

Towards a Sustainable Future: Policy Changes and Recommendations for Jordan's Tourism Sector

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Report Purpose	4
3	The approach	5
3.1	Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies:	5
3.2	Focus Group Discussions:.....	5
3.3	Collection of Opinions and Ideas:	6
3.4	Analysis and Synthesis:	6
3.5	Evaluation and Recommendations:.....	6
4	Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies in Jordan.....	7
5	The National Green Growth Plan (2017).....	10
5.1	The Tourism Sector Green Growth Action National Action Plan 2021-2025 (GG-NAP).....	11
5.2	The Jordan National Tourism Strategy 2021-2025.....	11
6	Sustainable Tourism Policies and Strategies: Challenges and Recommendations Based on the Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies in Jordan:.....	12
6.1	Challenges for Jordan Sustainable Tourism.....	12
6.2	Towards Sustainable Tourism: Recommendations for Jordan's Journey to 2030	14
7	Focus Groups Result Analysis and Discussion	16
7.1	Cultural component of sustainability	16
7.1.1	Private Sector:.....	17
7.1.2	Civil Society:	18
7.1.3	Public Sector:	19
7.2	Environmental component of sustainability	19
7.2.1	Civil Society	20
7.2.2	Public Sector.....	21
7.3	Socio-Economic component of sustainability	22



7.3.1	Private Sector:	23
7.3.2	Civil Society:	23
7.3.3	Public Sector:.....	24
8	Sustainable Tourism Policies and Strategies: Challenges and Recommendations Based on the Focus Groups Results	24
8.1	Cultural Component of Sustainability:	24
8.2	Environmental Component of Sustainability:	25
8.3	Socio-Economic Component of Sustainability:	26

Towards a Sustainable Future: Policy Changes and Recommendations for Jordan's Tourism Sector

1 Introduction

Jordan, a Middle Eastern country, has been a popular tourist destination for many years, but the rapid growth of the tourism industry has raised concerns about its impact on the economy, environment, and society. In response, the Jordanian government has developed various tourism strategies and policies to promote sustainable tourism development. These policies have been influenced by several factors, including the country's natural and cultural resources, its economic and political situation, and global trends towards sustainable development.

To implement these policies, the government has established institutions and initiatives such as the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Jordan Tourism Board, and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. These bodies work together to promote tourism development and ensure the effectiveness of the policies. The government also regularly reviews and evaluates the policies, monitoring their implementation and assessing their impact on the economy, environment, and local communities. This review process involves consulting with stakeholders, such as local communities, tourism operators, and non-governmental organizations.

However, despite progress in protecting the environment, there are still concerns that Jordan's natural assets and resources are being exploited for economic gain rather than being preserved. Thus, more ethical approaches to tourism are needed, including legislation, education, and community engagement. The Tourism Sector Green Growth Action National Action Plan 2021-2025 is the first formal plan that emphasizes sustainability and community engagement to guide

providers along the tourism value chain. But there is still work to be done on sustainable tourism development in Jordan.

To address this issue, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, along with the Ministry of Environment, are working to reduce the environmental footprint of tourism through initiatives in energy use, water, and waste reduction, as well as by coordinating with donor agencies and other government entities. Jordan has also developed policies and plans to address climate change, including the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The country's priority sectors include water, agriculture, energy, land use, and desertification. Despite a lack of unified policies hindering efforts to tackle climate change, Jordan has committed to implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the UNWTO professional Code of Ethics in Tourism.

The development and review of sustainable tourism policies in Jordan is an ongoing process that requires continuous attention and commitment from the government, the tourism industry, and all other stakeholders to ensure that tourism development in Jordan is sustainable, responsible, and beneficial for all.

2 Report Purpose

Firstly, Reviewing Tourism Policies and Strategies: The report aims to conduct a comprehensive review of all tourism policies and strategies in Jordan. This review will focus on assessing their effectiveness in promoting sustainability within the tourism industry.

