

## DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH GOALS 8: TOURISM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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### Abstract

To secure a sustainable future for both developed and developing countries, a group of global leaders came together to settle on a list of 17 objectives that would be known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These goals aim to achieve a worldwide balance between economic, social, and ecological progress. Initially, the United Nations connected tourism to only three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), tourism has the potential - albeit frequently untapped - to contribute to the complete set of goals. Until now, the relationship between sustainable development and tourism is viewed as equivocal - tourism is a sector defined by a significant reliance on foreign investment and international tourists, with a spotty history of negative repercussions and disputes. This study examines Sustainable Development Goal 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth" from the standpoint of robust sustainability and identifies the connection between tourism development and SDG 8. This article examines the relationship between Sustainable Development Goal 8 and tourism, providing an overview of the current condition of tourism for growth within Southeast Asia, particularly at a time when the area – and the sector as a whole – have been significantly impacted.

**Keywords: Decent Work, Economic Development, Tourism, Southeast Asia.**

### Introduction

One of the tools many developing nations seek is the conservation, sustainable development, and utilization of ecotourism environmental resources. Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) have as their overarching objective the creation of a brighter and more resilient future for the entire globe. SDG 8, which stands for "decent work and economic growth," is one of the purposes that this initiative aims to accomplish by the year 2030. It is one of 17 interconnected goals (United Nations, 2020). This objective asks for the promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as well as productive and full employment, as well as fair employment for all. SDG 8 is anticipated to improve the economic development per capita of a country in accordance with its national conditions. Therefore, productive activities, such as entrepreneurship, the creation of respectable jobs, and the enhancement of creativity, must be implemented to promote these objectives.

Tourism has the ability to make major contributions toward the achievement of each goal's specific targets. While the United Nations explicitly connects tourism to goal 8, It contribute to all 17 objectives, including health, environmental conservation, education, gender equality, efforts to combat climate change, etc (UNWTO, 2017, p99). However, tourism is a two-edged sword; despite its undeniable advantages, it may also have negative effects on local communities, both environmentally and socially. These include the damage to ecosystems caused by over-tourism (Koh and Fakfare, 2020), being dependent on the tourist industry (Lasso and Dahles, 2020), cultural artifacts as tourism attractions (Husa, 2020), and discrimination against ethnic groups and native communities (Tham et al., 2020).

Consequently, a number of issues arise, guiding our current discussion and establishing the groundwork for a future sustainable development and tourism research agenda in Southeast Asia. The following three questions are addressed in this article: 1) What kind of sustainable tourism progress have we made toward these Development Goal 8 targets in Southeast Asia? 2) What unsustainable trends are still present? 3) What do sustainable tourism policies in Southeast Asia anticipate attaining SDG 8 in the future? Therefore, the first part of this paper argues about how tourism helps (sustainable) development in Southeast Asia. After this introduction, the paper explains key ideas, lists the main features of tourism in Southeast Asia, explains what else needs to be done, and ends by going back to the research questions, going over the study's findings, and weighing the prospects for tourism and the SDG.

### Literature Review

#### **The sustainable development goals and the theUNWTO: SDG 8**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the basis for the UNWTO's framework for sustainable travel. Governments reached a consensus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be carried out by major business organizations and multi-stakeholder organizations representing sectors where corporate influence

is important (Gleckman, 2016). However, SDG 8 makes it clear that growth is necessary, proclaiming the commitment to establish policies that lead to economic growth that benefits all people and leads to widespread prosperity and quality jobs for everyone. Although the SDGs are meant to be "integrated and indivisible" (UN, 2015), the UNWTO has decided to prioritize SDG 8, which reads: "Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for everyone." (UNWTO, 2017, p99). Target 8.9 specifically mentions the tourism industry and its role in the production and distribution of regional products and services. There are two metrics that relate to this goal:

8.9.1: Direct tourism GDP as a percentage of total GDP and in the rate of growth

8.9.2: Sustainable tourism employment is a share of the total tourism workforce.

The UNWTO proposed replacing indicators 8.9.1 as well as 8.9.2 by 2020 with a single metric, "Progress towards sustainable tourism," and three sub-measures "that provide a good (conceptually precise and feasible) indication of the three dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic, social and environmental)" (UNWTO, 2018, p6). In addition, the UNWTO recommended quantifying the economic aspect of sustainability by the contribution of the tourism sector to the gross domestic product (GDP) using Tourism Satellite Accounting.

