

TECHNICAL NOTE

# Towards sustainable and climate-resilient tourism in Nepal



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# Towards sustainable and climate-resilient tourism in Nepal

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We extend our sincere thanks to all participants who engaged in the Policy Delphi online survey, consultations, validation workshops, and key informant interviews used for this publication. Their perspectives have provided depth and relevance to this work.

We express our sincere gratitude to Honourable Minister for Women, Children & Senior Citizens, Shradha Shrestha, for her thoughtful review and valuable inputs. Her prior experience as senior manager at the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) has greatly enriched this work.

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Finally, we acknowledge the collective efforts of all stakeholders (government departments, research, academic, industry association and communities) who contributed their time, expertise, and commitment to advancing Nepal's vision of a green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism sector. Their engagement has been vital in charting a roadmap towards high value and highly competitive tourism for prosperity and contribute to the nation's aspiration of becoming a high-income country by 2043.

## Foreward

Tourism in Nepal stands at a critical moment. The Himalayas, rich ecosystems and diverse cultures present extraordinary potential, yet the sector is under escalating economic, environmental, climate and social strain. These challenges are not isolated—they are deeply intertwined within the broader Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region and global tourism context, where climate vulnerability, glacier loss, and shifting ecosystems threaten both livelihoods and long-term sustainability.

The HKH is globally recognised as a climate-vulnerable region by several global assessments such as that of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report IPCC AR6), and Nepal's tourism future depends on embedding adaptation, resilience, and nature-positive practices into policy and planning.

This note calls for rethinking and resetting tourism—moving beyond volume-driven growth to embrace high-value, regenerative, climate-resilient, and inclusive tourism. It emphasises nature-positive innovation, evidence-based policymaking, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, while aligning with Nepal's 16th Periodic Plan, Tourism Policy 2082, and global commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nepal's natural and cultural heritage is not just an asset – it is a strategic lever for inclusive growth and climate resilience. With targeted investment in tourism enterprises, a skilled workforce and climate-smart solutions, tourism can deliver shared prosperity while protecting the country's fragile mountain ecosystems.

ICIMOD stands ready to partner with the Government of Nepal and its partners to advance this vision. Delivering transformative change demands a whole-of-society approach – bringing together government, mobilising the private sector, academia, communities and regional actors around a shared agenda. By aligning science, policy and action, these partnerships can position tourism as a strategic engine for resilience, equity and sustainability – creating lasting value for mountain communities, ecosystems and all those who depend on them.

To this end, ICIMOD will foster knowledge exchange, and enable evidence-based governance to attract investment and accelerate implementation. Together, we can position Nepal as a global benchmark for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient mountain tourism, setting a precedent for the entire HKH region.

**Izabella Koziell**

Deputy Director General

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

## Foreward

“Sustainable and climate-resilient tourism” is a phrase often discussed but rarely embedded in policies, and even less frequently translated into practice. While it is clear that we have no alternative but to embrace sustainability and ensure our travel and experiences are climate-friendly, we still lack the research-backed policies and actionable frameworks to guide us. In this context, I see the technical note “Towards Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Tourism in Nepal” as an important icebreaker. I extend my congratulations to the team at ICIMOD and all associated stakeholders, and convey my best wishes for the sustainable journey ahead.

This document and its recommendations serve as important policy inputs to enable key tourism decision-makers to design and develop well-informed and integrated policies and guidelines. It also contributes to the effective operationalization of the recently published Tourism Policy 2082, particularly in advancing Nepal’s tourism as green, inclusive, and climate-resilient.

Nepal, having earned global recognition as one of the world’s most nature-connected destinations, now faces challenges that are as formidable as they are full of opportunity. We have a higher mountain to climb than our majestic peaks, for the impacts of climate change are already visible in our landscapes and in the livelihoods of our people. To diversify tourism products and enrich visitor experiences, we must first safeguard the extraordinary diversities we possess—biological, ethnic, geographical, and socio-cultural—which remain underrepresented on the global stage.

With so much to offer, we carry equal responsibility to preserve and, more importantly, to regenerate. Our mountains, high-altitude glaciers, wetlands, forests, and wildlife demand active stewardship, with local stakeholders at the heart of this effort. I sincerely thank ICIMOD for the remarkable work it has been doing in this domain, and I reaffirm that the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), as the national tourism organization, stands firmly aligned in this mission. I wish the team every success in the journey ahead.

**Deepak Raj Joshi**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Nepal Tourism Board

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# 1. Background

Tourism in Nepal stands at the crossroads of natural grandeur, cultural richness, and economic transformation. Blessed with the majestic Himalayas, including Everest, Annapurna, and Kangchenjunga, alongside vibrant ecosystems and diverse ethnic traditions, Nepal offers a unique blend of adventure, spirituality, and community-based experiences. These assets not only define the country's global identity but also serve as powerful engines for equitable and sustainable economic growth, aligning with Nepal's aspiration to become a high-income nation by 2043 under the 16th Periodic Plan. However, in reality, Nepal's tourism sector reveals critical gaps between policy ambitions and ground-level challenges. These challenges span across economic, environmental, climate, and social dimensions, underscoring the need for recalibrated strategies.

Economically, Nepal's tourism faces structural imbalances, regional disparities, low-value positioning, weak data systems, and workforce gaps, requiring policy reforms for diversification, competitiveness, and equitable growth to align with global tourism trends. Environmentally, Nepal's tourism faces ecological strain from overtourism and unsustainable tourism growth, demanding policies for biodiversity protection and resilient planning to safeguard fragile landscapes, ecosystem and heritage for future generations. These challenges are further aggravated by severe climate vulnerability and risks, requiring policies for carbon reduction, resilient economies, infrastructure, and data-driven adaptation, to safeguard destinations and sustain sector viability. Tourism's social fabric is strained by youth outmigration, gender inequities, SME vulnerabilities, and skill gaps, demanding inclusive policies for workforce development, governance reforms, and equitable benefit-sharing to strengthen resilience and competitiveness.

These interconnected challenges highlight the urgency of rethinking Nepal's tourism policy framework. While existing strategies recognise the role of tourism in driving prosperity, they must now be recalibrated to address imbalanced growth, low-value positioning, workforce gaps, climate vulnerability, and social inequities.

# 2. State of tourism in Nepal

Tourism is Nepal's fastest-growing service industry. It is one of the primary sources of foreign reserves and currency. Tourism in Nepal is on a track of post-pandemic recovery. Such rebound is instrumental in leading Nepal to receive over 1 million tourists in 2024. This growth signifies a near 96% recovery of pre-pandemic visitor levels. Such tourism growth prospects demonstrate the resilient nature of the sector and its potential for bringing prosperity, key to addressing key national development aspiration of becoming a high-income country by 2043 (NPC, 2024).

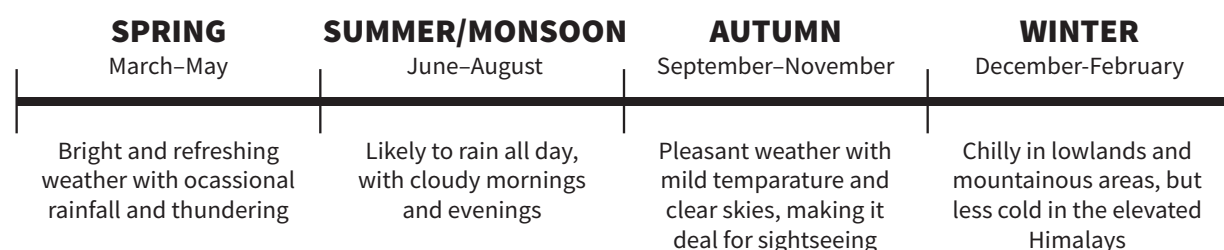
Nepal has long relied on its unique geography, mountain landscapes, natural, adventure and cultural offerings to promote tourism. As one of the pioneers for sustainable tourism, Nepal is well renowned for nature-based tourism, including ecotourism and wildlife tourism. Nepal boasts 20 protected areas (PAs), with 13 nestled in high hills and mountains. In 2019, the PAs hosted around 36% of total tourist arrivals. The Chitwan National Park (CNP), Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA), and Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) emerged as the most visited PAs, drawing nearly 89% of visitors (MoCTCA, 2020). The mountain PA such as the ACA, SNP, and Langtang National Park (LNP) collectively attracted over 93% of visitors.

