Q: How can smart and effective development of tourism help resolve problems of poverty and social inequality?

A: As discussed during the webinar, when tourism is not effectively managed with a holistic perspective, its impacts can lead to economic leakages, unfair distribution of economic benefits, and undue burden on local systems. To reduce the risk of such negative impacts, destinations need sustainable management, or "destination stewardship" approaches, which takes into account the whole picture of tourism benefits and impacts.

The report "Creating equitable destinations" by The Travel Foundation outlines mechanisms for tourism to better serve local community interests, including: taxes and revenue-sharing initiatives; business incubation and training programs; licensing and zoning regulations; community enterprises and volunteering programs; product development that integrates local culture and environment protection.

Q: How can tourism marketing strategies be adapted to reach and engage diverse audiences, ensuring that tourism is accessible to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds?

A: Often, within the context of "overtourism" discussions, we hear about destinations' aiming to adopt a "low volume, high value" tourism model. If we only focus on financial "value" (i.e. attracting high-spending visitors), even if the approach may help ease pressure from overcrowding, it won't lead to optimal outcomes in terms of socio-economic sustainability. And the environmental footprints of high-spending visitors may be larger, depending on the market segments and local conditions.

Destination strategies, therefore, should ideally take a more holistic view of socio-economic impacts and focus on attracting travellers that share key values that the local communities represent and cherish. Here are some examples of tourism destinations and businesses working to make travel more inclusive for as many people as possible regardless of their economic means.

Q: We often hear travelers want sustainable choices, but most decisions are still mostly influenced by factors like price and novelty. And this gap makes it hard to encourage more businesses to commit to sustainability practices. Do consumers in Europe take sustainability certifications into account when choosing tourism experiences?

A: Certification is of course important, but it's not the only reason for people to make booking decisions. Most importantly, businesses need to make their sustainability a concrete part of the benefits they are offering their customers because booking decisions are influenced by benefits ("what's in it for me?"). And benefits don't need to be just about price or convenience. It may also be about fun (unique experiences). And certification labels can be a way to reinforce your identity and to provide additional assurance backing up your claims and providing credibility to your promises.

You can read more in this article on [sustainable hospitality benefits for guests](#). You may also be interested in [this study](#) focused on (non-)communications on sustainability practices.

Q: How can destinations make infrastructure improvements and service adjustments to address accessibility challenges faced by travellers with disabilities?

A: As highlighted during the webinar, one of the most important aspects of any accessibility consideration is creating solutions *with* (not just *for*) people for whom they are designed. In practical terms, this can include steps such as employing professionals with disabilities, partnering with local organisations that represent people with disabilities, and collaborating with experts who can serve as advisors and consultants.

Here is a good resource by ATTA to help you better understand key approaches to improving accessibility in travel experiences: "[Designing Accessible Adventure Travel: Change the Environment, Not the Body](#)".

Q: Should we consider sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism as different concepts?

A: Regeneration is a broad concept that can be applied to various contexts, not just in tourism. As such, it may be more appropriate to consider "regenerative approaches to tourism" rather than "regenerative tourism". It is important that we don't treat "regenerative tourism" (or "sustainable tourism" for that matter) as another type of tourism product, but as a comprehensive approach to how we manage tourism.

The different aspects of sustainable tourism (social, economic, environmental, governance), as represented in standards and performance indicators covered during the webinar, build the necessary conditions for destinations and communities to implement a more regenerative approach to tourism (focused on restoring and revitalising nature, rather than just avoiding harm). In that sense these two concepts are different but relevant and closely linked to each other.

Q: Is sustainable change possible in destinations when lobbyism is too strong?

A: Local and regional dynamics such as lobbying can discourage sustainability actions, and prevent stakeholders from trying to change the status quo. It's true that in some cases such forces may be too strong for those stakeholder groups working towards sustainable change. However, considering the possible consequences of tourism not managed effectively (as highlighted during the webinar), giving up is not an option.

We need to keep our eyes open, be honest in what we do, and not be afraid to express ourselves clearly and expose the paradoxes and contradictions of tourism. In order for destination organisations to gather support and strengthen their sustainability efforts, they need to invest in stakeholder engagement and in creating optimal conditions for collaboration among different stakeholder groups, which can lead to building a stronger collective voice advocating for sustainable change.

Q: What are the roles of governments and authorities in creating a positive socio-economic impact of tourism?

A: Bottom-up approaches are as important as top-down, and the two need to be balanced. Bottom-up, grassroots initiatives working to improve the social and economic impacts of tourism are to be supported by governments and higher-level institutions that have the economic, and political means for more effective negotiation.

To promote such cooperative approaches, frameworks and a vision at a national level is important. At the same time, we need structures and institutions at local and regional levels to enact those policies on the ground. For an overview of the different responsibilities at different organisational levels, see the [lesson on destination management](#).

Questions to Daniele Tonelli, DMO Garda Trentino (Italy)

Q: How do you track independent hikers or bikers coming to the destination?

A: For the most important part, which are the bike and hiking trails in our area, we have installed people counters in strategic locations that track visitor flows, indicating whether they are going uphill or downhill and what type of users they are (i.e. bikers or hikers).

Q: With 4.15 million overnight stays within this region, how is toilet/human waste sustainably managed? How are water and ecosystems protected?

A: We are fortunate to have a territory with excellent wastewater management and a solid network of treatment plants, which are constantly monitored and checked at both the provincial and municipal levels.

Q: How do you solve accumulated solid waste and water waste as a result in the operations of hospitality and tourism businesses, and achieve circularity of materials?

A: Recycling is growing exponentially, and as a DMO we are working on several fronts: raising awareness among hoteliers and other property owners; reminding our guests to adopt good practices; promoting recycling (e.g., we distribute recycling kits to guests in our campsites); and

doing extensive advocacy work with our local administrations to find the best solutions to ensure the area remains highly livable not only for our guests but also for local residents.