

REGENERATIVE TOURISM – BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to present a shift in thinking in terms of implementing the systems and practices needed to transition to a regenerative approach in tourism. The article aims to provide concrete ways to change thinking and move towards a regenerative paradigm in the tourism industry.

Design/methodology/approach: This viewpoint paper defines regenerative tourism, explores its principles and the possibilities for driving transformational change in tourism. It outlines what a conscious approach to regenerative tourism entails and outlines working principles for regenerative tourism. The article concludes with a discussion of new regenerative thinking and practices.

Findings: Transitioning towards regenerative tourism requires a change in systems, thinking and practice. Regenerative tourism requires a change in socio-ecological awareness in terms of both awareness of the financial benefits to the tourist destination, local society, and the owners of tourist facilities. For tourism must be managed as a complex adaptive system and overcome the challenges of polarisation, which is even more acute in times of economic, political, and social crises. Regenerative tourism requires a deeply committed bottom-up approach that is destination-based, community-centred and environmentally focused.

Research limitations/implications: The article presents a point of view; it is not a typical research article. Nevertheless, it provides a rich field for future research in the implementation of regenerative tourism activities.

Practical and social implications: After indicating the scientific basis of regenerative tourism, the article provides recommendations and courses of action that can be used by tourism entrepreneurs. It can also be confidently used by entrepreneurs in other industries.

Originality/value: This paper is based on both the literature on the subject and the reflections and recommendations of female researchers who share their long experience from different perspectives - economics, environment, and biotechnology - both academically and from business practice. As a result, the study identifies not only recommendations but also good practices that tourism entrepreneurs can apply to run their business in a regenerative way, while taking care of society, the economy, and the environment.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism, Tourism management.

Category of the paper: Viewpoint.

1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is widely criticised for encouraging continued economic growth, leading to environmental devastation and social inequality. Calls for a fundamental change in the approach to the SDGs are therefore growing louder.

One alternative, as it recently seemed, that is now seen as complementary in moving to a higher, more conscious level of tourism development, is regenerative tourism. It differs from sustainable tourism in that it goes beyond simply minimising the negative impacts of human travel. Sustainable tourism focuses on reducing the damage caused by tourism activities, whereas regenerative tourism aims to make a positive impact by actively regenerating the environment and communities. Regenerative tourism represents a long line of regenerative approaches to development, drawing on Western science and available systems of knowledge and practice.

The COVID-19 pandemic can be considered as the factor that most influenced the spread of regenerative tourism. The crisis that was caused by it influenced price increases and the emergence of travel-related impediments. The downturn in the tourism industry provided the impetus to 'build' global tourism anew. With the introduction of the lockdown, many previously overcrowded tourist destinations became deserted. This resulted in the inhabitants of such regions finally being able to breathe. It was then realised how much of an impact tourists had on infrastructure, the daily lives of local people and the environment, and that this was not always a positive impact. However, when post-pandemic tourism began to be considered in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, such as the devastation of the environment through increased tourism, initiatives such as rescuing devastated sites and preventing further negative impacts began to emerge. Regenerative tourism has emerged as a response to these needs.

A universal definition of regenerative tourism has not yet been developed or adopted. Nevertheless, in the literature from niche innovators, several attributes of regenerative tourism can be identified and distinguished that form the conceptual core and enable further conceptual development. Anna Pollock, one of the proponents of the regenerative tourism movement and a tourism expert stated: "Regenerative tourism is the idea that tourism should leave a place better than it was before. Sustainability, in comparison, is leaving something as it is so that it stays the same. In other words - not causing any extra damage" (Pollock, 2016).

Regenerative tourism is based on the understanding that the tourism economy in general, and the destination in particular, are not an industrial production line, but a living, networked system, embedded in a natural environment, subject to the rules and principles of nature.

2. Literature Review

The concept of regeneration dates back to the late 19th century. The first studies on the subject appeared in the 1880s when Howard (2010) wrote 'To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Social Reform' (Howard, 2010). This seems to have been the first expression of ecological thinking, which assumed harmony of human life with nature and the use of natural (not engineered processes) to ensure the health of the system (Lyle, 1994). Then in 1915, Patrick Geddes published his research on cities understood as living organisms (Geddes, 1915). Geddes introduced terms such as palaeotechnics and neotechnics to distinguish between the industrial era, which led to destructive urbanisation, and the era he predicted would follow the collapse of the industrial era. The above terms were adopted by Lyle (1996) almost 80 years later to distinguish between the industrial era and regenerative technologies.

