. Racionzer, who works in housing in Hackney, noticed the impact short-term holiday rentals can have on a local area. In fact, the crisis is so acute, he can’t afford to live in the same borough he works in.

Given his profession, it's an irony he's well aware of: "Like, what the hell? That's the process we're contributing to fighting against. I know it's countercultural, and I know it's countercyclical, and I know it's counter to the capitalist movement of gentrification. But I do think something has to be done. And this is part of that solution".

Racionzer is among the early UK adopters of Fairbnb.coop, signing up as one of the first hosts. If it spreads as its architects hope, it could be transformational.

"Tourism is this all-consuming industry, where everything becomes touristified," says Emanuele Dal Carlo, Fairbnb.coop's co-founder. "Tourism is a great opportunity, but the resources generated by tourism are often extracted. They seldom stay in the community. Even less often they are re-invested in social projects in the community."

Cornwall is the UK's most obvious example of this, where the problem has become so bad that the county features on a "no list" of global regions tourists are being asked to avoid. Yet councils and governments are starting to recognise the problem and make attempts at solutions. Tourists going to Cornwall have been urged to check if their presence will make the housing crisis in the area worse.

In Edinburgh, new policies are aiming to take thousands of homes out of the holiday rentals market and back to residents, and the council has a plan which would let them veto short term lets. In Gwynedd, where 16 per cent of sales in a single year were second homes, council tax on second homes will be two and a half times greater than on normal houses, as the council struggles with growing homelessness.

But Fairbnb.coop hopes to provide a grassroots solution to the problem. In theory, tourism can be a boon to an area. Restaurants and bars thrive, employment opportunities abound, and the local economy grows.

But left to its own devices, demand can quickly overwhelm an area. Homes are bought up for short-term holiday lets. Rents rise. Shops start to gear themselves towards tourists – as do restaurants and almost everything else. Hospitals get overwhelmed during the summer, and things fall silent during winter.

"You're in the right place, you make money. Unless you screw up massively, you're gonna make money. This attracts more investment," says Dal Carlo. Fairbnb.coop works, unsurprisingly, a lot like Airbnb. Hosts sign up to rent out their homes on the platform. The twist comes with Fairbnb.coop's local "nodes". It is up to select residents, acting as "nodes", to decide how much exactly an area can take. Will an influx of holiday rentals overwhelm an area?

Some places might not have limits, but in a small village these rules might be strict, limiting rental properties only to B&Bs. These nodes are "thinking about their 20-50 people that they know in their small community," says Dal Carlo. "We want to find people who want to make the model adapt to their own community." The funding of local

projects is an example of how tourism can solve a problem it might traditionally worsen, says Dal Carlo.

“I love the idea that we are trying to do something for people that don’t have what we actually sell to lucky tourists,” he says.

“The idea of using houses, even if it’s for good, using an asset that people don’t have access to, is something that really needs to be addressed by all people that participate in this industry.”

Along with Cornwall, Dal Carlo’s home city of Venice features on the “no list”, of places tourists are being urged to avoid. It’s a microcosm of the problems that can take root if things are left to their own devices.

“What happens, and I experienced this in my own city, Venice, is that tourism becomes a black hole of investment. People who don’t do tourism invest in tourism, people who do tourism reinvest in tourism. He added: “Venice is like the canary in the coalmine of tourism. It’s such a small, complex and dedicated organism that you can see the detrimental effects of tourism 10 years before. If it doesn’t work in Venice, it’s probably going to screw up the rest of the world in time.”

With its launch in the UK and its charity partners, Dal Carlo wants Fairbnb.coop to help redress the balance. Areas which can handle a high volume of rentals can generate money to help less fortunate areas.

“We don’t think the touristic economy is redistributive enough,” he says. “It’s year zero, but we have a lot of stuff going on and we’re hoping to grow really fast in the UK.