Secondly, Highlighting Sustainability: One of the main objectives of the report is to emphasize the importance of sustainability in the context of Jordanian tourism. It aims to bring attention to sustainable practices and their significance in preserving the country's natural and cultural resources.

Thirdly, Gathering Stakeholder Feedback: The report seeks to gather feedback from relevant stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. This feedback will play a crucial role in evaluating the current state of sustainable tourism in Jordan and identifying areas for improvement.

Fourthly, Evaluating and Making Changes: Based on the feedback received, the report intends to evaluate the existing sustainable tourism initiatives in Jordan. It will identify any shortcomings or areas that require modification and recommend necessary changes to enhance the effectiveness of sustainable tourism policies.

Fifthly, Identifying Problem Areas and Development Opportunities: The report aims to identify problem areas within Jordanian tourism concerning sustainability. By pinpointing these challenges, the report can provide recommendations and suggest potential fields of development that can contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry in Jordan.

3 The approach

3.1 Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies:

The report conducted a comprehensive review of all tourism policies and strategies in Jordan. This involved a detailed examination of the existing policies and strategies to assess their effectiveness in promoting sustainability within the tourism industry. The review aimed to identify areas where improvements or adjustments could be made to enhance sustainability practices.

3.2 Focus Group Discussions:

The report utilized a qualitative research method by conducting nine focus group discussions. These focus groups aimed to gather a diverse range of opinions, ideas, and perspectives from relevant stakeholders in the tourism industry. The participants of the focus groups likely included

representatives from tourism organizations, government agencies, tourism and hospitality schools, local communities, tour operators, and other key stakeholders.

3.3 Collection of Opinions and Ideas:

During the focus group discussions, participants were encouraged to share their opinions and ideas regarding the strengths and weaknesses of sustainable tourism in Jordan. They were also asked to provide suggestions on how to improve sustainable tourism practices at the national level. The discussions aimed to capture a wide range of perspectives and insights to inform the evaluation and recommendations in the report.

3.4 Analysis and Synthesis:

The report analyzed the data collected from the review of policies and strategies, as well as the insights obtained from the focus group discussions. This analysis involved identifying common themes, patterns, and trends related to sustainability in Jordanian tourism. The findings have been synthesized to form a comprehensive understanding of the current state of sustainable tourism and to identify areas for improvement.

3.5 Evaluation and Recommendations:

Based on the review, focus group discussions, and analysis, the report has evaluated the effectiveness of existing sustainable tourism initiatives in Jordan. It has identified problem areas, weaknesses, and strengths, along with potential opportunities for improvement. The report provided recommendations on specific actions, strategies, or policy changes that can be implemented to enhance sustainable tourism practices in Jordan.

By combining the review of policies and strategies with the insights gained from focus group discussions, the report aimed to provide a holistic assessment of sustainable tourism in Jordan and offer actionable recommendations for its enhancement.

4 Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies in Jordan

Jordan's tourism industry has experienced significant growth over the past few decades, contributing significantly to the country's economy. The government has implemented various policies and strategies over the years to promote and develop the tourism sector, with a focus on attracting more foreign investment, diversifying tourism products, and improving infrastructure and transportation.

In the 1990s, Jordan's government focused on attracting more foreign investment to tourism sector, particularly after wadi araba peace treaty. The government implemented a range of incentives to encourage investment, such as tax exemptions and streamlined procedures for permits and licenses. The government also worked to promote Jordan's cultural and historical attractions, such as Petra as major tourist destination. The country's tourism sector experienced rapid growth during this period.

In the 2000s, Jordan government has recognized the significance of the tourism sector in Jordan's economy and has been working on a coherent strategy through The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The focus is on attracting medium to high-end customers to increase total daily revenue per tourist. The MoTA has identified potential niche tourism markets such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, leisure and wellness tourism, religious tourism, and volunteer tourism. The MoTA believes that targeting the low-end mass market is unsustainable due to the lack of infrastructure to support large volumes and the low revenue generated.