### **Decent work and Sustainable tourism**

During the 1990s, discussions on broader issues related to sustainability coexisted with the emergence of the notion of "decent work." The International Labour Organization defined decent employment in 1999 as jobs of sufficient quality and protection for employees' rights (ILO, 1999). The ILO's new guidelines on decent work list some of the biggest problems in hospitality and tourism jobs, such as uncertainty, informal employment rates, limited incomes, bad working conditions, long hours, few social protections, discrimination, high rates of turnover, exploitation, and sexual harassment (ILO, 2017).

The inclusion of decent employment in the SDGs enables addressing some of the opportunities and challenges facing tourism workers (Baum, 2018). The UNWTO's tourism forecast for SDG8 is primarily concerned with economic expansion (UNWTO, 2018) and thus on business as usual (Scheyvens et al., 2016), the ILO's rules on work with dignity and tourism that is good for society go even further. The standards list goals that are unique to tourism, such as a focus on fair wages, a non-discriminatory workplace, and a healthy balance between work and life, as well as social dialogue and worker involvement. The significance of respectable employment in tourism stems from the labor the level of competition within the industry, as well as the greater options for migrants, women, and youth than in the majority of other industries. The guidelines provide numerous recommendations for creating more equitable establishing policies and working conditions and codes of conduct to address the sector's lack of respectable work. Such deficiencies include limited social security, extended working hours, limited incomes, and gender discrimination; all of which, according to the ILO, is most prevalent in the unregulated area of the economy and disproportionately affect women (ILO, 2017). This is a worry for a business with a large proportion of a majority female workforce and informal workers, especially at the lowest end of the range of jobs (UNWTO, 2011).

### **Tourism development and growth**

Tourism can be a big part of the growth of an economy in developing nations, relative to those that are already developed (Liu and Wall, 2006). Tourism development is regarded as a mechanism for income generation and employment creation (Samina and Kakar, 2007). Tourism boosts international earnings via imports of capital products and commodity trade, manufacturing sectors, and necessary services. Trends indicate that tourism growth has indirect, direct, and induced economic effects (Dwyer et al., 2000). The main economic effects of tourism include more money coming in from restaurants, tourism groups, and hotels. The secondary effect is caused by transfers, such as when local businesses buy supplies for restaurants and hotels. When the recipients of indirect and direct impacts are the same (such as firm employees and owners) expend their income, induced impact occurs. Thus, tourism development influences numerous economic sectors via multiplier effects (Khan et al., 1990).

It is possible to relate the expansion of tourism and its influence at the community level with the eradication of poverty at the national level through economic growth, and SDG 8 deals directly with the topic of sustainable economic growth (UNWTO, 2017, p99). The contribution of tourism to increases in living standards, national income, and reductions in poverty is rarely subjected to a thorough examination of the political and social trends in tourism expansion. Not only does GDP change how we think about value, but it could also make the economic benefits of tourism seem bigger. This is because tourism is a big part of many low-income economies export, where off-shore investors and transnational corporations play a big role.

### **Research Methods**

The study goals on decent work and economic growth aim 8 were met by the use of desk research to conduct analyses, arrive at findings, and satisfy the study objectives: Tourism and Sustainable Development in Southeast

Asia (the appropriate research methodology represents the type of quantitative approaches that take the information source into consideration). This analysis utilized secondary data sources.

(i) Research question: As the initial step of the secondary investigation, three research questions were formulated:

1) What kind of sustainable tourism progress have we made toward these Development Goal 8 targets in Southeast Asia? 2) What unsustainable trends are still present? 3) What do sustainable tourism policies in Southeast Asia anticipate attaining SDG 8 in the future?

(ii) Data collection and processing: Data on Southeast Asia's tourism industry (expenditures, the number of visitors, revenue, employment rate, and GDP growth) collected throughout the period (between 2010 and 2021) from International Labour Office (ILO), WorldData, Statista. After data has been collected, it is categorized, cleaned, aggregated, and input into Excel software in order to calculate the necessary criteria and generate illustrative charts.

(iii) Data analysis: In the study, descriptive statistics and comparative analysis were utilized to look at how the analytical criteria fluctuated over time.