Reference: <https://www.bigissue.com/news/activism/tourism-is-all-consuming-how-airbnbs-ethical-rival-is-letting-communities-decide-how-much-tourism-they-can-take/>

Exhibit 3: THE ROLE OF DATA AND TECH IN TRANSFORMING A DESTINATION EXPERIENCE

BY YEOH SIEW HOON - WEBINTRAVEL | SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

With a background in data and government technology, the new chief technology officer of the Singapore Tourism Board, Wong Ming Fai, is driving an ambitious digital transformation of not only a tourism organization, but also the entire travel industry ecosystem of a nation.

He outlines the comprehensive steps to do this in a recent interview.

Q: Given your experience with government tech, what role can government tech play in helping Singapore tourism reopen? There’s been a lot of work in developing travel passes for example – Singapore has a partnership with IATA Travel Pass and

Temasek's Affinidi has also developed a travel pass. How can government tech in general help with the recovery?

As we reopen Singapore's borders in a safe and progressive manner, technology is playing a critical role in enabling a safe and seamless experience for both locals and visitors.

Apart from developing technologies such as digital certificates for COVID-19 tests and vaccines to enhance the safety of travel, the government has provided support through grants such as STB's Business Improvement Fund (BIF) for companies to adopt innovative tech solutions to raise cleanliness and hygiene standards. For example, our hotels have tapped BIF to deploy contactless technology and virtual concierge services that provide a seamless experience and peace-of-mind for guests.

We are encouraging hotels to participate in the E-Visitor Authentication (EVA) System initiative, which leverages facial recognition technology to authenticate guests' identities. Guest data will then be sent to ICA to verify the validity of their stay, eliminating the process of performing manual checks on travel documents. As mass leisure travel is unlikely to recover quickly, our tourism and lifestyle businesses must continue to find ways to allow consumers to experience Singapore from afar, stay top-of-mind, and build demand for when the market recovers.

Companies that are looking for platforms to enhance their marketing can utilize STB's Tourism Information & Services Hub (TIH), a one-stop digital resource platform developed by STB for them to access relevant information on Singapore's tourism offerings and travel software services.

This platform will give businesses access to a resource depository that contains over 4,000 listings and more than 13,000 media assets across multiple categories including attractions, food and beverages, malls and shops, as well as plug-and-play services like a Recommendation Engine and an Itinerary Planner. Real-time information updates are pushed to all TIH-linked tourism-related websites and mobile applications through the use of application program interfaces (APIs).

With TIH, tourism players can achieve greater exposure for their products and amplify their marketing efforts to reach more channels and broaden their consumer base. They will also be able to connect with other tourism businesses to explore collaborations and build synergistic partnerships.

Q: You say your role is "formulating and aligning technology and digitalization strategies to shape a dynamic, vibrant and innovative tourism sector for Singapore." Simple statement but a lot to unpack within it – what are your top three priorities?

The top three priorities for STB's technology transformation strategy are:

- Creating a seamless end-to-end visitor experience – our vision is to create the One Singapore Experience, adopting a customer-centric mindset that is guided

by data to deliver a seamless and immersive experience via technology such as augmented reality and smart services.

- To deliver a seamless experience, we mapped out visitors' journey to identify friction points and see how to reduce the number of steps visitors have to go through. We then deliver the seamless visitor experience via a variety of platforms – VisitSingapore.com, Visit Singapore App, Singapore Visitor Centres – and work towards a seamless transition between these platforms.
- Furthermore, we collect data from different parts of the visitor journey and use them to understand visitors' preferences. With this understanding, we are able to make recommendations to visitors on where to visit and even propose itineraries for their visits.
- In addition, we empower our partners to deliver useful content and recommendations through their channels, by integrating their channels with STB's Tourism Information & Services Hub.
- To deliver immersive experience, we crafted an Augment Reality Strategy, where we proposed how AR can improve visitors' experience, and also how we can encourage greater AR adoption for Singapore Tourism.
- Transforming Singapore into a living lab for the future of travel – to do that, we need to level up the demand side, i.e., the tourism businesses in Singapore, as well as intervene on the supply side to bring into Singapore cutting-edge technology providers. As such, on the demand side, we catalyze digital transformation through initiatives like Tcube that provide resources for tourism businesses to transform. On the supply side, we have initiatives like the Singapore Tourism Accelerator to attract tech solutions and talent from around the world to Singapore to power our tourism sector. We also partner with tech bellwethers like Google and Airbnb to co-create new digital products for tourism.
- Building tech and data capabilities within STB – finally, we want to promote the wider usage of digital tools and data among STB officers, be it tapping on data analytics from the Singapore Tourism Analytics Network (Stan) to enhance our marketing through consumer insights or using digital platforms and content to engage potential visitors.