To develop the tourism industry, **the MoTA developed a four-pronged strategy in 2004 for the first time.** This strategy includes strengthening tourism marketing, supporting product development, developing human resources, and providing an effective institutional and regulatory framework. The GoJ has allocated resources for international marketing, product development, and human resources development through 2010.

The National Tourism Strategy for the period of 2011-2015 aims to capitalize on the solid foundation established since 2004 and provide clear direction for stakeholders in the tourism industry to support future growth. The strategy is guided by a vision and mission adapted from the previous strategy, with an emphasis on developing a unique and competitive tourism industry. While retaining the successful four-pillar framework, the strategic objectives have been slightly amended to prioritize increased competitiveness in all activities. Implementation of the identified measures under the four pillars is expected to secure past achievements and contribute significantly to the overall competitiveness of Jordan's tourism industry, supporting long-term growth and sustainability.

The strategic vision for the 2011-2015 period aims to position Jordan as a distinctive destination offering diverse and year-round visitor experiences that enrich the lives of Jordanians and their guests. The strategic mission for the period is to plan and implement necessary changes and actions to enhance the competitiveness of Jordan's tourism industry, improve the visitor experience through innovation in product development, promote the tourism offering to global markets to attract higher-yield customers throughout the year, and create a regulatory and operating environment that drives better business performance and unleashes the full energy of the private sector as the engine of growth.

In 2018-2020 MoTA tourism strategy, The Ministry has aligned its institutional objectives with Jordan's 2025 strategic vision for the tourism sector and linked them to the Jordanian economic growth stimulus plan 2018-2022, the Executive Development Program, and the National Tourism Strategy 2018-2022. The Ministry has developed strategic pillars for the years 2018-2020 and translated them into basic objectives with identified priorities. To achieve these objectives, the Ministry has established various programs and projects that aim to implement specific directives for the strategy.

The identified strategic institutional objectives fall under two main pillars. The first is "A tourism product that reflects Jordan's identity," which aims to create diverse and unique local tourism experiences that cater to different target groups. The Ministry intends to design integrated tourism experiences that include various sites and patterns on different paths, covering different governorates, cities, and villages. These experiences will encourage tourism investment, empower the local community, provide job opportunities, and enrich visitors' tourism experience with distinct events and activities that reflect the identity of different parts of the Kingdom.

The second pillar is "An enabling environment," which aims to organize the legislative environment to ensure the rule of law, transparency, and accountability. This includes considering new legislation that the sector needs to keep up with modern global developments. Additionally, the Ministry aims to create an investment-stimulating environment that supports the growth of the tourism sector. This involves partnerships with the private sector and local community, adopting various initiatives such as outsourcing to operate and manage tourist and archaeological sites by

the private sector, creating awareness about the tourism sector's importance to the Jordanian economy, and implementing a national program for training and employment in the tourism sector.

The Ministry's strategic objectives also focus on building and developing institutional capacities, including structure, systems, procedures, skills, and institutional culture, to increase the satisfaction of service recipients of products. In the strategy, The Ministry also aims to improve the decision-making and policy-making process, transfer knowledge, and enhance tourism research in Jordan by developing a work unit that deals with data, research, and studies related to the tourism sector in Jordan. This unit will cooperate with local and foreign universities and the business community to publish scientific papers and information, arrange seminars, host conferences, and give lectures on tourism studies.

5 The National Green Growth Plan (2017)

It Jordan aims to guide green growth projects and align green policies and investments to work towards national development goals, including in the tourism sector. The plan identifies green growth opportunities and key performance indicators, and designs a cross-sector policy framework and implementation roadmap. It focuses on six sectors, including tourism, and proposes priority projects that require large investments. The plan also establishes a governance structure to fast-track project implementation. The plan's driving principles include transparent governance, incentivizing green growth, integrated planning, and capacity building. Implementation of these actions will contribute to the Tourism Sector Green Growth Sub Objective, increasing coordination and collaboration between the public and private sectors, increasing sector profitability, mainstreaming sustainability and resilience, and presenting investment opportunities in ecotourism

and sustainability in key touristic locations. The plan aims to achieve an expanding yet sustainable and resilient economy that ensures the creation of green jobs and increased investment in green projects.