## **Finding and Discussion**

### **Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia is a tropical area with a comfortable temperature and many cultural, historical, legacy-related, and ecological attractions. The countries there have put a lot of effort into developing tourism through ministries of tourism or the establishment of national tourism committees and other tourism organizations to maximize tourism industries and resources. In Southeast Asia, tourism is a development activity and a well-established economic sector that dates back to the nineteenth century (Hitchcock et al., 2009). Asia-Pacific is one of the most dynamic regions in the globe, attracting both domestic and international tourists. With so many different places to visit in Southeast Asia, the tourism industry has been growing quickly and is expected to grow even more.

There are 29 World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia. Of these, 17 (59%) are cultural sites and 12 (41%) are natural sites. Indonesia has seven of them, Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand each have five, and Malaysia has three (the historic cities of the Straits of Malacca recently added to the list include two sites, George Town and Melaka, which are both in this book), and Cambodia and Laos each have two (Hitchcock, 2010).

Table 1. Southeast Asian sites recognized as World Heritage by UNESCO

	<b>World Heritage Site</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>CAMBODIA</b>		
Angkor	Cultural	1992
Preah Vihear Temple	Cultural	2008
<b>INDONESIA</b>		
Borobudur Temple Compounds	Cultural	1991
Komodo National Park	Natural	1991
Prambanan Temple Compounds	Cultural	1991
Ujung Kulon National Park	Natural	1991
Sangiran Early Man Site	Cultural	1996
Lorentz National Park	Natural	1999
Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra	Natural	2004
<b>LAO PDR</b>		
Town of Luang Prabang	Cultural	1995
Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape	Cultural	2001
<b>MALAYSIA</b>		
Gunung Mulu National Park	Natural	2000
Kinabalu Park	Natural	2000
Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca	Cultural	2008
<b>PHILIPPINES</b>		
Baroque Churches of the Philippines	Cultural	1993
Tubbataha Reef Marine Park	Natural	1993
Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras	Cultural (in danger)	1995
Historic Town of Vigan	Cultural	1999
Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park	Natural	1999
<b>THAILAND</b>		
Historic City of Ayutthaya	Cultural	1991
Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns	Cultural	1991
Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries	Natural	1991
Ban Chiang Archaeological Site	Cultural	1992
Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex	Natural	2005
<b>VIETNAM</b>		
Complex of Hue Monuments	Cultural	1993
Ha Long Bay	Natural	1994, 2000
Hoi An Ancient Town	Cultural	1999
My Son Sanctuary	Cultural	1999
Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park	Natural	2003

Source: Hitchcock (2021)

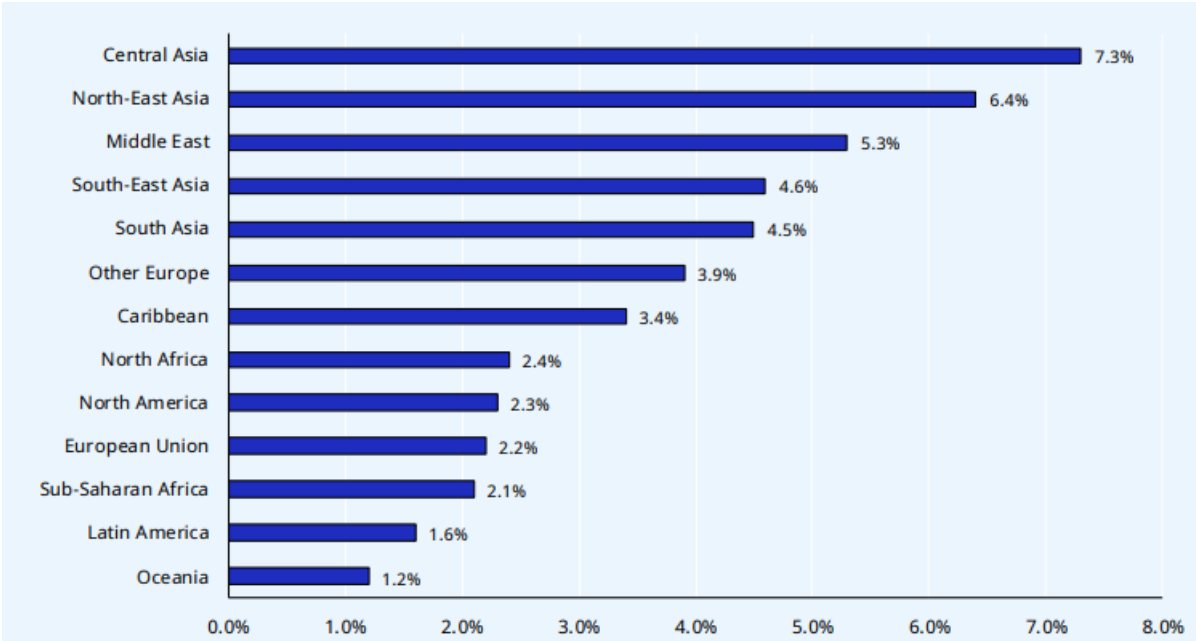
Tourism can help the area's economy grow in more than one way and support and encourage the growth of other associated services and industries, such as the arts, hotels, catering, transport, and handicraft manufacturing. Developing infrastructure concurrently with tourism can facilitate industrialization and modernization (Chon, 2013). However, Southeast Asian tourism is extremely susceptible to financial and political instability in the region and additional external disturbances, such as the spread of terrorism, pandemic diseases, and natural disasters.