## 2.1. Tourism seasonality

Tourism in Nepal experiences distinct seasonality (Figure 1)- influenced by weather conditions and accessibility, in the main- with the peak seasons being from March to May and from September to November. During these phases the weather is generally stable, offering clear skies and mild temperatures, ideal for outdoor recreational activities. The monsoon season (June to August) brings heavy rainfall, making it difficult to travel to mountain and remote rural areas, leading to a significant drop in tourist numbers. Winter (December to February) presents its own challenges, with harsh weather and snow limiting access to high-altitude areas.

FIGURE 2.1

## TOURISM SEASONALITY IN NEPAL



## 2.2. Nepal's tourism market

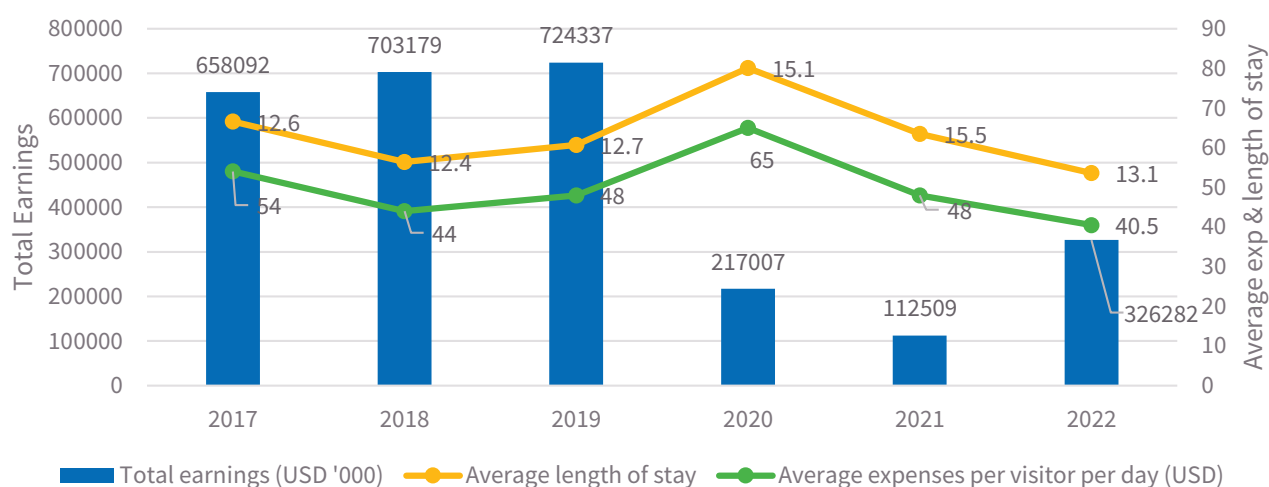
Nepal provides a diverse array of budget-friendly options, making it an attractive choice for travellers seeking adventure and culture without overspending. Accommodation options range from budget hostels and guesthouses, starting as low as USD 5-10 per night, to mid-range hotels and luxury resorts. Food is also inexpensive, with local dishes like Dal-Bhat and Mo:Mo available for just USD 1-3 per meal. Public transportation, including buses and microbuses, offers economical ways to travel between destinations, often costing only a few dollars. While trekking permits are required in certain areas, the fees are typically low (around USD

22), and guided tours are reasonably priced, allowing for rich experiences without breaking the bank. The rich experience with a low cost of living makes Nepal the most desirable destination for budget travellers.

The trend of the revenue from tourism looked to be gradually increasing (with a steady growth) from 2017-2019, which slumped during the COVID period (Figure 2.2). The average expenses per visitor per day has mostly hovered around USD 40-50/day over the years. Nepal grapples through low daily expenditure, which has been stagnating between USD 45-55 for almost two decades making it a budget destination. The average length of stay for visitors hovered around 12 days during 2017-19 period.

FIGURE 2.2

## TRENDS OF HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN NEPAL

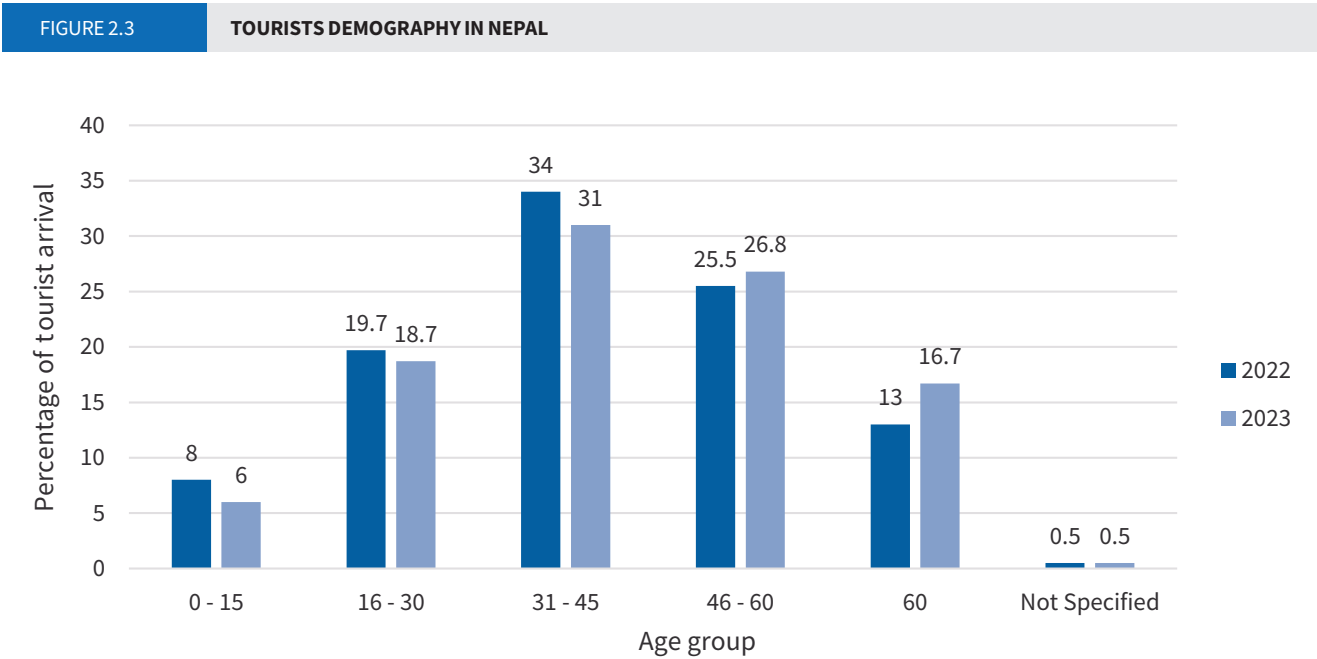


Source: MoCTCA, 2024

Nepal’s tourism market has experienced a landmark shift in recent years. The market has experienced some significant changes in its source market and tourist demography. Post COVID, India, USA, China, UK and Australia emerged as the top five source markets. The tourism market and current tourist data underscores three key points:

*Firstly*, more inbound tourists from the South and East Asian Countries, with India and China dominating the market, in the main.

*Secondly*, the market consists of rich blend of heterogenous source market and tourist demography. International tourists account for 59% of total visitor arrival, while regional tourists make up the remaining 41%. Although, there’s no specific data, but Nepal’s internal market is also expanding with the number of domestic tourists being on the rise. Among the international tourists, Nepal is predominantly visited by those that fall in the age categories of 30-45 and 46-60 years (Figure 2.3)



Source: MoCTCA, 2024

Indian tourists demonstrate a wide range of demography. Indians within the age categories of 30–45 and 45–60 years are visiting for religious purpose, while those below 30 years of age are travelling for adventure, nature and immersive experiences. Chinese tourists in the age group of 30’s form the most common visitors of Nepal, particularly drawn to the country’s cultural and heritage sites, while those travelling for soft adventure and nature based (wildlife tourism) have also increased in recent years.

Thirdly, women travellers and the silver generation (age 60 and over) are emerging as significant market segments. Women account for 44% of the total visitor arrival (MoCTCA, 2024). Destinations such as Pokhara, Annapurna, Manang, Mustang and Everest

regions are seeing rise of women travellers. Women travellers are reported to stay longer compared to male travelers. As Nepal is considered a relatively safe destination for solo female travelers, this market is also increasing in recent years.

The silver generation travellers account for 15% of total tourists’ arrival. With the pace of population ageing, globally, being faster than in the past, the population size in this age cohort is expected to reach more than 1.5 billion by 2050 (UN, 2019). In the Asia – Pacific, this niche consumer market is expected to reach 1.3 billion marks by 2030 (AAN, 2019).