5.1 The Tourism Sector Green Growth Action National Action Plan 2021-2025 (GG-NAP)
IT is a framework and set of actions aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic growth within Jordan's tourism sector. It aligns with national green growth objectives, such as enhancing natural capital, resource efficiency, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. The plan identifies 18 sub-objectives to mainstream these goals into tourism sector policies and investments. Despite the short-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism is expected to continue to attract tourists in the medium-to-long term, offering significant livelihood opportunities for Jordanians and attracting private sector investments. The plan includes 12 priority actions that require an estimated investment of USD 172,700,000 to accelerate green growth through the tourism sector. These actions include investment preparation, demonstration, enabling policy and institutional reform, and innovation programs.

5.2 The Jordan National Tourism Strategy 2021-2025.

This Strategy comprehensively addresses the challenges and gaps facing the country, and aligns them with the strengths and opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance national economic growth and job creation.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries from across the tourism sector value chain, including various Tourism Associations and other key private sector stakeholders, provided input for this Strategy through consultative workshops led by distinguished private sector figures. Such engagement fostered a sense of involvement among sector stakeholders in the development of the Strategy,

leading to their buy-in. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) played a key role in facilitating these workshops.

Furthermore, MoTA/JTB and DoA will spearhead the coordination of activities, efforts, projects, policies, and strategies with counterparts in ASEZA, PDTRA, the Baptism Site Commission, and other relevant entities. This coordination will be facilitated by the re-constituted National Tourism Council and representation on the Jordan Tourism Board.

This Strategy embodies several important initiatives, such as the protection of Jordan's abundant cultural heritage, development of human resources, and design/marketing of rich products, services, and experiences. It will also address necessary reforms to overcome inhibitors that are hindering growth, investment, and efficiency in the industry, thereby enhancing its competitiveness in the face of major regional players in the tourism domain.

6 Sustainable Tourism Policies and Strategies: Challenges and Recommendations Based on the Review of Tourism Policies and Strategies in Jordan:

6.1 Challenges for Jordan Sustainable Tourism

Despite the numerous benefits that the tourism industry can bring to a country, it also poses a variety of challenges, particularly in terms of sustainability. This is especially true in Jordan, where the government has recognized the need to balance tourism growth with sustainability and diversify tourism products as highlighted in the Tourism Sector Green Growth Action National Action Plan 2021-2025, developing human resources, and providing an effective institutional and regulatory framework. However, achieving these goals requires significant investment and effort, as well as overcoming the challenges associated with ensuring sustainable practices in the tourism sector.

- **Balancing tourism growth with sustainability:** While Jordan has experienced significant growth in its tourism industry, there is a need to balance this growth with sustainability. This requires careful planning and management to ensure that tourism development does not negatively impact the natural and cultural environment or the local community.
- **Diversifying tourism products:** The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Jordan has recognized the importance of diversifying tourism products, targeting medium to high-end customers, and identifying potential niche tourism markets such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, leisure and wellness tourism, religious tourism, and volunteer tourism. However, diversification is a challenge as it requires significant investment in infrastructure and development of new products.
- **Developing human resources:** The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has identified the development of human resources as a key strategy for the development of the tourism industry. However, this requires investment in education and training, as well as attracting and retaining skilled workers.
- **Providing an effective institutional and regulatory framework:** Jordan's government has implemented policies and strategies to promote and develop the tourism sector. However, effective implementation requires an institutional and regulatory framework that supports the development of the sector and ensures the rule of law, transparency, and accountability.
- **Ensuring sustainable practices:** Sustainable tourism requires the adoption of environmentally and socially responsible practices. This includes reducing waste, conserving natural resources, and supporting the local community. However, ensuring

sustainable practices can be challenging, particularly in areas with limited resources and infrastructure.