### **Tourism and Development in Southeast Asia**

#### **Tourism and Economic Growth in Southeast Asia**

Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, Asia and the Pacific were the primary regions where the tourism industry expanded, with the most rapidly expanding regions being Central Asia (7.3%), North-East Asia (6.4%), the Middle East (5.3%), and South-East Asia (4.5%), respectively (see Figure 1). Since 1990, global tourism has grown at a rate of approximately 4% annually, but this growth has not been evenly distributed across the world's regions (ILO, 2022). As a result of their economic development and the diversification of their tourism destinations, the growth rate of Southeast Asia's newly industrialized nations has been accelerating at a rapid rate.

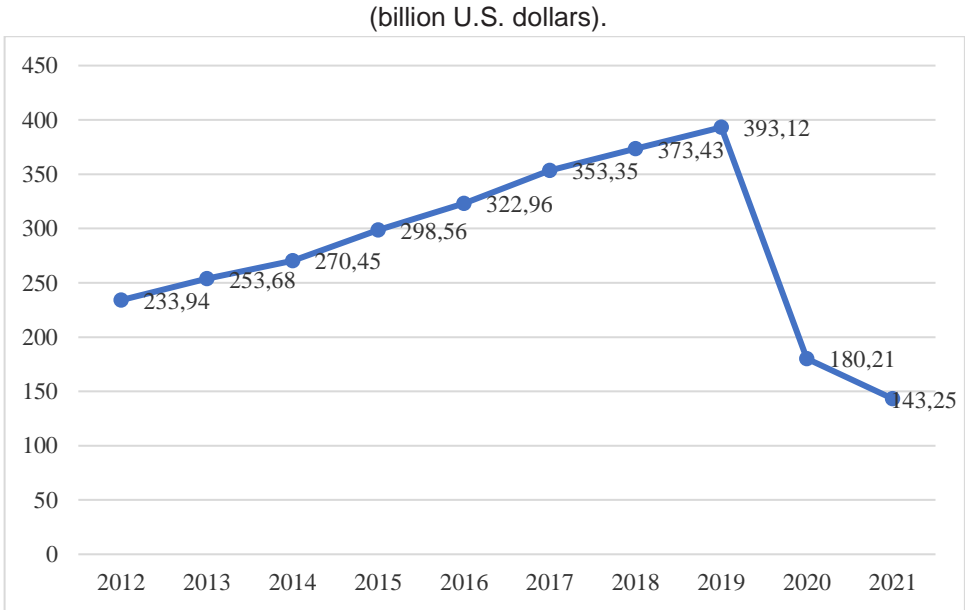
Figure 1. Subregional travel and tourism GDP growth, 2019



Source: ILO (2022)

The travel and tourism industry in Southeast Asia added a little over 143 billion U.S. dollars to the region's GDP in 2021. In comparison, in 2020 the tourism industry in Southeast Asia added over 180 billion U.S. dollars to the GDP of that region (Statista, 2023a). Since the beginning of this decade, contributions to Southeast Asia's GDP from the travel and tourist business have been on an upward trend. However, this trend was abruptly cut in half in 2020 as a direct result of the worldwide pandemic.