In 1935, Tansley proposed the term ecosystem as a name for an interactive system of living things and their non-living habitat. He wrote: "we cannot separate them from their particular environment with which they form" ('we cannot separate them from their special environment, with which they form one physical system'). Subsequently, in 1953 Odum published the first textbook on ecology: *The Fundamentals of Ecology*, pioneering the development of ecology as a modern science, based on the concept of the ecosystem as the fundamental structure that orders nature. Odum's research was an important contribution to the beginnings of the field of ecological engineering (Mitsch, Jørgensen, 1989). Of particular importance in the evolution of regenerative development was the framework given by Krone, a systems theorist and process architect, outlining the four natures of work that are essential to the ongoing ability of any living system to evolve. This framework defines different levels of work in a hierarchy, with work at lower levels focusing on existence (that which has already manifested), increasing productivity and efficiency. Work at higher levels is concerned with potential (what could be but has not yet manifested), introducing the potential for new life and creativity and developing wholeness. Understanding, goals and objectives developed at the regenerative level guide work at other levels (Mang, Haggard, 2016). The basic premise is that all four 'are essential for an individual to sustain themselves in a world that is nested, dynamic, complex, interdependent and evolving'. The framework has been used as an instrument to enable 'practitioners to design an integrated evolution of all work' and as 'a lens to see how and where different sustainability strategies fit and how they can be used when aligned with a regenerative purpose' (Mang, Haggard, 2016).

In the reviewed tourism literature, the earliest use of the term regenerative tourism was applied to ecotourism sites by architectural researcher Owen (2007). She described regenerative tourism as critically engaging with place, making a positive impact, seeing people as part of nature, and linking ecology to socio-political processes. Professor Joseph Cheer (2020) analysed the concept of human flourishing based on systems thinking and interconnectedness with nature. He identified the prioritisation of net positive benefits, including the approach of

indigenous peoples who had previously been displaced by colonisation and inclusive development. Similarly, Matunga (2020) explains regenerative tourism as an additive, interconnected and reciprocal approach between people and place for mutual benefit. Finally, Duxbury (2020) describes regenerative tourism as systems-based, aligned with cultural and natural patterns, integrated with local development approaches and positioning tourism practices as regenerative processes.

With an emphasis on economic practices, Sheller (2021) described regenerative tourism as embracing 'alternative, non-capitalist forms of ownership, non-monetary exchange, and beneficial community-based development, calling for a shift away from colonisation, racial inequality, and extractive neoliberal development towards an alternative collective future. Cave and Dredge (2020) look at regenerative tourism as one that encompasses alternative economic practices to mediate between global and local values and create 'wellbeing', and thus the authors what considers a view of regenerative tourism as a holistic view of wellbeing.

Practitioners of the Global Initiative for Regenerative Tourism, on the other hand, emphasise the transformation of relationships between self, other people, and nature to improve the capacity of social and environmental systems. For example, Teruel (2018) describes regenerative tourism as an emerging evolutionary and dynamic understanding that embraces sustainability within living systems and emphasises the human relationship with self, with others and with the earth.

3. Towards regenerative tourism

Regenerative tourism is a concept that is gaining popularity in the tourism industry. It is a philosophy that aims not only to minimise the negative impact of tourism on the environment, but also to actively contribute to the regeneration of local ecosystems, economies, and cultures. Essentially, regenerative tourism seeks to leave a destination better than it was found.

When looking at the definitions of sustainable and regenerative tourism, it is difficult to see a difference between the two. However, it is worth remembering that for many people, sustainability has become a set of actions and guidelines to follow in order not to make the current situation worse. Therefore, sustainability is often seen by certain precepts, and this makes it lose its positive and inspiring overtones and motivation for action. In the meantime, regeneration is a new word, not yet coined, and thus generates more and more interest and positive emotions.

However, the real difference in terminology lies not in their meaning, but in attitude and intention. Regeneration is not just about not making the existing situation worse, but about improving it. Therefore, with sustainability one talks about optimisation and maximisation, while the regenerative approach is all about prospering and flourishing (Figure 1).

