

# Supporting Businesses to Adapt and Build Resilience

By now, you should have had time to reflect on and analyze the impacts of tourism in your community. This will provide you with a better understanding of the businesses, communities and groups that require the most support to embed sustainability and build resilience. For example, certain sectors may have been hit harder by pandemic restrictions and continue to require recovery support, whereas others may be experiencing the negative impacts of increased congestion in rural areas and require support to better manage crowds and visitor flows. Still others may be seeing more frequently occurring impacts from climate change. This will also enable support mechanisms to be better targeted, making sure that the right support goes to the right people at the right time. This section of the guide will highlight the different types of support and assistance that can be provided to businesses to adapt and build resilience.



Depot Park, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

## Financial Support

**The main types of financial assistance and stimulus provided by governments and umbrella organizations are detailed below:**

- Direct monetary assistance to support revenue loss via emergency funds, loans, or funding of incentive-driven campaigns to support business recovery.
- Assistance to reduce operational and variable costs via tax relief, waivers of mandatory fees and licenses, and debt/loan cancellation or delays.
- Provide (or direct businesses to) financial planning and advisory support seminars and practical information.
- Waive or postpone collection of fees e.g., membership fees or operator licenses.

- Offer (or direct businesses to) financial and legal advice and support designed to manage and encourage rebooking over cancellations and minimize economic loss and unemployment.
- Facilitate communication with other agencies to resolve issues (e.g., staffing or housing).
- Support tourism, recreation and hospitality businesses to adapt their marketing to reduce seasonality, increase support for diverse local suppliers, improve DEIA, and support climate and regenerative tourism initiatives in the region.

## Technical Support

The different types of technical support required to build resilience are wide-ranging and the most appropriate types will depend on the local situation. There are, however, key themes that should be considered by all destinations.

### Sharing market intelligence

Sharing market intelligence regularly is important for the whole sector to understand source market trends and evolving consumer needs. This helps to identify the right type of technical support that can be accessed to help the sector to adapt. Whether a business directly interacts with visitors or is a supplier, understanding the

**Future of Tourism**  
**Guiding Principle #13**  
**Operate Business Responsibly**



Incentivize and reward tourism businesses and associated enterprises that support these principles through their actions and develop strong local supply chains that allow for higher quality products and experiences.

market is essential for being able to adapt products and operations appropriately. The case study below from Turismo Portugal is an excellent example of how this can be achieved.

### Helping businesses to adapt

Sub-sectors need guidance on how to develop or adapt their products to ongoing and future challenges such as the climate crisis, changing market trends, digitalization, etc. This can be delivered via workshops for small businesses, hotels, tour operators and attractions. Many different resources are being created internationally: New Zealand's Tourism Transition Program delivered advice to tourism businesses on how to adapt to domestic and Australian markets. British Columbia's Tourism Resiliency Program provided advice through a funded Digital Literacy Program to businesses to shift online by receiving tech support in 2021 and 2022. In 2023 it evolved to a Tourism Sustainability Program to offer support to destination organizations for sustainability planning.



### Expanding educational and business advice services

- Since March 2020, Turismo de Portugal has provided a specialised online support service, provided by 60 trainers from its official Hotel and Tourism Schools to help provide advice to companies in dealing with specific operational issues and helping to minimise the impact of Contingency Plans for COVID-19.
- The organization, which runs 12 official schools in the country, opened its online courses for free in June 2020, to enable all professionals in Portuguese-speaking countries in the world to benefit from online educational content.
- The organization provides a daily update of market information (air transport, reservations, tour operators and travel restrictions) for tourism businesses, submitted by the offices of Turismo de Portugal worldwide and publicly available on Turismo de Portugal's knowledge management platform, Travel BI.

(Source: [European Travel Commission, 2020](#))

The following training topics are useful to consider:

- How to adapt existing products: including understanding the growing demand for sustainability, improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, enhancing technology capabilities, dealing with reduced/increased volumes, and the opportunities for more personalized experiences.
- Diversification to build resilience to future shocks e.g., diversify customer base, product offerings, and revenue streams.