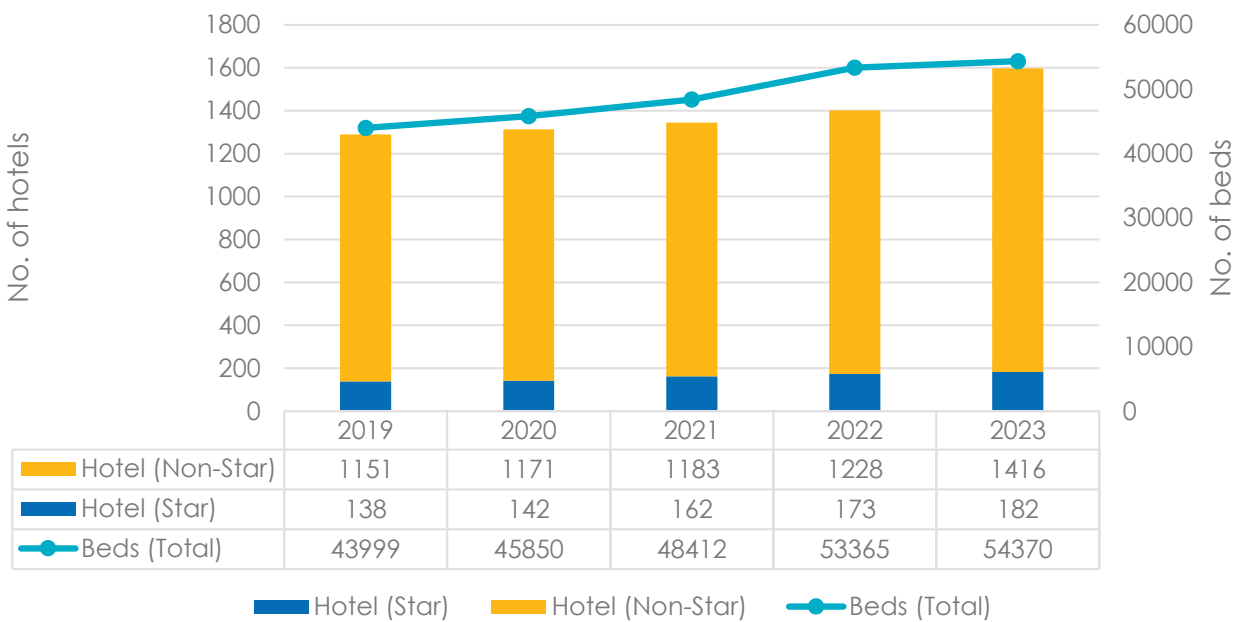
### 2.3. Tourism employment and businesses

Tourism offers significant economic prospects for Nepal through increased employment and revenue generation. The sector contributes to the local economy, creates jobs, and attracts investments. The sector contributed 6.7% of GDP and 6.9% of employment in 2019 (CBS, 2021). Tourism contributed to creating 1.19 million jobs (directly and indirectly) (Bhattarai et al., 2021). As a cross-cutting and labour-intensive sector, tourism is the most inclusive sector providing wide range of employment

opportunities for skilled, semi and low-skilled workforce.

The sector accounts for 134832 establishments making up 14.6% of all establishment in Nepal (CBS, 2021). There has been a steady increase in the number of hotel accommodation over the years (Figure 2.4). Investment in luxury and five-star hotels within and outside Kathmandu has seen rapid growth, with the target to cater to approximately 3.5 million tourists annually. Investment growth also includes Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), particularly in hotels. Such growth is expected to further stimulate growth in the hospitality sector.

FIGURE 2.3 TRENDS OF HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN NEPAL



Source: MoCTCA, 2024

Homestays provide an alternative accommodation option, particularly in rural Nepal. The government has established guidelines for homestays and has been offering training and financial support to create a network of such accommodations. There

were 310 community-based and 79 private homestay households registered, spread across 15 districts (MoCTCA, 2020). These homestays offered a total of 633 rooms and 1,088 beds.

## 3. Policy Contexts

### 3.1. National tourism policy contexts

Nepal is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and relies heavily on service sector such as tourism. The country aims to graduate from LDC by 2026 (UNDCO, 2023), upper middle-income country by 2030 and high-income country by 2043 (Acharya, 2023). Despite a 3.6% reduction in poverty over the past decade, 20.3% of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2022 (ADB, 2025), with rural and mountainous areas facing higher rates than urban centers.

The current tourism development priorities and plans are influenced by the need to promote economic growth for prosperity. Some of the key policy documents such as the National Tourism Strategic Plan (2015 – 2024), Tourism Policy 2008, Tourism Vision 2020 and Tourism Decade Initiative (2023 – 2032), complement government efforts to bring accelerated economic growth through inclusive and broad-based development in the marginalised and rural areas of Nepal.

The Tourism Policy 2082 prioritises sustainability, resilience, and safety across the sector (MoCTCA, 2025). Tourism and livelihoods are recognised as the priority areas in several other policies, in areas of national development, climate change, investment, gender and environment (Table1)

TABLE 1

KEY POLICY PROVISIONS INTERFACE WITH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM IN NEPAL

| Key Policy Provisions                | Interface with and implication for tourism                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Constitution of Nepal</b>         | Article 51 of Nepal's Constitution states a clear goal to develop eco-friendly tourism by safeguarding the country's rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage while prioritising the equitable distribution of benefits to local communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>16<sup>th</sup> Periodic Plan</b> | Tourism is recognized as one of the transformational strategies to bring high economic and GDP growth, through increased productivity and competitiveness. This is to be achieved by ensuring environmental responsible and sustainable tourism practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Tourism Policies</b>              | <p>Tourism Policy 2082 provision mandates climate-resilient tourism infrastructure, enforce environmental standards, integrate disaster risk reduction, and ensure coordinated safety monitoring across destinations.</p> <p>National Tourism Strategic Plan (2015 – 2024), Tourism Vision 2020, Tourism Policy 2008 and Tourism Decade Initiative (2023-2032) enabled government to bring accelerated economic growth by guiding tourism growth in marginalised and remote areas of Nepal via public private partnership and encouraging community to engage in tourism development. The focus of these policies lies on diversification of tourism products, tourism infrastructure development and extension, and boost tourism by attracting 3.5 million tourists annually and creating 1 million additional jobs in the sector.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Climate Change Policies</b>       | <p><b>National Climate Change Policy, 2019:</b> Tourism is recognised as a priority sector and focuses on eco-tourism promotion, the development of green trekking routes, and the adoption of zero-emission initiatives through renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies. Additionally, the policy emphasises on enhancing the safety of mountaineers and trekkers with reliable weather forecast services.</p> <p><b>Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0:</b> As a signatory of the Paris Agreement, Nepal is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Nepal's <i>NDC 3.0</i> commits to greener tourism by 2030; seven destinations will have sustainable tourism plans and five will be carbonneutral; by 2035, heritage sites will be protected with climateresilient measures.</p> <p><b>National Adaptation Plan (NAP):</b> Tourism, natural, and cultural heritage are identified as one of the priority sectors, comprising of eight priority programs that advance climateresilient tourism, strengthening sustainability, equity, safety, diversification, infrastructure, community prosperity, and heritage protection.</p> |

|                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Public Private Partnership and Investment Act (PIPA), 2075</b> | Enacted to contribute to economic prosperity of the country through investment in infrastructure and services sectors. Tourism is acknowledged as one of the priority sectors for investment.                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>National Gender Equality Policy 2077</b>                       | Building on Article 38 of the Constitution, the policy aims to establish equality between women, men, gender and sexual minorities in legal and practical terms including the economic, social and political empowerment of women.                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Environmental Policies</b>                                     | <b>Forest Sector Strategy (2016 – 2025):</b> The strategy envisions sustainable management of forests, biodiversity, and watersheds to drive prosperity. It emphasises protection, resilience, and inclusive governance, while creating fair employment, income, and livelihood opportunities through a competitive and decentralised forestry sector. |

Source: Source: NPC (2024), MoCTCA (2025), MoFE (2025), MoFE (2020 a,b), MoFE (2019), MoFSC (2016), IBN (2019), MoWCSC (2020)

## 3.2. Global and regional tourism policy contexts

Tourism being a part of global and regional industry, several global and regional policies also influence the sustainability aspects of Nepal's tourism (Table 2).