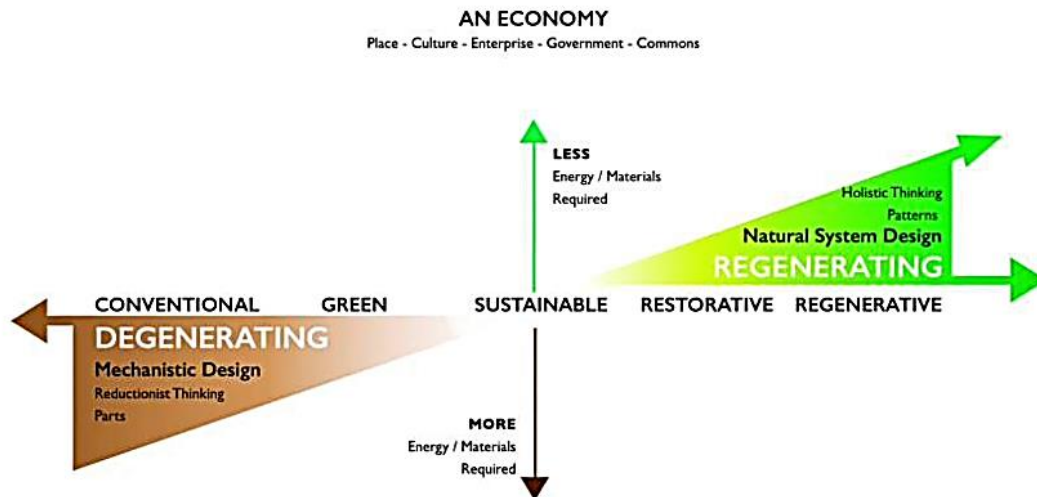


Figure 1. Regenerative Economy.

Source: Fullerton, 2018.

Looking at Figure 1, it can be seen that the starting point in the model is precisely sustainable tourism, which, with the aim of development and adding value, moves from a restorative (Hu et al., 2022) to a regenerative level. The more regenerative tourism becomes, we are talking about thinking holistically and designing natural systems and using certain proven patterns. The counterpoint is degenerating tourism, which is realised at the green level (Furgan et al., 2010) (a narrower form than sustainable) or conventional, favouring the 3S model mentioned earlier, with mechanical design (unthinking, spontaneous), thinking limited to convenience and stereotypes.

Sustainable tourism certainly aims for destination communities to develop and flourish. John Elkington, author of the so-called tripple bottom line (Elkington, 2010), embraces the regeneration movement as an important new way of thinking about sustainability, based on past experience. It is also worth noting that the term 'regeneration' is not loaded with policies that are explicitly associated with 'sustainability'. People who would reject 'sustainable development' because of political views or worldviews may embrace regenerative action and see it as good for their communities. This enthusiasm and motivation to move towards a regenerative tourism model has become a driving force for new initiatives and projects in target groups.

Regenerative tourism can be likened, in a way, to moving beyond the previous standards of sustainable tourism (*Regenerative Tourism - A holiday mind shift beyond sustainability*, 2022), by moving away from focusing only on minimising the negative effects of travel, but also paying attention to the possibility of positively impacting the traveller's environment.

Regenerative tourism can be likened, in a way, to going beyond previous standards of sustainable tourism (*Regenerative Tourism - A holiday mind shifts beyond sustainability*, 2022), by moving away from a focus solely on minimising the negative effects of travel, but also paying attention to the potential for positive impacts on the traveller's environment.

As a starting point for considering regenerative tourism, it is important to define the concept in question and to identify the essence of the components that constitute its foundations. "Regenerative tourism" can be described as a type of tourism oriented towards simultaneous investment in both people, places, and nature, together with support for the long-term regeneration and flourishing of the socio-ecological system (Figure 2). The foundations of the idea of regenerative tourism are identified as (Dredge, 2022):

- a holistic approach, conditioned by the fact that tourism does not operate in a vacuum, but in a continuous two-way relationship with other sectors of the economy and community. So its aim is to understand tourism not only in economic terms, but also in social, environmental, cultural and other terms;
- deep cooperation between state and private actors operating in the tourism environment. Regenerative tourism efforts should be multi-pronged, global, combining different insights and practices. Therefore, one speaks of creative, lateral thinking, aiming to respect diversity and inclusivity (Dziadkiewicz, 2021);
- the sustainable approach of optimising the use of resources, supporting natural diversity, as well as using pristine natural forms in accordance with their original functions, indicates a desire to create a community that cares about the future for the common good (Borawska-Dziadkiewicz, 2023).