### A Strategic Approach To Upskilling And Re-Training

- **Upskilling and re-training packages need to be made available to address skills gaps** that evolving market trends create e.g., developing sustainable travel products and strengthening local supply chains. The provision of support in this area should be based on evidence and align with the overall destination strategy. An analysis of skills required, and current gaps will be key.
- **Consider what programs could be created to build local knowledge and skills and a strong workforce for the future.** E.g., based on the evolving trends, will more people be needed to work in the sub-sectors of outdoor/leisure, protected area management and maintenance? What can be done to address labor shortages and attract people to work opportunities and diversify employment in the tourism sector? In an increasingly competitive labor market, sustainable and inclusive businesses are more likely to attract and retain the best staff.
- **Consider how to stimulate innovation and the creation of new business start-ups.** E.g., the provision of grants/loans and other financial packages for start-ups could prioritize businesses that contribute to the development or strengthening of the destination and meet changing visitor demand. For example, rural areas that have experienced increased demand from day-trippers may provide opportunities for new accommodation businesses, including glamping or ecolodges, to encourage more overnight stays. Does your destination have the products to meet this demand?

Mariposa Country in California, for example, developed a new Airstream campsite in order to attract visitors to stay longer, not just for the day as an add-on to Yosemite National Park (Yosemite 2021).

## Bridging the digital gap in Australia

The “Tourism Exchange Australia” is a digital platform that provides small businesses with the same opportunity to market their products as the big hotel and resort chains. The platform acts as a matchmaker between local suppliers and intermediaries to create innovative and diverse packages that allow the flexibility to adapt to new trends. The platform draws on live availability and provides an invaluable tool for customer searching for travel products online.

(Source: [Tourism Exchange Australia, 2023](#))



## Tackling staffing issues in Canada

A Canadian hotel school points to an interesting shift in hiring policy, based on experience learned from big-tech companies like Google.

“These employers have learned to shift their hiring focus from education and experience to skills and demonstrated competencies – a hiring innovation, says Joe Baker. He says hotels need to get similarly comfortable with non-traditional talent pools and soft skills such as communication, cultural sympathy, personal resilience, empathy, persistence and confidence”

(Source: [Hotelier, 2019](#))

## Strengthening Collaboration And Partnerships

The pandemic demonstrated the interdependence of the tourism community and there is an opportunity now to build on these connections, helping to manage negative impacts, support recovery and increase the resilience of the sector. When communities turned to each other throughout the pandemic to gauge how best to adapt and respond, it proved to be a great source of innovation and shared learning, enabling destinations to navigate the many uncertainties, including how to adapt marketing and support businesses. This model can and should be continued with the aim of tackling tourism (and humanity’s) greatest challenges yet – climate change and equity. No one entity can solve these challenges alone and much is to be gained from working together.

## The Circular Economy: Pulling together to create shared value

There are many opportunities across the tourism value chain to create greater efficiencies, increase income and spread the benefits of tourism more widely. For example, initiatives that link hotels, restaurants and producers can bring multiple benefits to the local economy and

environment while capitalizing on increased demand for local, authentic and healthier food. The following diagram illustrates an approach for collaboration between food producers, hotels and restaurants, with a goal of reducing food waste and creating efficiencies.



**A circular economy model** refers to a more sustainable system of production and consumption, promoting ways to extend the use of products such as through reuse, sharing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials for as long as possible to extend their lifecycle and to minimize waste. In this way, it reduces emissions from fossil fuels as less demand is created for new products to be made and less energy is required to dispose of products after minimal usage.

A good example from tourism is the switch away from using single-use products to reusable ones in an increasing number of businesses and destinations. For example, many hotels, restaurants and tour operators now implement deposit programs which require customers to pay upfront for a reusable drink container. The money is reclaimed when the container is returned at the end of their stay/activity/experience or, alternatively, the customer may be given the option to pay extra to keep it for personal use. This cuts waste and encourages more sustainable practices within businesses and among visitors.



A range of initiatives can be used to strengthen value chains for the future; thinking about them while considering actions that will help to capitalize on the interdependencies within your community and focus on building resilience.