Q: Tell us about TCube. Name three ways in which the travel industry can leverage on its resources and capabilities. And thus far, what has been the most in-demand service/product?

STB launched Tcube in April 2021 – a hybrid innovation space that brings together several of STB's existing digital initiatives, with new resources, programs and thought-leadership content onto a single platform. Tcube provides easy access all of our digital resources in one place, to help tourism businesses transform and redesign experiences and to support their overall digital transformation.

The resources and digital initiatives available on Tcube are organized under the three-step Learn-Test-Build framework. In the immediate term, we want to encourage tourism players to learn – that is, to understand their current state of digital transformation. To

do so, STB launched the Tourism Transformation Index (TXI), a self-diagnostic tool that consists of:

- A framework that provides a common language for what transformation means to the tourism sector and STB.
- A self-assessment tool that diagnoses the current state of transformation for a company
- A report thereafter which provides targeted recommendations to companies.
-

We also launched Data College, a data analytics e-learning platform that provides training resources for a range of competency levels, from basics in data analytics for those just starting out, to a more technical track as companies level up.'

Tcube then fosters an open innovation environment for tourism businesses to test by cultivating a community of tourism innovators to testbed world-first innovative solutions through proof-of-concepts and pilots.

Through the Singapore Tourism Accelerator program, we are continuing our support for companies to develop quality solutions and piloting them with our tourism industry players. To date, the Accelerator has supported 25 start-ups to develop 35 industry solutions across the first three cohorts. For example:

- Wheel the World partnered with Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) and Shangri-La Hotel to improve accessibility for customers with disabilities. Through its smart accessibility assessment, recommendations and training, Wheel The World enabled SDC and Shangri-La Hotel to adapt their products and services for the needs of travelers with disabilities and create seamless end-to-end experiences.
- Copthorne Kings Hotels (Millennium Hotels and Resorts) has partnered with WooHoo as part of their digital transformation initiatives, to bring in WooHoo X-Series, a next-generation Voice Assistant speaker that improves in-room guest safety and experience. Guests can use their voice-commands to make phone calls, play in-room entertainment like music and TV, request for toiletries, place in-room dining orders and adjust their room experience e.g. control the lighting. The aim is reduce staff calls by 20%, increase in-room dining by at least 30% and provide real-time operational insights.

With Cohort 4 currently in progress, we look forward to seeing the results of the latest pilots.

Q: Sustainability is a key goal of the Singapore government and STB's chief executive Keith Tan has said that its vision is to position Singapore "as a top sustainable and innovative urban destination" and it wants to be the "best place to test-bed sustainable tourism products and experiences". Is there anything you are working on currently that you can share? What kind of products and experiences would fall into this category?

Some of our tourism stakeholders have already embarked on their respective sustainability journeys. For example, Sentosa has set the ambitious target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, while Wildlife Reserves Singapore has been championing the

cause for environmental sustainability and conservation with initiatives such as the Mandai Ecological Restoration Plan, and their green procurement roadmap.

In addition, the Singapore Hotels Association (SHA) set up a Hotel Sustainability Committee (HSC) last year, comprising both private and public sector representatives, including the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), National Environment Agency (NEA) and Singapore Food Agency (SFA).

The HSC will conceptualize solutions and strategies that bring together sustainability and commercial value, to promote Singapore as a green accommodation destination. The HSC will also conduct a stocktake of the current state of sustainability efforts by the hotel industry, in order to identify possible challenges and opportunities that would lay the foundation for a robust Sustainability Roadmap for the next three to five years. The SHA will be sharing more details on the HSC at a later date.