Accepting the dynamism and turbulence of tourism. Shying away from standardised solutions to contemporary problems in favour of an individual approach, and towards social and nature-centricity.

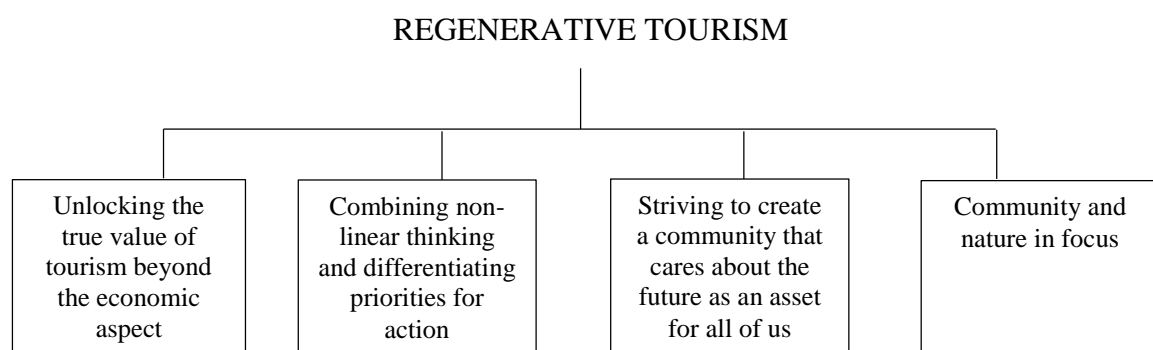


Figure 2. Pillars of Regenerative tourism.

Source: based on Cave et al., 2022.

Linking the concept of regenerative tourism to the business level is not easy, but it is as possible. Today's businesses need to recognise that the environment in which they operate is a living system within a larger living system. This means that their business is part of the whole ecosystem, which requires a change in mindset from tourism entrepreneurs as well. Businesses

wishing to use the principles of regenerative tourism to their advantage need to take care of moral considerations, market dynamics and technology - essential elements for achieving regenerative outcomes (*Regenerative tourism: moving beyond sustainable and responsible tourism*, 2022).

Regenerative tourism is therefore holistic in nature. It fosters cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders in local tourism and encourages diversity, in order to avoid extreme dependence of local people on tourism. In the concept of this tourism, local communities are included in decision-making processes in an inclusive and equal space, generating value for the community, as well as responsibility for the environment and the preservation of biodiversity in the tourism location.

4. Regenerative tourism - trends and practical implications

The concept of regenerative tourism aims to provide guests with experiences of possible transformation options so that, on returning home, they are inspired and positive about their trip, while keeping in mind the preservation of local cultural heritage. Holidays, therefore, are meant to give added value, divested of selfishness.

Meanwhile, predictions for travel behaviour in the years ahead, from 2024 onwards, indicate that travel for most of us is not just a form of relaxation according to the 3S (sea, sand, sun) principle, but a catalyst for experiencing life at its best 3E (education, entertainment, and excitement), sometimes the 4 E's - ethnicity - are added to this acronym. Thanks to Booking.com's travel forecasts, it was not only possible to see some changes in tourist attitudes, but also to be able to develop a picture of the local market for the UK, Italy, Germany, Spain, the USA, and Latin America.

One of the trends published by Booking.com is the so-called Reinventing oneself. Almost 70% of travellers believe that they put themselves in a much better light during their holiday than they actually are. While just over 60% of tourists remain anonymous and do not socialise, the rest love to tell untrue stories about themselves, putting themselves in the spotlight. Some even (around 42%) consider hiring a more luxurious car than the one they drive every day. In order to capitalise on this trend for regenerative tourism, the emphasis should be on authenticity and dialogue (instead of creating false stories, travellers can share authentic experiences and stories from the places they visit. It is worth encouraging them to dialogue with the local community to understand the locals' point of view, needs and values. Tourists can be provided with information about the places they visit to raise their cultural and environmental awareness - by organising workshops, lectures, or meetings with local experts on the environment, history, or the arts. It is also worth supporting local businesses instead of large corporations, which can contribute to the profits of the local economy.