TABLE 2

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POLICY INTERFACES AND IMPLICATION FOR NEPAL'S TOURISM

| Key Policy Provisions                | Interface with and implication for tourism                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sustainable Development Goals</b> | <p><b>Economic impacts (SDGs 8 and 9):</b> Bringing sustained economic growth via jobs, (8) and developing and strengthening enterprises resilient to climate and non-climate shocks (9). Target 8.9 - “Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promote local culture and products by 2030.”</p> <p><b>Environmental impacts (SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13, and 15):</b> Sustained economic growth via tourism dependent on key natural resources - sustainable water and waste management (6), promotion and productive use of renewable energy and energy efficient technology (7), sustainable consumption and production of tourism goods and services (12), climate action (13) and protection and rejuvenation of nature and biodiversity (15).</p> <p><b>Social impacts (SDGs 5, 10, and 17):</b> Delivering tourism led sustainable economic growth through competent (economically, socially and politically) human resources, entrepreneurs and decision makers, contributing to gender equality (5), reducing inequality based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin etc. (10) and promoting inclusive governance (17).</p> |
| <b>Paris Agreement</b>               | <p><b>Article 2:</b> Keep global warming well below 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C.</p> <p><b>Article 4:</b> Countries submit NDCs and long-term low-emission strategies.</p> <p><b>Article 8:</b> Address loss and damage from climate impacts.</p> <p><b>Articles 9–11:</b> Provide climate finance, technology, and capacity support for developing nations.</p> <p><b>Article 12:</b> Promote climate education, awareness, and participation.</p> <p><b>Article 14:</b> Conduct a global level stocktaking to track collective progress.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism</b>         | Rebalance the tourism-nature relationship, critical for regenerating ecological health and social, individual and economic wellbeing. This balance is important for enabling tourism to bring prosperity, and accelerate climate actions, contributing to global goals of halving emissions over the next decade and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.                                          |
| <b>UNFCCC Global Stocktake and Tourism</b>                      | Periodic global level stocktaking to assess collective progress, with the first completed at COP28 in 2023 and repeated every five years. Aligned with the global stocktaking, Tourism Panel on Climate Change (TPCC) delivered the first tourism climate stocktaking, assessing mitigation, adaptation, policy, and finance gaps.                                                                |
| <b>UN resolution 65/148 - Global Code of Ethics for Tourism</b> | The resolution adopted by UN General Assembly in 2010 encourages all parties to promote and safeguard just, equitable and collaborative development interests for sustainable tourism future.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>UN resolution 65/173 of UN General Assembly</b>              | The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly calls for promoting ecotourism within the framework of sustainable tourism, contributing poverty alleviation, environmental protection and sustainable development.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Decision 1/CP.16 7 of Cancun Agreement</b>                   | Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties recognise the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, national and local levels, including youth and people with disabilities. Gender equality and the full participation of women were, for the first time, formally recognised as integral components of effective climate action within the UNFCCC Framework. |
| <b>Environmental Policies</b>                                   | The framework of the Convention of Biological Diversity, Agenda 21, Rio +20 and the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production point out the special relationships between tourism development, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, placing tourism development in the context of sustainable resource management.                                   |

Source: Source: NPC (2024), MoCTCA (2025), MoFE (2025), MoFE (2020 a,b), MoFE (2019), MoFSC (2016), IBN (2019), MoWCSC (2020)

### 3.3. Issues and challenges

Nepal's tourism landscape is complex, marked by progress in certain areas and persistent challenges in others. The tourism sector is credited to be the primary driver of economic growth. This is made possible due to increased tourism-related services at supply end – hospitality, transport, travel and food services and the demand from increased tourist arrivals. Efforts to address poverty via tourism have been positive and so is the case of promoting public-private partnership in developing tourism. However, the tourism sector is struggling with many challenges, which can be broadly categorised into economic, environmental and social challenges.

#### 3.3.1.ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

##### Uneven tourism distribution

Tourism growth in Nepal is highly imbalanced across provinces and destinations, including the PAs. Major hubs such as Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan

in Bagmati and Gandaki Provinces dominate tourism activity, while provinces like Koshi, Karnali, Sudurpashchim, and Madhesh—despite their rich natural and cultural assets—receive minimal tourist traffic. A similar imbalance exists within PAs, where Everest, Annapurna, and Langtang attract most visitors, leaving other areas underutilised. This unequal distribution of tourism benefits exacerbates regional income disparities, contributes to economic marginalisation, and perpetuates poverty in rural and remote areas.

##### Overcrowding and seasonality

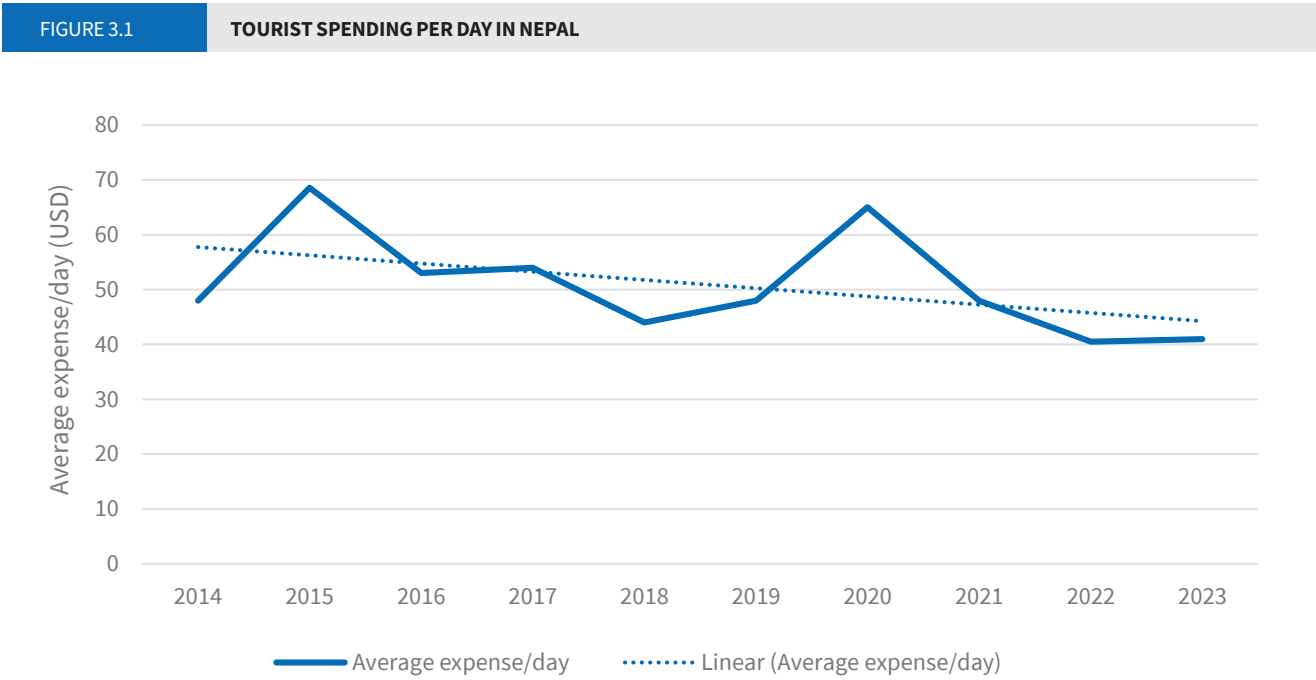
Destinations experiencing concentrated tourism growth are increasingly affected by overcrowding, particularly during peak months such as September and October. Tourist influx strains infrastructure and resources, resulting in limited hotel availability, inflated prices for food, accommodation, and transportation, and pressure on local services. Overcrowding diminishes the quality of visitor experiences and threatens the unique appeal of

destinations. Seasonality further compounds these challenges, as demand fluctuates sharply between peak and off-peak periods. This imbalance destabilises business operations, reduces employment opportunities, and creates volatility in revenue streams, while placing additional strain on local communities and resources.

### Low-value tourism image

Nepal continues to be perceived as a budget travel destination, attracting high volumes of tourists but

generating relatively low economic value. Daily tourist expenditure has stagnated at USD 45–55 for over a decade (Figure 3.1). This low-spending profile, coupled with shorter lengths of stay, reduces overall revenue for local businesses and weakens the long-term resilience of the tourism economy. Over-reliance on price competition reinforces Nepal’s image as a low-value destination, limiting diversification and hindering the sector’s ability to adapt to changing global tourism trends.