Figure 2. Southeast Asia's travel and tourism GDP contribution from 2012 to 2021



Source: Statista (2023)

The following table depicts the development of tourist arrivals by Southeast Asian countries from 2010 to 2021 (see Table 2). Thailand received the most international visitors (39.92 million) in 2019, followed by Malaysia (26.11 million) and Singapore (19.12 million). In addition, Indonesia (16.11 million), Vietnam (18.01 million), Philippines (8.26 million), Cambodia (6.61 million), Lao PDR (4.79 million), Myanmar (4.36 million), and Brunei Darussalam (4.45 million) account for the remainder of international visitor arrivals (WorldData, 2022).

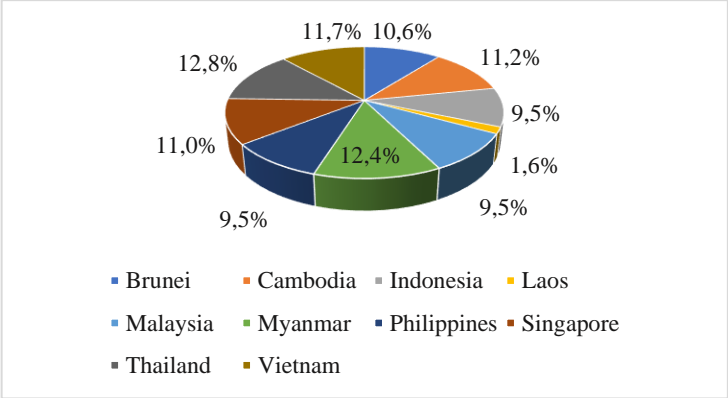
Table 2. Arrivals of tourists by country of destination, 2010-2021 (in million)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Brunei</b>	0.214	0.242	0.209	0.225	0.201	0.128	4.26	4.32	4.52	4.45	1.07	1.947
<b>Cambodia</b>	2.51	2.88	3.58	4.21	4.5	4.78	5.01	5.6	6.2	6.61	1.31	0.196
<b>Indonesia</b>	7	7.65	8.04	8.8	9.44	10.41	11.52	14.04	15.81	16.11	4.05	1.56
<b>Laos</b>	2.51	2.72	3.33	3.78	4.16	4.68	4.24	3.87	4.19	4.79	0.89	0.83
<b>Malaysia</b>	24.58	24.71	25.03	25.72	27.44	25.72	26.76	25.95	25.83	26.1	4.33	0.134
<b>Myanmar</b>	0.79	0.82	1.06	2.04	3.08	4.68	2.91	3.44	3.55	4.36	0.90	0.13
<b>Philippines</b>	3.52	3.92	4.27	4.68	4.83	5.36	5.97	6.62	7.17	8.26	1.48	0.163
<b>Singapore</b>	11.64	13.17	14.5	15.57	15.1	15.23	16.4	17.43	18.51	19.12	2.74	0.33
<b>Thailand</b>	15.94	19.23	22.35	26.55	24.81	29.92	32.53	35.59	38.18	39.92	6.7	0.43
<b>Vietnam</b>	5.05	6.01	6.85	7.57	7.87	7.94	10.01	12.92	15.5	18.01	3.84	0.16

Source: WorldData (2022)

The outline presented above reveals a pattern of tourism development. Thailand also received more than two times the visitor arrivals than Singapore which is the largest country in Southeast Asia. However, South East Asia's tourism business took a major hit as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. All the countries were experiencing a rapid decrease in the number visitor international arrivals during COVID-19. In 2020, Thailand conceded as the most visited destination, which reduced to 6.7 million total tourists arrival, subsequently neighboring countries of Malaysia (4.33 million), Philippines (1.48 million), and Vietnam (3.84 million) respectively.