And instead of considering renting a luxury car, travellers can choose modes of transport that are more environmentally friendly, such as bicycles, public transport or electric cars. It is also worth encouraging tourists to participate in social or environmental projects, such as planting trees, cleaning up beaches or taking part in local community initiatives.

The need for proximity to water and water activities have always been considered synonymous with holidays (S for sea). Meanwhile, it appears that water is no longer the only way to relax (36% of tourists). More and more people indicate as a destination the search for solace in the form of health retreats (20% of tourists), a good night's sleep, which becomes the priority of the trip for 58% of travellers, or tantric retreats (48%). Travelling into the unknown is also a new leisure option. More than half of travellers are willing to book trips whose destination remains a mystery until they arrive at their destination. 56% of tourists are willing to explore places that are not obvious, off the beaten track, and 34% are willing to travel with strangers. Spontaneity takes precedence over rational travel planning. The majority of travellers prefer to set off without fixed plans, while two-thirds (almost 70%) choose itineraries that can be freely modified according to the weather, the mood of the group and fatigue. Almost half of travellers want to use artificial intelligence in planning their trips, as exemplified by the AI Trip Planner, a planning tool developed by Booking.com. In order to link regenerative tourism to the above trend, it makes sense to introduce so-called sustainable routes that take tourists through unfamiliar, less commercialised areas, supporting local communities and environmental protection. Avoiding major tourist routes can help minimise the negative impact on natural areas. Additionally, working with local communities and tourism businesses to develop programmes that benefit both tourists and local communities, from promoting local culture, arts and crafts to storytelling about local traditions. It is extremely important to educate tourists. In this regard, it is useful to encourage informed travel by providing information on tourist destinations and promoting ethical travel practices. Guidance can be provided to tourists on respecting local culture, environment, and customs. Furthermore, supporting a variety of tourist attractions outside the main attractions helps to balance the influx of tourists. This, too, can minimise pressure on high-tourism areas. Developing local experiences can be done by encouraging travel with strangers, which promotes cross-cultural interaction and the exchange of experiences. Travel programmes that allow tourists to participate in local events and activities can foster closer ties between tourists and local communities. And modifiable itineraries give tourists the opportunity to choose routes depending on factors such as weather, mood or fatigue, encouraging a more flexible and sustainable approach to travel. These activities promote a more sustainable, ethical, and regenerative travel model that contributes to the environment and the development of local communities.

Another trend is to move towards fresh tastes and smells. Here, culinary tourism will lead the way. Almost 80 per cent of travellers want to taste fresh, local dishes. Half of tourists say they want to travel based on specific restaurants or dishes - taking advantage of dedicated trips and culinary journeys, and 61% prioritise trying an iconic dish from a particular region.

A regenerative approach can encourage the promotion of traditional recipes and cooking techniques, protecting a region's culinary heritage. It appears that technology is having an increasing impact on how we enjoy food. Almost 50% of tourists seek out 'phygital' (physical and digital) meals via VR or AR. This means that the increasingly popular use of technology, such as VR and AR, can be used to create interactive dining experiences, allowing travellers to browse menus, watch the food preparation process or take a virtual tour of a restaurant. The integration of 'phygital' technology allows travellers to have both physical and digital experiences, which can include ordering food online, using a table reservation app, or exploring dishes through VR. While just over 60 per cent of travellers are fascinated by innovative plant-based options such as 3D printed vegan steaks and mushroom 'foie gras'. Meanwhile, interest in innovative plant-based options in the kitchen can foster regenerative tourism by promoting more sustainable eating practices. Regenerative Tourism can therefore include education about local food and culinary culture, the history of food and the impact that tourism has on the environment. In summary, a regenerative approach to food and culinary tourism can include a range of practices that both satisfy travellers' desire to discover new flavours and at the same time contribute to protecting the environment and supporting local communities. The introduction of technology, education and sustainable practices can make culinary travel more conscious and positive for local areas.