Source: MoCTCA, 2024

### Market diversification and data gaps

Emerging tourism trends reveal increasingly diverse demographics, including international, regional, domestic, women, and silver-generation travellers. These groups are driving demand for personalized and curated experiences. However, the sector lacks robust data systems to effectively analyse and respond to this heterogeneity. Without reliable information, Nepal struggles to design products and services that meet the evolving preferences of its visitors, limiting its ability to fully capitalize on market diversification.

### Length-of-stay challenges

The average tourist stay in Nepal remains at 13.36 days, constrained by several factors. Limited

diversity of tourism products, infrastructure gaps in connectivity and quality accommodation, seasonality, and environmental concerns all reduce visitor satisfaction and discourage longer stays. These challenges not only restrict economic benefits but also undermine Nepal’s potential to position itself as a destination for extended and immersive travel experiences.

### Workforce inequality and limitations of SMEs

Tourism provides significant employment opportunities, yet gender and youth disparities persist. Men occupy largest share of formal employment category, accounting for 80% of total workforce (MoCTCA, 2014). This indicates a strong gender disparity in formal employment

environment. Similarly, women employees are mainly concentrated in accommodation, with their numbers outperforming their men counterpart in tourism SMEs, including homestays. Women remain underrepresented and face barriers to leadership, professional advancement and pay parity. The median monthly earnings of women are two-thirds of the earnings of males. This means women only earned NPR 0.66 for every NPR 1.00 earned by men (CBS, 2019). Women are largely concentrated in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where they often lack access to training, skills, and leadership opportunities. SMEs themselves struggle to attract and retain skilled labour compared to larger firms, limiting their competitiveness. Addressing these inequalities requires targeted vocational training and capacity-building initiatives to empower entrepreneurs and strengthen SME resilience.

### **Lack of skilled workforce and education gaps**

Nepal's tourism sector suffers from a shortage of professional and skilled workers, underscoring the importance of access to quality higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). However, the sector faces multiple challenges, including outdated curricula, limited tourism-specific programs, declining student enrolment, and a lack of innovation in teaching and learning. These shortcomings create a mismatch between graduate skills and industry needs, leaving many unprepared for the labour market. Overemphasis on hotel management further narrows opportunities, neglecting other vital areas of tourism that are essential for a healthy ecosystem. Moreover, insufficient collaboration between industry and academia in designing training modules, coupled with limited experiential learning, results in graduates who lack practical exposure and cutting-edge expertise. This gap in workforce development poses a significant barrier to the long-term growth and competitiveness of Nepal's tourism sector.

## **3.3.2. ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

### **Overtourism and environmental cost**

The environmental costs of overtourism in Nepal often outweigh its economic benefits. While the influx of tourists can generate short-term financial gains, it simultaneously degrades natural resources, damages fragile ecosystems, and contributes to resource scarcity. These impacts jeopardize the long-

term sustainability of destinations, underscoring the urgent need for green tourism management practices that minimize ecological footprints and ensure that tourism growth does not compromise environmental integrity.

Water availability is another pressing environmental challenge, with issues ranging from flash floods to seasonal shortages. As climate change intensifies, these risks are becoming more frequent and severe in tourist destinations. The consequences extend beyond environmental damage, leading to the destruction of assets and infrastructure, loss of income, and in extreme cases, loss of life. Such vulnerabilities highlight the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability and economic resilience in tourism-dependent regions.

In remote mountain destinations, access to reliable and clean energy is critical for both environmental sustainability and economic development. Tourism businesses in these areas face persistent concerns about electricity quality, particularly power fluctuations, which disrupt operations and increase costs. As a result, many enterprises rely on mixed energy sources and diesel generators, practices that not only raise expenses but also contribute to environmental degradation. Expanding access to clean and stable energy is therefore essential to support sustainable tourism in these regions.

### **Unsustainable tourism growth**

Rapid and haphazard road and building construction further compounds environmental challenges. Expanding road access accelerates unplanned urbanization, triggering a surge in building activity and transportation services. However, infrastructure development has not kept pace with this growth, leading to unsustainable urban expansion. The impacts are wide-ranging: landscapes and traditional villages are being altered, traffic congestion and air and noise pollution are increasing, and wildlife habitats are being disrupted. Heritage sites face mounting threats, while unchecked urban sprawl risks causing irreversible natural, cultural, and social losses.

Taken together, these challenges emphasize the urgent need to minimize the environmental footprint of tourism and to build resilience against ecological risks. Promoting nature-positive tourism—where conservation and sustainable practices are integrated into tourism development—is essential to safeguard

Nepal’s natural and cultural heritage while ensuring that tourism remains a viable driver of long-term prosperity.

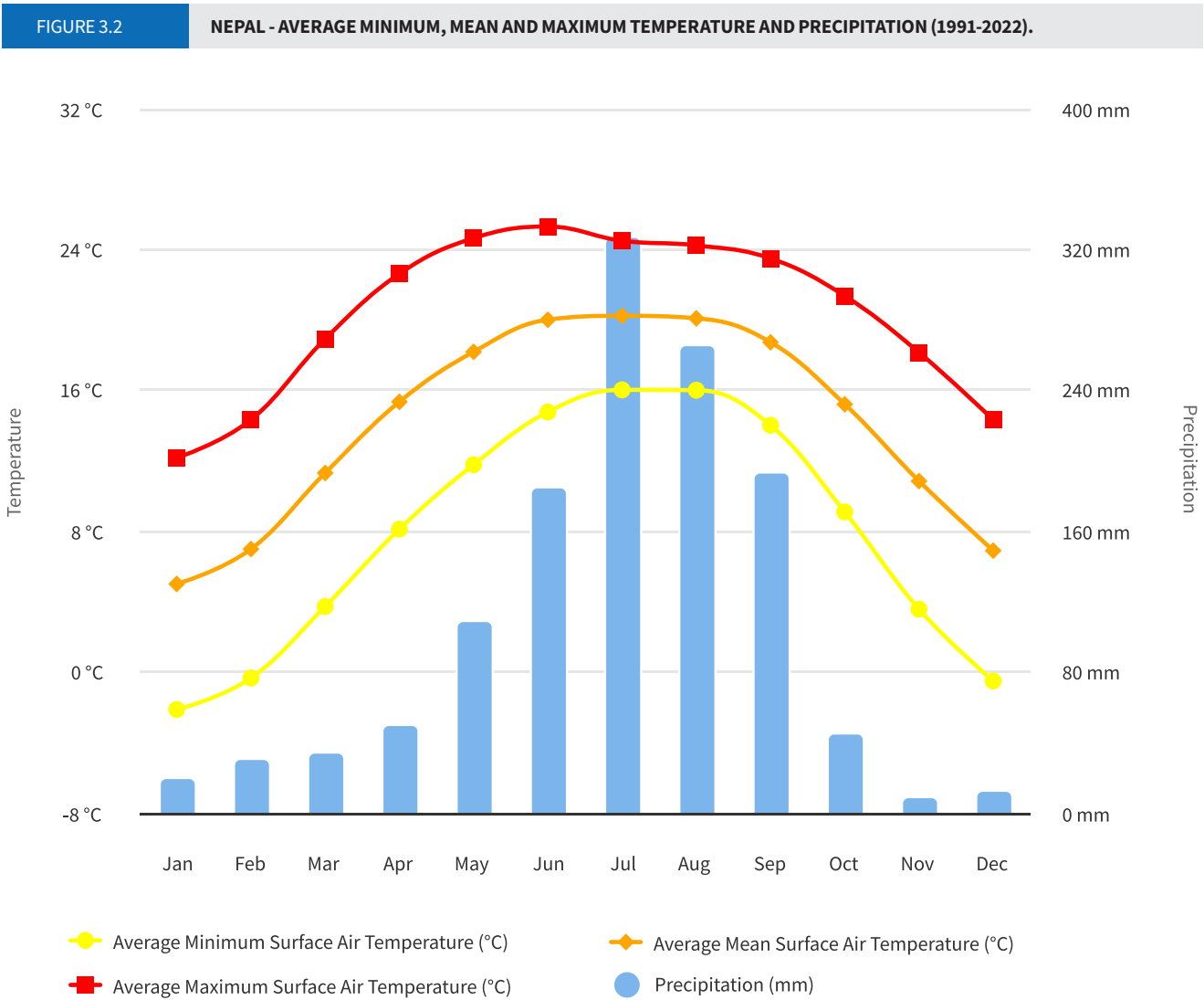
### 3.3.3. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

#### Climate change vulnerability

Nepal faces considerable challenges from changing climate contexts. Nepal has become warmer over time, with rising temperatures across all regions, from high Himalaya in the north to the low-lying Tarai in the south (MoFE, 2020a). Nepal experiences clear seasonal shifts, with hot summers (June–

September) and cold winters (December–February). Rainfall follows the same pattern, reaching its peak during the summer monsoon months (Figure 3.2).