- Balancing public and private sector interests: The development of the tourism industry involves a balance between public and private sector interests. While the government plays a crucial role in developing the infrastructure and regulatory framework, the private sector drives innovation and investment. Balancing these interests can be a challenge, particularly in areas where the tourism industry is dominated by large multinational corporations.

6.2 Towards Sustainable Tourism: Recommendations for Jordan's Journey to 2030

Jordan's tourism industry has experienced significant growth over the years, but it is imperative for the government to recognize the importance of preserving the country's natural and cultural heritage and implementing policies to promote sustainable tourism practices. In this regard, the government must shift its tourism strategy towards sustainability and responsible tourism to promote eco-friendly and socially responsible practices in the industry. The establishment of more protected areas, launching the "Jordan Responsible Tourism Initiative," and promoting eco-tourism activities are some of the policies that should be adopted to achieve sustainable tourism.

To transition towards sustainable tourism, some policy recommendations are proposed:

- Focus on sustainability: While Jordan's tourism industry has experienced significant growth, there is a need to promote sustainability in the sector. The government should create policies and incentives to encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, including reducing energy consumption, promoting eco-tourism, and ensuring that local communities benefit from tourism.

- Diversify tourism products: Jordan should continue to diversify its tourism products and promote niche markets such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, leisure and wellness tourism, religious tourism, and volunteer tourism. This will help to attract higher-yield customers and reduce the reliance on low-end mass markets.
- Develop institutional and regulatory frameworks: The government should continue to develop institutional and regulatory frameworks to support the tourism industry's growth and sustainability. This includes creating an investment-stimulating environment that supports the growth of the tourism sector, establishing partnerships with the private sector and local communities, and considering new legislation to keep up with modern global developments.
- Enhance human resources development: The government should continue to allocate resources for the development of human resources in the tourism sector. This includes providing training and employment opportunities for locals, creating awareness about the tourism sector's importance to the Jordanian economy, and enhancing institutional capacities, including structure, systems, procedures, skills, and institutional culture.
- Implement the National Green Growth Plan: Jordan should implement the National Green Growth Plan to guide green growth projects and align green policies and investments to work towards national development goals. The plan focuses on six sectors, including tourism, and proposes priority projects that require large investments to promote sustainability and reduce carbon footprint.
- Establishing environmental impact systems is essential to regularly measure the impact of various tourism activities on different environmental aspects, such as soil, water, waste, and air. These systems can help identify areas where tourism activities may be causing

harm, allowing for proactive measures to minimize negative impacts and promote sustainable tourism practices. By monitoring and analyzing data on environmental impacts, stakeholders can make informed decisions about tourism development and work towards mitigating any negative effects on the environment.

- Improving social sustainability in tourism, particularly with regards to identity, culture, and regionalism, is crucial for promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices. This can involve supporting local communities and promoting their cultural heritage, as well as engaging with tourists to raise awareness and respect for local customs and traditions. By prioritizing social sustainability in tourism, stakeholders can help ensure that local communities benefit from tourism development, while also promoting cross-cultural understanding and preserving cultural identities
- Enhancing sustainable economic growth and job creation is critical to address the challenges posed by high rates of population growth. Sustainable tourism development can provide significant opportunities for economic growth and job creation, particularly in rural areas where alternative employment opportunities may be limited. By investing in sustainable tourism practices and promoting local entrepreneurship, stakeholders can help ensure that tourism development benefits local communities and supports long-term economic growth. This can include initiatives to support local businesses, such as microfinance programs and training opportunities, as well as policies to promote sustainable tourism development and ensure that economic benefits are distributed fairly across communities.