In 2024, attitudes towards travel as a destination realising the desire for deeper relationships and self-discovery will also change. Nearly 25% of travellers want to strengthen ties with their partners. Nearly 40% choose getting to know a partner as their destination, and 35% hope to heal a broken heart abroad. Those travelling to meet a partner may be interested in social events, workshops or meetings that enable new relationships. For those who are travelling in the hope of finding emotional peace, consider offerings that combine therapeutic elements with the experience of travelling. This could include meditative retreats, personal development workshops or therapeutic meetings with local experts. Solo travel is becoming increasingly popular year on year (60% of travellers), with slightly more male enthusiasts of such outings than women. As solo travel becomes more popular, it is worth considering how to create travel experiences that allow travellers to explore individually while respecting the local environment and culture. Even parents are joining the trend, with 60 per cent of couples planning to travel without children, prioritising internal development. For couples who plan to travel without children to focus on inner development, travel offerings can be created that support mental and physical health while positively impacting the local community. Regenerative Tourism emphasises the importance of sustainable travel practices. Green travel can be promoted, local environmental and cultural initiatives can be supported, and the negative impact of tourism on a destination can be minimised.

Can affordable luxury be achieved on a limited budget? According to travellers, yes, and what's more, it's one of the main trends. Almost half of parents want to take their children on holiday during school and therefore outside the peak tourist season, and 46% plan

to limit tipping. Promoting off-season travel can help to minimise the negative impact on the environment and local community during peak tourism, and supporting educational travel experiences for children, integrates them as future adults to consciously care for the local culture of the place and the environment. 50% plan to take out a loan to pay for their holiday (promoting ethical and sustainable forms of travel finance, repayable in a sensible way to avoid negative impact on the household budget is also a regenerative tourism measure), and supporting pet-friendly destinations and promoting a responsible approach to travelling with pets sees almost 40% of tourists consider taking a pet. The desire to cut costs, associated with the trip, does not make travellers want to give up luxury. 34% of travellers intend to borrow branded clothes and gear from family or friends to avoid paying for luxury products themselves. Develop rental services for eco-friendly clothing (which can be luxurious) and travel gear, with an emphasis on sustainable practices. Over half (54%) would pay for an upgrade in accommodation and 47% are willing to pay extra, on reasonable terms of course, for an upgrade on a flight or train. Encouraging more sustainable options, e.g. direct flights instead of connecting flights, eco-friendly modes of transport, or accommodation with sustainability certificates. Regenerative Tourism involves not only minimising the negative impacts of travel, but also actively contributing to the regeneration of local communities and the environment. It is therefore important that travellers are aware of the consequences of their actions and make informed choices when travelling.

A final trend worth reflecting on is to bet further on sustainability in tourism. In almost all European countries, it is possible to see the identification of a significant group of sustainable tourists who demand certain behaviours from tourist destinations and owners of tourist facilities. More than half of travellers are looking for accommodation that combines comfort with innovative sustainability features. They want the tranquillity of nature indoors (especially the so-called Peace of Minds group) (Dziadkiewicz et al., 2023; Melbye et al., 2022), and 65% want green spaces and plants in hotel venues, restaurants, and places where they purchase tourism products and services (Dziadkiewicz et al., 2023; Melbye et al., 2022). Sustainability is not just a fashionable buzzword - it is a lifestyle. Travellers are interested in green choices (Dziadkiewicz et al., 2023; Melbye et al., 2022) and even more so in rewards for making sustainable choices (60%), e.g. vouchers to be used at the accommodation in exchange for not cleaning the hotel room and changing towels and bed linen throughout the stay. Authenticity is key, with 47% keen to interact with locals in less frequented areas and 44% venturing into less touristy areas.

In the regenerative tourism industry, it is important to shift the mindset from pure profit-based models to regeneration and sustainability. This approach involves adopting a regenerative mindset, that is, prioritising the improvement and regeneration of the planet over pure profit. The steps needed to realise the premise are (Saul, 2022):

- Building an ecosystem business model (Integrating the tourism facility with local ecosystems, co-creating with communities, and understanding the interdependence between local communities, the economy, and the environment).
- Local stakeholders and ecosystem: Making a net positive impact on local ecosystems and supporting the wellbeing of local communities, the environment, and our employees.
- Guest engagement in regeneration: Educate visitors about regenerative practices, provide activities that contribute to the regeneration of the area and encourage experiences that approach nature more slowly and respectfully.

Figure 3 shows the applicability of regenerative activities for a hotel, but they can be adapted to any possible tourism facility.