Within the Singapore Tourism Accelerator, we look out for promising companies that are developing solutions to future-proof the travel and tourism industry and match them with our tourism companies to bring viable solutions to fruition. In fact, some participating companies are already developing problem statements to reduce waste, water and energy use in their properties. For example, local start-up Lumitics helped Millennium & Copthorne International Limited reduce food waste and lower costs through their solution which combines AI, data analytics and image recognition software.

For the next Accelerator run, we are broadening the scope to develop sustainability-related technology solutions. We welcome companies with innovative technology solutions that can track, monitor and achieve the sustainability goals of tourism businesses to submit proposals.

Q: How should a travel company that wants to be more sustainable begin its journey? It is said it starts with measuring and tracking – any practical advice you can give?

It starts with a shift in mindset – Sustainability initiatives could mean more efficient processes, use of resources and less costs in the long run. Businesses need to think about how sustainability makes business sense for them, and fits into their own business processes and models, beyond it being the right thing to do.

Q: Tech cannot exist without talent – and travel companies have struggled to compete with tech companies for talent at this time. How can this challenge be addressed?

Our tourism businesses need to redesign jobs to become ones that would attract tech talent. To do this well, businesses need to first understand how technology can help transform their business, and then articulate a vision compelling to tech talents.

Our tourism businesses need to keep up with technological trends and equip themselves with skills that can help them be more innovative and user-centric. That's why we encourage them to learn more about the latest tech developments and best practices in the marketplace through the Tech College, a series of technology and

innovation-related courses, workshops and webinars organized by STB. We'll be launching a new module on augmented reality and will have more details to share very soon.

Q: What's the most exciting thing happening in tech/travel tech in general at the moment?

Here are some of the key trends that will have a profound impact on the way people travel and experience tourism offerings:

- Extended reality (XR) blends the virtual and physical world together, using a combination of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and mixed reality to create immersive experiences to bridge the online to offline divide. In tourism, this can be done via gamification to deliver information to consumers in a memorable way to enhance customer engagement, drive conversion and promote products. It can also be used to deliver contactless and seamless experiences that prioritize safety amidst Covid. Tourism businesses are already using XR to provide immersive experiences for their guests. For example, virtual fashion festival. The Front Row has pivoted to a hybrid format this year. It will feature a 3D fashion village created in Virtual Reality (VR), and fashion films which deploy Extended Reality (XR) technology to transport fashion models to unique 3D landscapes. To accelerate the use of XR experiences from pre- to post-trip, STB is investing in a library of free-to-use 3D assets for tourism businesses to use. With the advent of 5G, tourism businesses will be able to further push the boundaries for AR and XR with 4K-resolution immersive experiences.
- Robots can complete menial and repetitive tasks to replicate human actions and provide data-driven insights acquired from the tasks. Potential use cases in the hotel industry could include house-keeping services. For example, hotels could use robots to transport soiled linen, room supplies and reduce bottlenecks in room turnover from manual transportation. Robots capable of autonomous movement, such as Service Delivery Robots, can also enhance safety and hygiene by providing services without human interaction.
- Artificial intelligence allows machines to sense, comprehend and learn so they can work and react as humans do. Applied with machine learning, AI helps recognize patterns and relationships in data sets to provide both real-time and forecasted consumer patterns for business decisions. For example, hotels have used AI to identify food waste to optimize resource planning. This has reduced food waste and food costs and contributed to environmental sustainability.

Reference: <https://www.phocuswire.com/the-role-of-data-and-tech-in-transforming-a-destination-experience>

Exhibit 4: Wellness will be key component of Singapore's tourism offerings in next 5 to 10 years: STB chief

Anjali Raguraman (PUBLISHED JUN 3, 2022)

SINGAPORE - Wellness will be a key part of Singapore's tourism offerings in the next five to 10 years, and events like the inaugural Wellness Festival will help kick-start this movement, said Singapore Tourism Board (STB) chief executive Keith Tan on Friday (June 3).

But to build Singapore's reputation in that field, domestic demand will also have to be built up and factored in, he added.

Mr Tan was speaking on a panel about shaping Singapore as an urban wellness haven at the Wellness Symposium, held at Gardens by the Bay.

The symposium, organised by Enterprise Singapore, brought together business leaders, industry experts and professionals to share insights on the market opportunities and consumer demand in spiritual, mental and preventive health.