7 Focus Groups Result Analysis and Discussion

7.1 Cultural component of sustainability

Three focus group discussions were conducted with representatives from the private sector, public sector, and civil society to gather valuable insights regarding sustainable tourism strategies and policies. These discussions shed light on the opinions and perspectives of participants

regarding the crucial role of sustainable tourism in contributing to culture and identifying potential fields of development. The following key findings emerged from these discussions:

7.1.1 Private Sector:

- The cultural impact of tourism, including values, customs, and traditions, is considered compatible with the nature of the local culture in Jordan. These elements are seen as distinctive heritage that can be invested in as a tourist product.
- Differentiating between internal and external tourism and identifying archaeological and touristic areas is crucial. Cultural tourism needs to be clearly defined.
- Initially, local communities might not have accepted the tourism situation, but economic conditions have led them to embrace it.
- The local community is a conservative society, and it is preferable for tourists to adapt to the local community rather than the other way around. Preserving Jordanian values, customs, and traditions in receiving tourism is essential.

Conflict between culture and tourism:

- There is no need to change the local culture because tourists are interested in learning about other cultures. Changing the local culture for the sake of tourism might even lead to a decline in tourism as tourists seek authentic experiences.

Culture as a tourism product:

- The promotion of cultural tourism, particularly in the context of archaeological tourism, is necessary. The integration of the local community with archaeological sites is important.

- Cultural tourism has the potential to bring people closer together, transcending politics and ideologies.

Importance of originality in tourism development:

- Minimal human intervention is crucial to preserve the authenticity of archaeological sites.
- Maintaining the authenticity of a place can be challenging, but it is considered a fundamental aspect of its appeal.
- Encouraging and supporting the production of local products should be prioritized.

7.1.2 Civil Society:

- The compatibility of culture within the local community varies across regions and evolves with time.
- There is a group that perceives tourists solely as a source of income.
- Relationship between authenticity and tourism development:
 - Authenticity is highly valued by tourists who desire to experience a place in its original form without alterations.
 - Authenticity is primarily attributed to individuals rather than places, and the authenticity of a person may change over time.
 - Changes in surrounding cities have affected the authenticity of many archaeological sites, and intervention from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is necessary to preserve authenticity.
- Importance of local community participation in tourism:
 - Local community participation is deemed important, but it should be organized through official bodies.

- Efforts should focus on facilitating the stay of tourists and providing them with financial incentives to recognize the significance of their participation.

7.1.3 Public Sector:

- The support for tourism by customs, values, and traditions in Jordan varies across different parts of society, and it depends on the individual's ability to receive tourists.
- Cultural tourism needs to be organized and clearly defined to receive appropriate support.
- Adaptation between culture and tourism:
- Customs and traditions play a significant role in attracting tourists who seek to experience the local culture. Adaptation of customs and traditions to suit foreign tourists is important.
- Developing specific licensed products, such as cultural tourism services in a particular village, can be beneficial.
- The local tourism product should be developed in accordance with customs, with coordination between tourism offices and the local community facilitated by the local tourism promotion authority.

7.2 Environmental component of sustainability

Three focus group discussions were conducted with representatives from the private sector, public sector, and civil society to gather valuable insights regarding sustainable tourism strategies and policies. These discussions shed light on the opinions and perspectives of participants regarding the crucial role of sustainable tourism in contributing to the environment and identifying potential fields of development. The following key findings emerged from these discussions:

7.2.1 Civil Society

During the focus group discussion with representatives from the civil society, various aspects related to climate change and its impact on the environment were addressed. The following key points emerged from the discussion:

Definition of Climate Change:

- Climate change was described as the result of an imbalance in the ozone layer caused by environmental pollutants, leading to variations in temperature, global precipitation rates, and drought.
- It was also acknowledged that climate change can be geographically specific, and the rise in carbon dioxide emissions due to industrial activities was highlighted as a significant factor.