### Pooling resources

Here are some suggestions for how you could pool resources with other organizations and promote partnerships between businesses:

- Cross-promotional initiatives between accommodation and attraction sectors – ‘stay and play’ packages.
- Multi-attraction / experience tickets to pool marketing budgets.
- Collective purchasing across hotels to reduce costs for small businesses and create economies of scale.

### Procurement practices that support local suppliers

- Sharing information on changes in consumer demand (e.g., for gluten-free food or plastic-free products) with local suppliers will help them in adapting their products to better meet the needs of the travel industry.

## Ensuring That Strategies Are Inclusive And Equitable

Further opportunities exist to repurpose tourism to better support communities. It is therefore important to consider where and how there is capacity to deliver

## Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #9



### Close the Loop on Resources

Turn away from the use of disposable plastics by tourism businesses, and transition to circular resource use.

more inclusive opportunities particularly among youth, women, rural, Indigenous and other underrepresented groups. The pandemic also highlighted the potential of the tourism sector to support society via its infrastructure and these synergies can help to prepare for future crises.

### Partnering with community organizations

There is so much to gain from broadening partnerships across sectors in your communities – with Tribes, non-profit organizations and cultural organizations, social benefit organizations, conservation organizations, and more – all of those working to keep the place you love and share with visitors, what it is. The most memorable and experiences for travelers are those that provide learning opportunities and meaningful encounters with local people.

Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

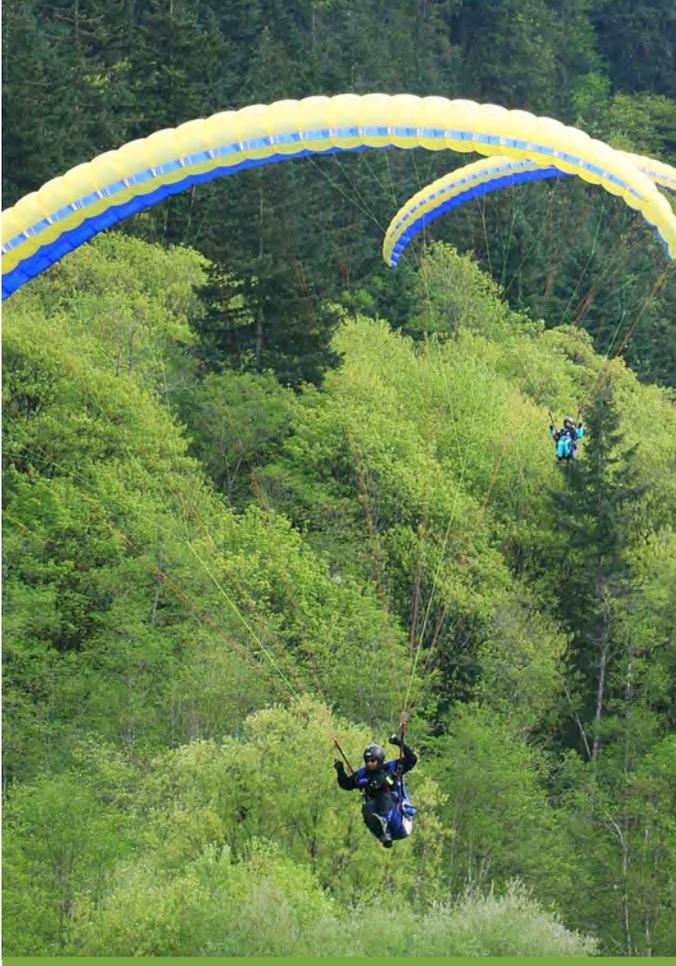


### Upcycling Food Waste in California

The One Kitchen Collaborative was funded by the City of Oceanside and is a program of the non-profit organization Soul Foundation. Its programs include professional food storage and production for catering and food security, using perishable food destined for landfill.

[One Kitchen Collective](#)





Seattle Paraglide, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah



### Rescuing Restaurant Food in Finland

A restaurant food waste program started in Helsinki now across Finland cities helps restaurants repackage and resell food that would go to waste for a discount. Customers use the RES-Q Club App to order and pick up meals.