Figure 3: Revenue from the Tourism sector in 2020



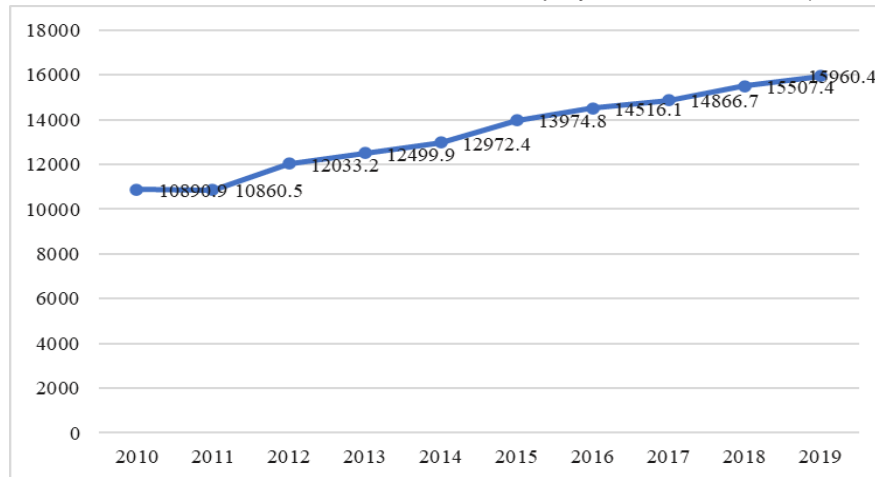
Source: Khant (2022)

According to Figure 3, Thailand has the greatest percentage of its GDP coming from the tourist industry at 12.8% in 2020. Myanmar comes in a close second with a percentage of 12.4%, while Cambodia, Singapore, and Vietnam all have percentages that are almost the same and range from 11.0% to 11.7%. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines all have percentages that are lower than the global average, ranging from 9.5% to 10.6%. At 1.6%, Laos has the smallest proportion. In 2019, the tourism sector was responsible for 10.4% of global GDP (USD 9,170 billion), but this figure was projected to drop to 5.5% (USD 4,671 billion) in 2020. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism sector's contribution to ASEAN countries' GDP fell to 7.52% of GDP in 2020 (Khant, 2022).

#### 4.2.2. Tourism and Decent Work in Southeast Asia

From 2010 to 2019, the provided data illustrates the role that tourism plays in creating jobs in Southeast Asia. The number of individuals employed in the tourism industry continues to increase each year (figure 4). In Southeast Asia, the tourist industry was directly responsible for the creation of about 16 million employments in the year 2019. Since 2010, when there were over 10.9 million employments created directly as a result of tourism in Southeast Asia (Statista, 2023b), there has been a consistent increase in the quantity of jobs created as a direct consequence of the tourism industry in that area.

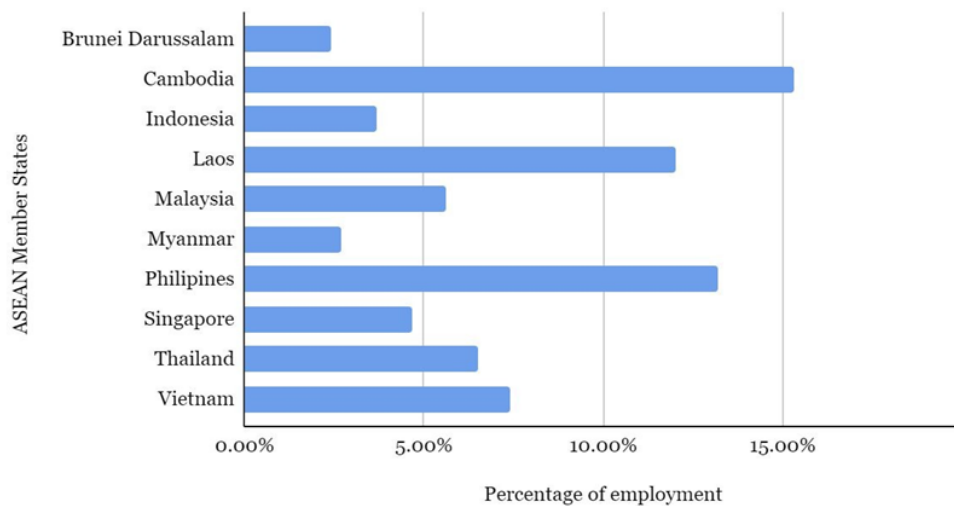
Figure 4: Southeast Asia tourism's 2010–2019 direct employment contribution (in 1,000s of jobs)



Source: Statista (2023)

The data indicate that tourism has been a developing source of employment in Southeast Asia over the past decade. The rise in employment indicates that the tourism sector has assumed a greater role in the region's economy and employment opportunities.