It is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change impact (MoFE, 2020a). Ranked 69th in the Climate Risk Index (Germanwatch, 2025), Nepal is not only highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change but also acutely exposed to climate-related disasters, with floods, landslides, and glacial lake outburst floods causing over 80% of property losses (MoFE, 2020a). This vulnerability underscores the urgent need for adaptive strategies to safeguard both communities and the tourism sector.



Source: World Bank – ADB (2021) [Climate Knowledge Portal](#)

## Climate change impacts on tourism

Climate change is already posing significant risks to sustainable business and service operations. Climate change has made Nepal warmer and brought more extreme weather. This has led to a sharp decline in ice across the Himalayan region (Maurer et al., 2019). As glaciers shrink, the danger of avalanches and landslides has grown, putting nearby communities, tourists and tourism service providers at greater risk. Notable examples include the Hudud Cyclone of October 2014 in the Annapurna region, the snow avalanches in Everest in April 2014 and 2015, the Kagbeni flood of August 13, 2023, and the Thame GLOF of August 16, 2024, all of which remain devastating disasters. These have caused immense damage to infrastructure, property, and livelihoods, while also resulting in tragic loss of life.

Despite these escalating risks, Nepal has inadequate capacity to conduct comprehensive research on the tourism sector's vulnerabilities to climate change. This limitation hampers the development of resilience-building strategies, effective risk management, and adaptation measures that are essential for safeguarding tourism-dependent livelihoods.

Climate change is also significantly altering tourism patterns. Rising temperatures, shifting precipitation regimes, and more frequent extreme weather events are directly impacting tourist demand, comfort, and satisfaction. Safety risks are increasing in destinations, particularly during peak tourism seasons, as climate-related disruptions become more frequent and intense. These changes threaten the stability of tourism flows and undermine the reliability of Nepal's tourism calendar.

## Carbon emission and Tourism Growth

Although Nepal's overall contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is very small, its per capita emissions have risen sharply in recent decades. The country contributes approximately 0.027% to total global GHG emissions (MoFE, 2016), yet CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita surged by 232% over the last two decades (IEA, 2025). This rapid increase highlights the growing domestic pressures of industrialization and urbanization, even as Nepal remains a minor player in global emissions.

Within Nepal, the transport and industry sectors are the primary drivers of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with

transport being the most significant contributor. Tourism activities—including air and surface travel, accommodation, trekking, and related services—also add substantially to emissions, though comprehensive data on the sector's carbon footprint remains lacking. This critical gap in knowledge hinders efforts to fully understand and address tourism's contribution to climate change, both in terms of direct emissions from businesses and services and the broader economic impacts.

Overall, climate change is creating a complex and interconnected set of challenges for the tourism industry. This poses challenges for tourism businesses, travellers, and the overall sustainability of tourism activities. The tourism sector and destinations must adapt and innovate to remain competitive and sustainable in the face of a changing climate.

### 3.3.4. SOCIAL CHALLENGES:

#### Outmigration and gender inequality

Nepal's tourism sector is deeply influenced by broader social dynamics, particularly the large-scale outmigration of youth, especially men. This demographic shift has significantly altered social structures and placed a heavy burden on women, who are often left behind to fill workforce gaps created by labour shortages. As a result, women have become a major component of the tourism workforce, yet they continue to face systemic challenges that limit their ability to earn a decent living. Occupational segregation, low representation in leadership roles, and limited opportunities for advancement hinder their full and productive participation in the sector.

#### Skill mismatch and gaps

Beyond structural barriers, women also struggle with fundamental skills and competency gaps that restrict their professional and entrepreneurial success. Many lack expertise in business and financial management, language proficiency, hospitality skills, information technology (IT) literacy, digital marketing, culinary knowledge, and guiding abilities. These skills are increasingly critical in navigating the modern workforce environment and in launching successful tourism ventures. Without targeted interventions, these gaps perpetuate inequality and limit women's ability to thrive in the tourism economy.

## Vulnerabilities of SMEs

Tourism small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nepal, where women are heavily concentrated, operate largely within an informal labour market characterised by a shortage of skilled workers. This undermines their competitiveness and overall potential, despite SMEs contributing substantially to the tourism economy. Their entrepreneurial potential remains largely untapped, representing a significant loss for the country. Moreover, women working in SMEs are particularly vulnerable to external shocks due to a lack of social protection. Precarious working conditions, low wages, and limited access to social security are common, exacerbated by the informal nature of employment, limited qualifications, and the disproportionate burden of family responsibilities that women often carry.

Skill gaps and mismatches across the tourism sector further weaken competitiveness, particularly in areas related to green, inclusive, and climate-resilient practices. Entrepreneurs often lack formal training, awareness of the need for continuous learning, and alignment between industry expectations and the skills possessed by graduates. This disconnect hampers their ability to plan, implement, and manage businesses effectively, leaving them ill-prepared to adapt to emerging sustainability demands.

Disparities between large-scale enterprises and SMEs also create resource conflicts and inequitable distribution of environmental costs. Larger enterprises, with greater access to resources and funding, are often better positioned to comply with environmental regulations or shift costs, while SMEs bear a disproportionate burden. This imbalance undermines sustainability efforts and widens inequality within the sector. Tourism leakages, driven by weaker local market systems and uneven benefit-sharing among enterprises, further prevent SMEs from fully benefiting from tourism growth.

## Weak governance and poor stakeholder coordination

Another critical challenge lies in the limited understanding and capacity among tourism stakeholders—including local governments, entrepreneurs, and communities—to plan and budget for green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism activities. This weakness stems from inadequate knowledge resources such as data,

analysis, strategies, and management guidelines, as well as limited ability to generate and apply them for informed decision-making. For example, while tourism growth is often discussed in terms of prosperity, the nuances of gendered tourism and heterogeneous consumer markets, and their interplay with sustainable practices, are frequently overlooked. This neglect leads to ineffective planning and management, with negative consequences for both economic and social outcomes, particularly among diverse communities.

Finally, the tourism sector suffers from inadequate capacity to coordinate and collaborate across diverse stakeholders to co-develop and implement policy actions. Without stronger mechanisms for cooperation, the sector risks fragmented efforts that fail to address the interconnected social challenges facing tourism in Nepal.

## 3.4. Key policy issues and gaps

Nepal leads in enabling climate proof tourism development, with policies on sustainability, gender, investment, and environment fostering low carbon, resilient tourism growth. However, Nepal faces significant gaps in making tourism sustainable and climate resilient due to three fundamental issues:

*Firstly*, in understanding and managing the interplay between tourism and climate change. Tourism, a major economic driver, can intensify climate change impacts through increased emissions and infrastructure demands. Conversely, climate change, with rising temperatures and extreme weather events, directly threatens Nepal's natural attractions and tourism-dependent livelihoods. Addressing this complex relationship requires balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and building climate resilience within the tourism sector.

*Secondly*, tourism policies lack indicators, baselines, monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), certification systems and relevant data, tools, and frameworks to integrate climate, social, and environmental dimensions, leading to weak operational knowledge and capacity.

*Thirdly*, inadequate coordination and collaboration between key government agencies such as NPC, MoCTCA, MoWCSC and MoFE act as one of the major barriers in aligning tourism with such policies. In essence, the existing tourism policy provision lacks the integrated and comprehensive approach to guide

the tourism sector to the path of a green, inclusive and climate resilient future.

### 3.5. Need for revised tourism policy

Overtourism and climate change pose significant threats to Nepal's tourism sector, particularly concerning resource depletion, environmental degradation, loss of income and damage to assets and infrastructure, and increased financial risks. These risks, coupled with rising greenhouse gas emissions from tourism, hinder Nepal's ambition to become a high-income country. To ensure a sustainable and climate-resilient tourism industry, it's crucial to reduce environmental footprints, address climate change impacts, and accelerate investment in climate action, including ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation.