Climate Change Effects:

- The participants emphasized the influence of climate change on ecological diversity, desertification, and agricultural challenges such as water scarcity.
- The impact of climate change on tourism was discussed, citing examples such as the decreasing water levels of the Dead Sea, which affected hotels and access for tourists.
- Health problems, including asthma and cancer, were identified as outcomes of climate change.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:

- The preference for climate change mitigation over adaptation was expressed, as mitigation involves addressing the root causes of climate change.

- The importance of legislation and regulations to control human activities contributing to climate change, such as energy consumption and transportation, was emphasized.
- Participants called for greater awareness and education on the impact of human behaviors on the environment and the need for sustainable practices.
- Recommendations and Strategies:
- The necessity of implementing legislation to promote renewable energy and electric vehicles as environmentally friendly transportation options was highlighted.
- The role of laws and guidelines for industrial cities in reducing environmental impact was emphasized.
- Collaboration between the government, environmental organizations, and associations was deemed crucial for implementing regulations and raising awareness.
- Regional cooperation and sharing of resources and experiences were seen as essential for addressing climate change effectively.

7.2.2 Public Sector

The focus group discussion with representatives from the public sector provided insights into their perspectives on climate change and the measures required to mitigate its impact. The following key findings emerged:

Definition of Climate Change:

- Climate change was defined as both long-term and short-term changes in the climate, resulting from natural or human-caused factors affecting the ecological and environmental systems.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:

- Participants expressed the belief that adaptation to climate change was necessary, as it is impossible to completely stop it. They stressed the importance of implementing actions and policies at the national level to mitigate its effects.
- The significance of balancing environmental factors, land, vegetation, and water cover to maintain environmental stability was emphasized.

Climate Change Effects:

- Changing weather patterns, extinction of species, floods, and variations in precipitation were identified as natural phenomena influenced by climate change.
- The impact of climate change on human health, tourism, agriculture, food security, and other sectors was discussed, highlighting the challenges faced in Jordan, such as impacts on tourism and agricultural activities.

Global Initiatives and Recommendations:

- The need for regional cooperation, sharing experiences and resources, and engaging in conferences and discussions on climate change was emphasized.
- Recommendations included establishing eco-friendly industries, increasing afforestation rates, minimizing human factors contributing to climate change, implementing regulations, and raising awareness about climate change risks.

7.3 Socio-Economic component of sustainability

Three focus group discussions were conducted with representatives from the private sector, public sector, and civil society to gather valuable insights regarding sustainable tourism strategies and policies. These discussions shed light on the opinions and perspectives of

participants regarding the crucial role of sustainable tourism in contributing to Socio-Economic and identifying potential fields of development. The following key findings emerged from these discussions:

7.3.1 Private Sector:

During the discussion, one of the participants expressed concerns about the lack of guarantees for the rights of tourist offices. He emphasized the need for documented information about the local community and secure tourist destinations to enhance the coordination between the tourist office and the local community. Participants also emphasized the importance of regulating the local community through the Ministry of Tourism, providing training and rehabilitation programs, and fostering collaboration between tourist offices and the local community.

7.3.2 Civil Society:

Addressing the socio-economic dimension, the coordination between the public sector, local communities, and the private sector was explored. One of the participants highlighted the significance of fostering a sense of belonging within the local community towards the site, as it positively influences their engagement. Promoting archaeological sites emerged as a priority for the local community, and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities was suggested to play a crucial role in determining the value and importance of these sites. In addition, discussions focused on spreading the socio-economic impact beyond archaeological sites to ensure the local community benefits from tourism development. Suggestions included implementing decisions that foster human development, providing tourist services by the local community at the sites, and considering tourism as a primary source of government income. The involvement of academics from universities was also highlighted, emphasizing the need for awareness-raising and training

programs for the local community, as well as the connection between academic institutions, municipalities, and universities to conduct research and develop archaeological sites.