Figure 5: Travel & Tourism Total Contribution to Jobs in Southeast Asia in 2019



Source: Khant (2022)

The proportion of individuals employed within the tourism sector in 2019 is highest in Cambodia, accounting for more than 15% of all jobs, while Brunei, Indonesia, and Myanmar have the lowest proportion, less than 5%. In addition, 10% to 15% rise in the quantity of persons employed in the tourism industry in Laos and the Philippines. Furthermore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia have a 5% to 10% direct tourism contribution to employment (see Figure 5).



Table 3: Employment Situation in the Travel & Tourism Industry of ASEAN Nations 2020

ASEAN Member States	Employment Condition in Tourism Sector
Brunei Darussalam	2.74% decline in the employment rate
Cambodia	3.2% unemployment rate
Indonesia	6.88 million were unemployed till February
Laos	38% falling
Malaysia	3.4% the rate of unemployment
Myanmar	4.80%
Philippines	4.68 million people
Singapore	4.63%
Thailand	11.1 million
Vietnam	Shrink by 60%

Source: Khant (2022)

The pandemic of COVID-19 in Southeast Asia halted all tourism activities. Millions of individuals were gravely affected by the abrupt disappearance of the income source. Brunei's tourist sector lost 2.74% of its jobs. Cambodia (3.2%), Malaysia (3.4%), Myanmar (4.8%), and Singapore (4.63%) each have a rate of unemployment. There were 4,68 million and 11,1 million unemployed in the tourism industry in the Philippines and Thailand, respectively, indicating a significant impact on employment opportunities in this industry. Vietnam had a shrinkage of 60% in the tourism sector, indicating a significant reduction in job opportunities in this industry.

### Unsustainable trends of mass tourism

#### Socio-economic effects

The concept of mass tourism is synonymous with the idea of tourism that is not sustainable (Alampay, 2005). The loss of biodiversity, the degradation of nature, the extinction and endangerment of wildlife, and the negative effects on local communities are among the most significant challenges posed by Southeast Asia's mass tourism (Kaiwa and Countries, 2017). However, it is critical to keep in mind that economic sustainability does not simply mean that more tourists mean more tourism receipts or money spent by tourists from other countries. There is a clear correlation between the volume of tourist arrivals and the growth of national economies. Financial leakage from investors, foreign hotel chains, and expatriates in Southeast Asian tourism destinations keeps just a small fraction of tourism money in the host country and benefits local populations (Gössling et al., 2009).

Critical to the lack of social sustainability of mass tourism in Thailand is the proportional contribution of travel and tourism's contribution to GDP and its induced effects. In particular, the induced effects are the benefits to the local community, such as hotel workers using their pay to buy food and stay in nearby places (Stynes, 1997). In addition, increasing medical tourism as one of Thailand's marketing strategies is negatively impacting local communities (Kaiwa and Countries, 2017). The Philippines' tourism marketing and branding prioritized arrival numbers over sustainable development due to the focus on expansion. Boracay, one of the most popular beach and sun destinations in the Philippines, is a case of a geographically isolated island experiencing social and cultural difficulties as a result of an enormous influx of tourists (Ong et al., 2011).

#### Mass tourism and climate change

Tourism is also in charge of 5 % of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in addition to revenue leakage and destitution. The tourism sector could theoretically be considered a polluting business primarily due to emissions from conveyance services (Gössling et al., 2015). Rising household incomes and rapid economic growth in many regions of Southeast Asia encourage more travel, in order for the airline business, has added more carriers and flights to meet the demand. The entry of low-cost carriers (LCC) into the market has increased passenger arrivals (Duval, 2013) and Dioxide emissions (Gössling et al., 2009; Peeters and Eijgelaar, 2014). Little research has been conducted on the correlation between tourist arrivals and CO2 emissions. Nonetheless, it is essential for policymakers to comprehend the actual effect of national tourism policies on economic growth through increased visitor arrivals. To mitigate tourism's unfavorable effects, host countries must implement a long-term strategy and rigorous monitoring system (De Sausmarez, 2007). According to the study of Kaiwa & Countries, 2017 indicated that roughly 55 million tons of carbon dioxide were released into the atmosphere as a result of transportation in Thailand in 2010. When comparing the selected nations, Thailand not only had the largest IVA growth (6.3 million)



but also the highest average CO2 emission per capita (1.4 metric tons) from 2000 to 2010. In fact, in the past decade, Vietnam has seen the largest annual increase in CO2 emissions from transportation, at 20 million tons. However, higher GDP countries like the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, have a smaller share of CO2 emissions from total fuel used by transportation than lower GDP countries like Laos and Cambodia. This trend demonstrates that the contribution ratio to CO2 emissions from the tourism industry is likely to decrease as the country's economy grows, whereas the quantity of CO2 emissions from transportation is typically high. The Philippines' time series are comparable to those of Vietnam and Thailand, with the exception of the increase in CO2 emissions (Hitchcock et al., 2009).