"Singapore is not known as a wellness destination and, frankly, if you ask a lot of locals, they don't associate Singapore with (that). But when you survey the landscape and see what's out there (with) companies that provide wellness solutions, there's a lot available that's underappreciated and not well known," he said.

Mr Tan cited Singapore's reputation as a foodie destination, where visitors can get a plethora of options, whether it costs \$5, \$50 or \$500. "I see that for the wellness sector too, where we are on this journey... It's not quite at the same stature where food is, but we can get there," he said.

He added that this will require the joint efforts of the industry and government agencies, so that in five to 10 years' time, Singapore will be known not just for its food and attractions, but also for its wellness offerings. "(But) Singapore cannot establish a reputation as an urban wellness destination if we don't have a baseline of domestic advocates and domestic demand... (Hence) it's crucial that we build something that appeals to locals because, without it, it would be an inauthentic experience for foreigners," he said.

The other panellists were Mr Aaron Boey, traditional Chinese medicine giant Eu Yan Sang's chief executive; Ms Fiona Tan, wellness brand Como Shambhala Group's general manager; and Ms Summer Song, founder of cultural experience creators Cultured Generation. The session was moderated by McKinsey & Company senior partner Diaan-Yi Lin.

The 10-day Wellness Festival - which runs from Friday to June 12 and has more than 130 free and ticketed activities islandwide - is among the first steps in making Singapore's wellness offerings more easily discoverable by locals and visitors.

Organised by STB, the festival features everything from forest bathing at Jewel Changi Airport to equine therapy with horses at the Singapore Turf Club Riding Centre, to yoga on the Marina Bay Sands SkyPark Observation Deck.

There are also several large-scale attractions such as The Wellness Sensorium, a multi-sensory pop-up experience at The Meadow at Gardens by the Bay, which will have six zones with activities like stone stacking, and a light-and-sound bath to induce a state of calm.

"The festival is just an event by itself, but it's a rallying call to the industry to step up and help support our efforts, so that Singapore can become better known as a wellness destination," said STB's Mr Tan.

That rallying call was echoed by Minister of State for Trade and Industry Alvin Tan, who delivered the opening address at the symposium. He noted the potential of the wellness industry, citing figures by the non-profit Global Wellness Institute, which said in 2020 that the global wellness economy was valued at US\$4.4 trillion (S\$6 trillion), US\$1.5 trillion in the Asia-Pacific region, and US\$12 billion in Singapore.

He called on industry players to capitalise on this. "Wellness is an emerging sector which presents many opportunities for our tourism sector and Singapore is very well positioned to capture these opportunities... because we have a wide variety of accessible, innovative and 'must-do' wellness experiences," said Mr Alvin Tan, who is also Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth.

The festival is also part of Singapore's post- Covid-19-pandemic recovery plans. In April, STB announced that close to \$500 million has been set aside to support the Singapore tourism sector's recovery plans in the coming years.

One key move is to develop Singapore as a sustainable urban destination to draw eco-conscious travellers, a growing tourism segment. To differentiate Singapore from other destinations, attractions and events will be curated and created with a sustainability and wellness focus.

STB's Mr Tan said Singapore will never be nor aspire to be another Bali or Phuket or Koh Samui. And unlike destinations where visitors have to travel a few hours to the mountains or an isolated spa in the wilderness, wellness experiences here are easily available in the heart of the city. "I would love it if Singapore can be seen as a destination where travellers come for business or leisure, and they go back refreshed, and that Singapore as a destination has taken care of them holistically," he said.

The Republic is also showing signs of strong, renewed demand in the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) sector, having already hosted more than 150 events in the first three months of this year.

More than 37,000 delegates attended the events, said STB, which added that the industry is expected to fully recover in two to three years.

At least 66 international events are slated for the rest of this year, including the return of the Milken Institute Asia Summit 2022 in September; and Gamescom Asia, the Asia satellite event of the world's largest computer and video games festival, in October.

Reference: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/consumer/wellness-will-be-key-component-of-singapores-tourism-offerings-in-next-5-to-10-years-stb-chief>