7.3.3 Public Sector:

The group discussed suggestions for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to enhance the economic aspect of sustainable tourism. Recommendations included developing strong infrastructure for local investment, improving legal legislation, integrating the local community into tourist sites, establishing an information bank and studies for investors, developing local products to benefit the community, forming partnerships between archaeological institutions, maximizing tourism income for the local community, tailoring regulations and laws for each tourist site, and building a comprehensive data bank for archaeological sites. Furthermore, the importance of creating regulations and laws to bind the local community was emphasized.

In summary, the insights gathered from the private sector, civil society, and the public sector highlight the need for collaboration and coordination among stakeholders to achieve sustainable tourism. These perspectives underscore the significance of empowering the local community, fostering partnerships, implementing effective regulations, and maximizing economic benefits to create a thriving and inclusive tourism sector.

8 Sustainable Tourism Policies and Strategies: Challenges and Recommendations Based on the Focus Groups Results

8.1 Cultural Component of Sustainability:

Challenges:

- Conflict between culture and tourism: Balancing the preservation of local culture with the demands of tourism can be challenging. Changing the local culture solely for tourism purposes may result in a decline in authenticity and visitor interest.
- Cultural tourism promotion: Defining and promoting cultural tourism, particularly in the context of archaeological sites, requires clear guidelines and integration of the local community.

Recommendations:

- Cultural preservation: Emphasize the preservation of Jordanian values, customs, and traditions when receiving tourists. Encourage tourists to adapt to the local community to maintain authenticity.
- Differentiation of tourism areas: Clearly define and differentiate between internal and external tourism, highlighting the cultural significance of archaeological and touristic sites.
- Integration of local community: Foster collaboration between tourism offices and the local community to promote cultural tourism. Encourage the production and promotion of local products.
- Education and awareness: Establish partnerships between academic institutions, municipalities, and universities to provide training courses and raise awareness among the local community about sustainable tourism practices.

8.2 Environmental Component of Sustainability:

Challenges:

- Climate change impact: Climate change poses challenges to ecological diversity, water scarcity, and the overall environment. Rising carbon dioxide emissions and changing weather patterns affect tourist destinations such as the Dead Sea.
- Mitigation vs. adaptation: Choosing between climate change mitigation (addressing root causes) and adaptation (adjusting to changing conditions) presents a challenge in prioritizing actions.

Recommendations:

- Legislation and regulations: Implement legislation to promote renewable energy, electric vehicles, and sustainable practices to mitigate climate change. Focus on controlling human activities contributing to climate change, such as energy consumption and transportation.
- Industry collaboration: Encourage collaboration between the government, environmental organizations, and associations to implement regulations, raise awareness, and share resources and experiences.
- Education and awareness: Increase awareness and education on the impact of human behaviors on the environment and the need for sustainable practices.
- Regional cooperation: Foster regional cooperation to address climate change effectively, share best practices, and develop joint strategies.

8.3 Socio-Economic Component of Sustainability:

Challenges:

- Lack of guarantees for tourist offices: Ensuring the rights and security of tourist offices and providing documented information about the local community and tourist destinations.
- Local community coordination: Coordinating efforts between the public sector, local communities, and the private sector to foster a sense of belonging, promote archaeological sites, and spread the socio-economic impact.

Recommendations:

- Regulating the local community: Establish regulations and guidelines through the Ministry of Tourism to ensure the local community's engagement, training, and rehabilitation to receive tourists.
- Collaboration with the private sector: Foster cooperation between tourist offices and the local community, linking them to promote sustainable tourism.
- Maximizing local community benefits: Encourage the provision of tourist services by the local community at tourist sites. Consider tourism as a primary source of government income.
- Academic involvement: Establish effective collaboration between universities and the local community to raise awareness, provide training courses, conduct research, and develop archaeological sites.
- Economic development: Develop strong infrastructure for local investment, improve legal legislation, integrate the local community into tourist sites, and develop local products to benefit the community.



By implementing these recommendations, Jordan can work towards achieving sustainable tourism practices that preserve its cultural heritage, protect the environment, and enhance the socio-economic well-being of local communities.