### Sustainable Tourism Policies in Southeast Asia

According to the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, Southeast Asia's ultimate goal is to become a region of excellent tourism destinations that provide distinctive experiences and are dedicated to the growth of sustainable tourism. With the support of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Period After COVID-19 was recently launched. Southeast Asia's vision, as outlined in the AEC Blueprint 2025, is to become a quality tourism destination that offers a diverse and unique ASEAN experience and is devoted to sustainable tourism development (Asian, 2022). The framework aims to identify areas of concentration where efforts to rebuild ASEAN tourism industry can be maximized, especially in 2025.

Figure 6. ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development



Source: Asian (2022)

The framework specifies five fundamental pillars and their respective strategic priorities:

- *Sustainable economic growth* includes giving priority to sustainable tourist strategy and policy, investments in green and infrastructure, and environmental marketing initiatives.
- *Social inclusion, employment, and the reduction of poverty*, giving priority to quality jobs in the tourism sector; equitable and widespread distribution of social and economic benefits; interventions customized for SME; women-specific obstacles, and public-private-community collaborations to empower and engage local communities.
- *Environmental protection, resource efficiency, and climate change mitigation* include, but not be restricted to, the following, prioritizing efficient and low-carbon use of resources; protecting the environment, preserving ecosystems, and conserving biodiversity; and mitigating the impacts of global warming.

- *Promotion of heritage, diversity, and cultural values* with an emphasis on the prioritization of cultural tourism, the preservation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and the development of living cultures and creative industries.
- *Mutual peace and understanding; security, safety, and health*, prioritizing the management of multi-hazard management of risks; crisis preparedness planning; better partnership and communication; and international information-sharing efforts.

Particularly, the five interconnected and intersecting central pillars were identified as the essential factors of sustainable development to which tourism could make a substantial and enduring contribution, thus refocusing attention on implementation efficacy. Considering a global epidemic, which heightened the significance of hygiene and health as a crucial aspect of tourism, the fifth and final pillar is revised to explicitly include this characteristic. Governance systems at multiple levels were introduced as the sixth pillar of the overall structure, defining the Framework's operation and control, the instruments and mechanisms for implementation, and the mechanisms and structures for interactions among the various stakeholders. Specifically highlighted is the function of technology as an overall critical driver of the synergies between the various sustainability and stakeholders pillars.

## Conclusion

Southeast Asia is ideal for developing a sustainable tourism industry that can help achieve Sustainable Development Goals related to local economic development and decent employment. Southeast Asia's geographic location, rich topographical, faunal, and floral biodiversity, and cultural and multi-linguistic diversity make it a fertile ground for sustainable tourism. This study examined the current situation regarding tourism growth in Southeast Asia. However, the main emphasis was focused on Sustainable Development Goal 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth". The study provides answers to three research questions. Increases in GDP and employment opportunities demonstrate sustainable tourism's advancement. The percentage of Southeast Asia's gross domestic product (GDP) that is contributed by the travel and tourism industry has been on an upward trend since the beginning of this decade. In addition, there has been a continuous rise in the quantity of jobs that have been created as a direct consequence of the tourist industry. This growth can be directly attributed to the growing number of visitors. Even though some governments in the region have promised to put the development of the tourism industry at the top of their agendas as a way to stimulate local economic development in areas without other natural resources and industries, this has not yet occurred. Secondary data analysis revealed the existence of general and fundamental obstacles that make sustainable tourism a difficult possibility. Some of the biggest challenges were unsustainable trends of mass tourists that were hurting nature, reducing biodiversity, putting wildlife at risk, or even killing them off, and hurting local communities. The study also provides the ASEAN Framework on sustainable tourist development by the ASEAN Economic Community, through which the region's tourist sectors can be reconstructed to their full potential, especially by 2025.

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