Going forward, Nepal needs to shift its tourism focus from a budget-focused, economic growth model to a regenerative, climate-friendly, and high-value tourism model. This involves promoting locally led nature positive tourism, supporting local communities in protecting and restoring ecosystem services, environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change, and updating policies to ensure green, inclusive and climate resilient tourism practices.

## 4. Policy framework

Tourism in Nepal is witnessing paradigm shifts derived from multiple drivers of change. It is a defining moment for Nepal to transform tourism to address dual goals of safeguarding environment and bring prosperity, contributing to the vision of making Nepal a high value and highly competitive destination. This calls for an integrated policy framework and actions consisting of vision, mission, core principles, objectives and strategic directions.

### 4.1. Vision

Towards high value and highly competitive tourism sector, harnessing unique nature and culture-based tourism offering and innovation for sustainable and climate resilient tourism future and wellbeing of the community and visitors.

This vision statement aligns with Nepal's 16th Periodic Plan, which aims to achieve high-income status by 2043, Tourism Policy 2082 and all other relevant key policies (climate change, gender and environment), which have strong interface with tourism sustainability and climate resilient future. In the context of complex and dynamic socio-economic and environmental changes (overtourism and climate change), Nepal will need to transform its tourism for a secure future. Such transformation is possible by rethinking, repurposing and resetting tourism planning and development. Hence the vision and aspiration for tourism is about making sure that tourism growth is robust, green and inclusive. For this, embracing nature-positive tourism and climate action (mitigation and adaptation) is crucial. This involves prioritising environmental health, community benefits, and sustained economic growth, while aligning with government policies and international commitments. Given this, a comprehensive tourism policy can help address environmental, social, and economic issues, promoting the well-being of all stakeholders.

### 4.2. Mission

To position Nepal as a high-value, highly competitive tourism destination, focusing on securing green, inclusive and climate resilient tourism future, alongside offering unique and immersive visitor experiences.

### 4.3. Core Principles

The comprehensive tourism policy is guided by following 6 core principles:

#### 4.3.1. HIGH VALUE AND HIGHLY COMPETITIVE:

Tourism sector, destination, products and service as a whole must be high value and highly competitive, targeting high end and conscious consumers through quality tourism goods and services curated using unique natural and cultural assets. This should contribute to generating high revenue and yields, and viable economy, enabling Nepal to compete in the global and regional marketplace.

#### 4.3.2. ENSURING GREEN GROWTH LED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism planning and development should aim to actively implement green growth strategies that prioritize positive environmental impacts, fostering social and environmental wellbeing by promoting regenerative tourism, focusing on nature-positive activities alongside low-carbon and climate-resilient tourism development, ultimately contributing to sustainable and resilient economies and societies.

#### 4.3.3. ENSURING TOURISM FOR ALL

Tourism planning and development should advocate for an approach where everyone, regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status, or other factors, should have the chance to actively participate and make decision, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly and contribute to the development of sustainable, green, and climate-resilient communities.

Tourism should also be benefiting all travellers while promoting sustainable practices. This means making tourism accessible and enjoyable for diverse groups, including international, regional, domestic, women, and silver generation tourists

#### 4.3.4. TRANSFORMING TOURISM FOR RESILIENCE:

Tourism planning and development to be guided by transformative pathways that address multiple risks (overtourism and climate change). The pathways should promote tourism that bounce forward responsibly and equitably through nature positive tourism and climate actions (mitigation and

adaptation) that contribute to environmental, social and economic wellbeing.

#### 4.3.5. BRIDGING SCIENCE-POLICY-ACTION GAPS:

Promote co-creative research and development intervention to inform key tourism stakeholders (government, industry, research and academia and community) ensuring that knowledge generated is relevant, inform policy development and actionable, ultimately leading to bridging the science-policy-action gaps.

#### 4.3.6. PUBLIC-PRIVATE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP:

Promote public-private-community partnerships for innovation, green tourism destination, products and service development and harness investments streams (FDI, Remittance and alternative financing and business opportunities) to attract more and diverse source of finance and foster sustainable growth.

## 4.4. Objectives

The tourism policy will aim at enabling:

- **Evidence supported policy uptake:** Strengthen a collaborative and research-driven approach to tourism policymaking, involving diverse stakeholders (government, private sector, research and academy and community), ensuring that policy decisions and actions are informed by robust evidence, effectively bridging the gap between research and policy implementation.
- **Tourism sector positioning and competitiveness:** Develop and promote green tourism products and services capitalizing on unique and rich natural and cultural heritage and capital for positioning Nepal as a high value and highly competitive destination.
- **Sustainable solutions through green innovation:** Promote nature positive tourism, adaptation and mitigation to address impacts from overtourism and climate change on tourism, by fostering innovative green solutions informed by new knowledge, technologies and services - digital and financial.
- **Green financing:** Promote green and climate financing by harnessing various investments

streams to diversify the source for sustainable and climate resilient tourism development.

- **Capacity building:** Develop human and institutional capacities, focusing on establishing a collaborative ecosystem where key stakeholders work together to address skills gaps, certify and standardize products, business and services, academic and vocational courses, and capacitate the workforce and enterprises with the necessary skills for professional and effective service and business operation, including entrepreneurship and leadership development.
- **Stakeholder engagement and collaboration:** Facilitate multi-stakeholders engagement and collaboration at federal, provincial and local levels to enhance human resource capability, improve coordination, accountability, transparency and effective policy uptake and actions on the ground.

## 5.Strategic policy directions

The policy context and action needed for sustainable tourism is broad and systemic in nature, requiring holistic and integral approach. The policy actions demonstrate the integrated nature of policy contexts for transforming tourism into a sustainable and climate resilient future. The policy action to drive Nepal towards high value and highly competitive tourism sector can be addressed through five strategic policy actions. These include strengthening policy environment, harnessing innovation, capacity building, investment and collaboration.

### 5.1. Strategic Area 1: Strengthening policy environment

Strengthening policy environment for green, inclusive and climate resilient tourism

**Strategic objective:** Enhancing the policy environment for informed decision making on green, inclusive and climate resilient tourism through evidence generation and capacity building.

**Actions:**

#### Research for sustainable and climate resilient tourism

- Conduct market research on travel patterns, preferences, and consumption behaviour across diverse consumer segments to generate insights that drive transformative change to secure green and inclusive growth and transition to low carbon and climate resilient future.
- Undertake consumer studies to assess market appeal, willingness to pay, and the potential influence of green transition and climate change on travel behaviour.
- Develop and consolidate comprehensive databases on low-carbon, climate-resilient, and regenerative mountain tourism, including institutions and investment landscapes.
- Establish real-time data and information-sharing systems on climate and regenerative tourism for effective destination management, risk communication, and resilience building.
- Support regenerative tourism and climate action

research and evidence-based advocacy, engaging stakeholders at national, provincial, and local levels of governance.

- Promote inter- and transdisciplinary research collaboration to strengthen scientific and industry partnerships, generating thematic knowledge, market intelligence, and actionable insights for tourism climate action.

#### **Regulation and management**

- Develop environmental regulations and guidelines to ensure tourism activities are managed responsibly, delivering positive impacts for ecosystems and local communities.
- Implement visitor quotas in overcrowded or ecologically and culturally sensitive sites to minimize environmental damage and safeguard heritage.
- Ensure timely and adaptive policy reforms to protect tourism resources, encourage sustainability, and stimulate green investment, labour opportunities, digital marketing, and partnerships.
- Advocate for harmonized tourism policies that attract high-value tourists, encourage responsible spending, and promote safe and sustainable practices.

#### **Capacity building and empowerment**

- Develop curricula, training manuals, and accreditation programs to support academic institutions, training providers, and industry stakeholders in advancing sustainable tourism knowledge and skills.
- Create enabling environments through affirmative policies that invest in women, equipping them with knowledge, skills, and growth opportunities to ensure political and economic empowerment.
- Strengthen professional development and stakeholder capacity to embed sustainability and resilience across the tourism sector.

#### **Standards and certification**

- Formulate National Carbon-Neutral Tourism Standards, aligned with international benchmarks but tailored to Nepal's local context

(Example: Green Hospitality Standards for the Tourism Industry of Nepal).

## **5.2. Strategic Area 2: Harnessing innovation**

Harnessing innovation for positioning Nepal as a high value and highly competitive destination

**Strategic objective:** Position Nepal as a high value and highly competitive destination through locally led and innovative knowledge, intervention, technologies and partnership for nature positive, low carbon and climate resilient tourism.