[ResQ-Club](#)



### Indigenous Tourism Business Support in BC

Indigenous Tourism BC has supported local Indigenous tourism businesses through a variety of measures including

- An Emergency Relief Fund to help businesses stay solvent and pivot to long-term recovery.
- An Indigenous Alignment Strategy: 3-year plan to rebuild and expand the Indigenous tourism sector.
- The Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund for market-ready Indigenous tourism businesses that continue to experience disruption and financial loss.

(Source: [Indigenous Tourism BC](#))



Duthie Hill, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

**Here are some examples from around the world:**

<p><b>A Social Enterprise Model</b></p>	<p>Amsterdam has developed projects to help visitors give back to neighborhoods and contribute positively to the city during their visit through its Untourist Guide that connects tourists with experiences outside of the mass tourism offer whilst creating value for local enterprises. (Source: <a href="#">The Untourist Movement Amsterdam, 2020</a>)</p>
<p><b>Supporting Black-owned Enterprises</b></p>	<p>Visit California has developed resources to signpost visitors to support California’s Black-owned businesses by curating collections of restaurants, boutiques, and experiences. (Source: <a href="#">Visit California, 2020</a>)</p>
<p><b>Connecting Infrastructure Capacity</b></p>	<p>Lisbon’s ‘Renda Segura’ (Safe Rent) program incentivizes the conversion of short-term rental apartments to become affordable housing for residents. It allows vacation-rental owners to rent out their property as affordable accommodation to the city authorities in exchange for a guaranteed income. The homes are then rented by the city authorities to people on low and medium incomes who would otherwise be unable to live in the city center. In this way, the program contributes to restoring the balance in the use of property, following a sharp increase in speculative purchases of holiday flats in recent years. (Source: <a href="#">European Travel Commission, 2020</a>)</p>
<p><b>Social Enterprise Examples – using tourism to benefit people and planet</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Cafe Reconcile</a>: <i>Featuring soul-filled local dishes, Café Reconcile is a destination lunch spot for a wide cross-section of New Orleanians as well as visitors from all across the country. Reconcile New Orleans supports young adults, ages 16-24, as they transform their lives by encouraging their personal growth, providing workforce development and training, and equipping them with tools to achieve their potential. Visitors to the café therefore directly support the advancement of the social mission of the organization.</i></p>
	<p><a href="#">Coral Reef Restoration Foundation</a> is the largest coral reef restoration program on the planet, located in Florida. Their OKCoral citizen science programs engages visitors in direct data collection and reef restoration activities.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Explore Songhees</a> Songhees Nation offers a range of tourism activities including accommodation, events and catering as well as cultural tours to share their Indigenous culture with visitors and direct revenues back to the First Nation government. Partner hotels offer tour packages to provide guests with meaningful experiences and increase market access for Explore Songhees’ products.</p>

**See the Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism in Washington section for a host of organizations across the state to support, partner with and learn from.**

## Planning Business Resilience Support

This section of the guide has illustrated the different support mechanisms available and how working collaboratively can help businesses to pool resources, support each other and create a more resilient tourism value chain.

The following table provides a set of considerations and ideas for how you could support businesses with sustainability and resilience in the immediate and longer term:

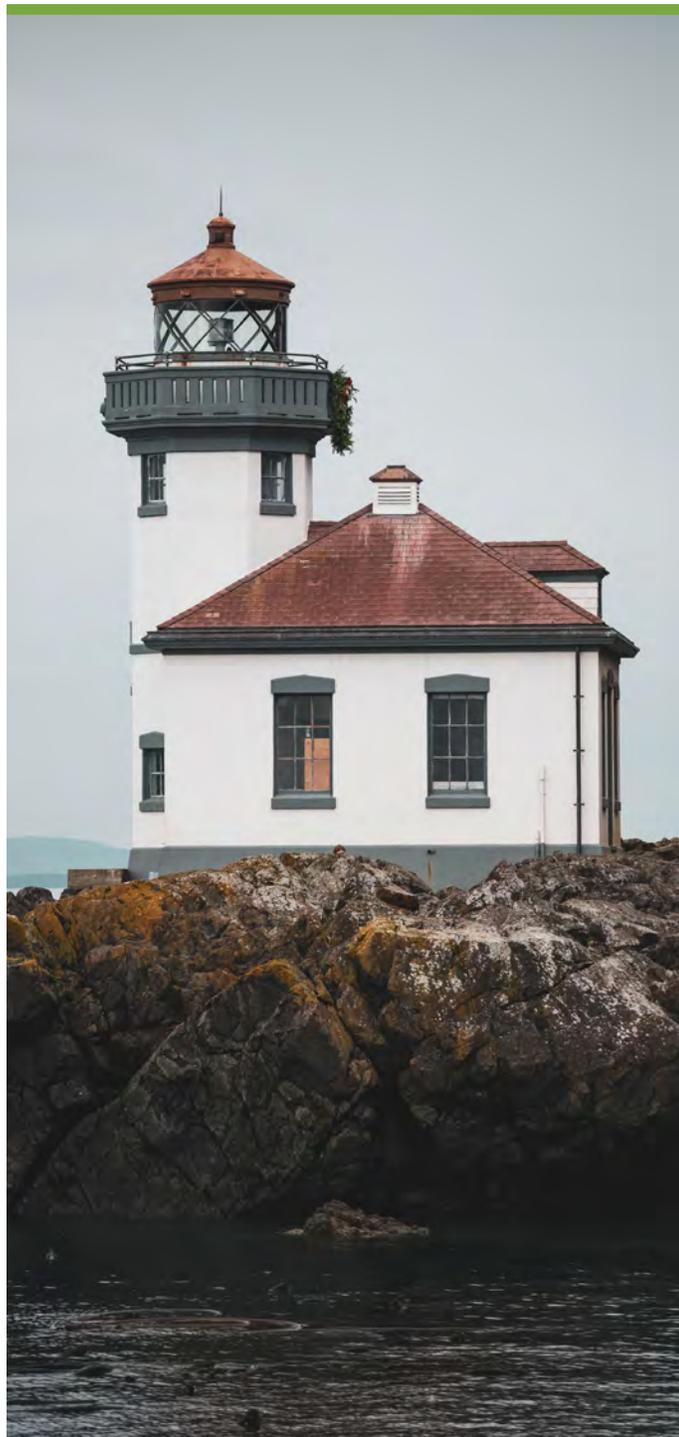


Highlands Drive Pedestrian Bridge, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Phase	Support Mecahnisms	Considerations	Capacity building activities
Immediate	Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to raise awareness of available support</li> <li>• How to ensure access to this support</li> <li>• Measures specifically to help ease impacts on tourism businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops and resources to inform and support with access</li> </ul>
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on how sub-sectors / competitors can support each other</li> <li>• Ensure the broader value chain is represented including small suppliers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish working groups</li> </ul>
Medium and ongoing	Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to share market intelligence</li> <li>• How to address gaps in product</li> <li>• How to address skills gaps and build knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalize on existing resources from international tourism community</li> <li>• Training programs to transfer knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Leverage local and national expertise and institutional capacity</li> </ul>
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice/support on how to facilitate partnerships</li> <li>• Advice/support to encourage circular economy models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops to share ideas and transfer know-how</li> <li>• Establish circular economy networks</li> </ul>

## Reflections

- **What existing financial support mechanisms are available? Are they being accessed by businesses?**
- **What new knowledge/skills might be required to improve the sustainability of tourism in your community or to respond to future challenges?**
- **What skills gaps are there?**
- **Where are the labor shortages?**
- **How can these needs/gaps best be addressed?**



### [Tourism Cares Meaningful Map](#)

Tourism Cares aims to connect the travel industry with community organizations and social enterprises around the world to increase benefits realized by communities. Their Meaningful Travel Platform provides learning [resources](#) for industry as well as the Meaningful Travel Map. As an ongoing project, new map locations and impact partners are being added all the time, in partnership with destinations who want to shine a spotlight on the organizations in their communities working for the benefit of the people, cultures, nature that tourism depends on.