#### **Actions:**

#### **Research, data, and knowledge systems**

- Map and profile green tourism products (adventure, ecotourism, wildlife, culinary, protected area visitation, and wellness tourism), assessing infrastructure, facilities, services, markets, and the broader business environment.
- Conduct baseline studies and establish databases (environmental, social, and economic) to support planning, development, monitoring, and reporting of nature-positive, low-carbon, and climate-resilient tourism initiatives.
- Develop and disseminate integrated tourism–climate information systems for risk communication, destination management, and safeguarding products and services, using digital platforms and mobile applications.

#### **Product diversification and supply chains**

- Diversify destinations and products by innovating offerings to stay ahead of evolving tourism trends, managing visitor expectations through sustainable practices, technological advancement, and personalized experiences.
- Cluster and promote green tourism products and services to strengthen regenerative, low carbon and climate resilient tourism supply chains across hospitality, tours, transport, and food services within and beyond Nepal.
- Promote farm-based and artisanal linkages within tourism supply chains to strengthen rural economies and ensure authenticity of visitor experiences.

- Strengthen culinary tourism by celebrating traditional cuisines, food culture, and history. Prioritize local sourcing to reduce food miles, reinforce place identity, enhance local food systems, and boost community pride.

#### **Green transition and low-carbon solutions**

- Advance the green transition of destinations, products, and businesses by integrating biodiversity conservation with water, energy, and waste management solutions.
- Promote low-carbon tourism destinations and businesses through energy- and water-efficient solutions (solar rooftops, renewable/efficient appliances and lighting, rainwater harvesting, greywater treatment) across accommodation, trekking, travel, and airline supply chains.
- Encourage low-carbon transport options, including electric buses, light vehicles, and two-wheelers, to reduce emissions in tourism mobility.
- Promote shared mobility solutions (carpooling, ride-sharing, rental services), alongside policies such as import restrictions on fossil-fuel vehicles and quota systems.
- Develop low-carbon and carbon-neutral tourism zones by identifying pilot destinations (e.g., community homestay clusters, protected area buffer zones) to implement renewable energy use, waste management systems, and low-impact mobility options that deliver direct benefits to ecosystems, natural environments, and local communities.

#### **Standards and regulation**

- Develop and enforce green standards and certification systems for tourism products, businesses, and services, ensuring compliance with criteria on environmental impact, waste management, energy and water use, and community engagement.

#### **Marketing, promotion, and partnerships**

- Implement targeted marketing campaigns and promotional events that highlight authentic, sustainable, and unique experiences. Showcase green tourism initiatives, cultural heritage, and

foster partnerships with DMOs, private sector actors, media (digital and print), and influencers.

#### **Innovation, SMEs, and empowerment**

- Support SMEs in building a green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism ecosystem, leveraging big data and market intelligence for competitiveness.
- Foster women-led green tourism start-ups and entrepreneurship, supporting ideation, incubation, and acceleration of nature-positive and climate-resilient business models.

### **5.3. Strategic Area 3: Capacity building**

Capacity building to support green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism development

**Strategic objective:** Enhance the skills, knowledge, and abilities of key stakeholders (government, private sectors, research and academia and local communities) within the tourism sector to support sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient development.

#### **Actions:**

##### **Awareness and engagement**

- Raise awareness and conduct sensitization programs on nature-positive, low-carbon, and climate-resilient tourism development.
- Organize Tourism Climate Action (TCA) campaigns and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen stakeholder engagement in advancing sustainable tourism agendas.

##### **Training and skills development**

- Provide training and technical support to tourism businesses and communities on sustainable practices, climate resilience strategies, and responsible tourism, enabling adaptation to climate change impacts such as shifting weather patterns, extreme events, and resource constraints.
- Develop professional and business leadership capacity to improve service quality, innovation, and entrepreneurial performance across the tourism sector.

- Promote and empower women-led tourism entrepreneurship, enhancing their leadership roles in tourism development. Deliver training for quality service delivery and raise awareness of women entrepreneurs' rights and contributions.

#### **Workforce development**

- Attract and retain highly skilled professionals to elevate the quality, competitiveness, and sustainability of tourism services.

#### **Experiential learning and collaboration**

- Facilitate exposure visits and experiential learning opportunities for key stakeholders — including government, academia, businesses, and local communities — to share best practices and strengthen collaboration.

#### **Knowledge partnerships and global standards**

- Engage knowledge institutions and international partners by collaborating with universities (forestry, tourism, hospitality, engineering, agriculture) and regional/global organizations (e.g., UN Tourism, ICIMOD, HUC) to build capacity and align with international standards.

### **5.4. Strategic Area 4: Leveraging investment opportunities**

Leveraging Investment Opportunities for Green, Inclusive and Climate Resilient Tourism

**Strategic objective:** Promote green investment opportunity to foster finance flow on low carbon, climate resilient and regenerative tourism initiative.

**Actions:**

#### **Mapping and incentives**

- Map and profile the investment landscape, including an investor database and analysis of financial flows.
- Promote incentives to develop nature markets, ensuring optimal utilization of key nature-based tourism assets — wildlife, biodiversity, landscapes, forests, rangelands, and watersheds.

#### **Expanding finance access**

- Expand funding opportunities to support collaborative, nature-positive tourism and climate action initiatives.
- Facilitate access to green finance and incentives to accelerate low-carbon, climate-resilient, and regenerative mountain tourism.
- Provide targeted incentives (tax breaks, subsidies, market-based mechanisms) for businesses and service providers adopting sustainable and responsible practices that benefit both the environment and local communities.

#### **Policy alignment**

- Align budgeting with policy goals to ensure annual programs and budgets reflect long-term tourism objectives.
- Mandate non-tourism ministries to incorporate tourism-related actions into their plans, strengthening cross-sectoral accountability.

#### **Partnerships and networks**

- Strengthen global, regional, and local networks and partnerships to mobilise financing for tourism climate action (mitigation and adaptation) and regenerative tourism.

#### **Digital innovation**

- Develop a digital aggregator platform to promote green tourism destinations and SMEs, fostering green jobs and showcasing sustainable products, services, and experiences.

### **5.5. Strategic Area 5: Collaboration and cooperation**

Collaboration for integrated action and cooperation

**Strategic objective:** Support and strengthen institutions for multistakeholder and multi-level collaboration to harness knowledge, skills, resources and network for integrated action.

## **Actions:**

### **Institutional clarity and coordination**

- Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities by clearly defining mandates among tourism institutions (e.g., Department of Tourism vs. Nepal Tourism Board) to avoid overlap and ensure accountability.
- Enhance vertical coordination within the federal structure by activating and strengthening mechanisms to improve coordination across federal, provincial, and local levels.
- Strengthen horizontal collaboration by fostering coordination between tourism and non-tourism ministries (e.g., Forest and Environment, Energy, Infrastructure, Finance) to co-develop tourism destination, products, infrastructure and services.
- Create mechanisms for policy integration by developing a national framework for horizontal policy alignment involving key ministries and agencies:
  - Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA)
  - Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE)
  - National Planning Commission (NPC)
  - Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT)
  - Ministry of Energy (MoE)
  - Ministry of Finance (MoF)
  - Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen (MoCSC)
- Promote evidence-based policymaking by collaborating with research, academic, and regional knowledge institutions (e.g., ICIMOD) and private sectors to generate actionable insights and establish a culture of using research findings to inform policy and planning.

### **Mechanisms for collaboration**

- Establish and strengthen formal and informal mechanisms to promote multistakeholder collaborative partnerships and cooperation at local (municipalities/rural municipalities and provincial), national, cross-border, regional, and global levels.
- Create and mobilize tourism think tanks at national and regional levels to review emerging issues and harness opportunities for green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism.
- Develop institutional mechanisms for multi-stakeholder collaboration by building structures and functions that foster regenerative, inclusive, low carbon and climate resilient tourism growth.

### **Stakeholder empowerment and networks**

- Empower key tourism stakeholders (public, private and community) to engage in and advance green, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism agendas across all governance levels.
- Strengthen global, regional, national and local networks to mobilize collaboration and financing for tourism climate action (mitigation and adaptation) and regenerative tourism.
- Promote knowledge exchange and regional collaboration by continuing cross-country exposure programs with successful regional models to foster innovation and coherence in regenerative tourism practices.
- Encourage joint advocacy, shared learning, and impactful business collaboration, including the joint packaging of tourism offers.

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