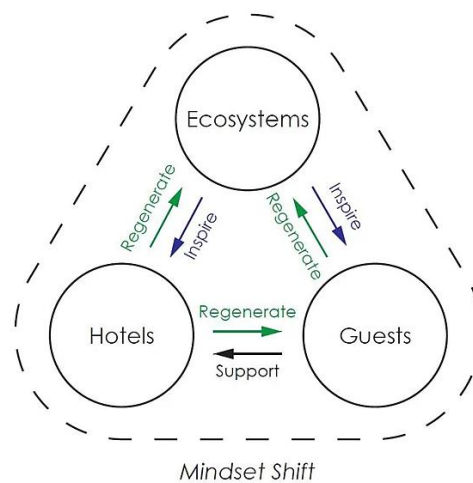


Figure 3. Application of regeneration measures.

Source: Saul, 2022.

Figure 3, developed by Saul, illustrates regenerative hospitality. It consists of three interconnected circles arranged in a triangle and labelled 'Ecosystems', 'Guests' and 'Hotels'. Arrows run between these circles, indicating dynamic relationships. Each arrow has a different term: 'Inspire', 'Support' and 'Regenerate'. These three elements are surrounded by dashed lines, and the arrow marked 'Changing mindsets' points to 'Hotels' and indicates the fundamental changes required for regenerative hospitality.

It can be inferred that regenerative hoteliers can create a circle that benefits local ecosystems and provides a better future than traditional corporate sustainability efforts.

Regenerative tourism can also involve the application of sustainable and regenerative practices within the tourism industry itself. Through the use of regenerative tourism, many benefits can be seen in terms of the environmental impact of these activities e.g. helping to restore damaged ecosystems, conserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. Tourism infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, spas, and wellness) can use renewable energy sources, reduce water consumption and use sustainable materials for construction. Catering can use local and organic produce, reduce food waste, and use composting to regenerate soil health.

For communities, regenerative tourism can bring economic benefits, create employment opportunities, and help preserve local cultures and traditions.

5. Discussions

Reflecting on the future of regenerative tourism in the tourism industry can include a number of important issues concerning both social, economic and environmental aspects.

In the context of regenerative tourism, an important element is the pursuit of sustainability. Reflection should include strategies and practices that contribute to a balance between economic benefits and environmental protection and preservation of local culture. It is worth considering how regenerative tourism can support the education of tourists about local culture, history, and the ecosystem. Education can contribute to a greater respect by tourists for the places they visit, which can influence tourist behaviour. A focus on the physical and mental health aspects of tourists can be crucial in the context of regenerative tourism. Analysing what forms of physical activity, relaxation or therapy are popular in this context can help tailor the offer to tourists' needs.

The future of regeneration tourism may be closely linked to technological advances. The use of modern technology, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, or data analytics, can help to better understand tourists' preferences and adapt the offer to their expectations. In the context of regenerative tourism, it is important to take climate change into account. How can the tourism industry adapt to these changes while minimising its negative effects on the environment? Are there innovative approaches to tourism that take into account and counteract the effects of climate change? Regenerative tourism often emphasises local goods and services. What strategies can be put in place to support local communities, artisans, and producers? What are the benefits and challenges of promoting localness in tourism?

The conclusions of the reflections can be used to develop practical guidelines for the tourism industry, encouraging actions that will contribute to the development of regenerative tourism in a sustainable and beneficial way for all stakeholders.

6. Conclusion

The concept of regenerative tourism is not new. Indigenous communities around the world have been practising this form of tourism for centuries. However, it has grown in popularity in recent years. The main reasons are the growing awareness of the impact of tourists on the environment and the need for sustainable travel practices. Interest has increased especially after

the pandemic, and tourism then proved to be a regenerative activity in itself for the tourism industry and all those dependent on it.

The aim of regenerative tourism is to have a positive impact on local, social and environmental systems. This can take many forms, but the idea is for the traveller to receive a real local experience and return home not only with memories, but also with new groups of enthusiast friends who will participate with them in projects that bring value to local communities or the environment. Visitors will then be able to be seen in a better light by local people, thus defining a tourism loop that is constructive for society as a whole.

The primary function of regenerative tourism is therefore to prevent the negative impact of tourism on the environment and the lives of local residents. Regenerative tourism can therefore be considered to promote slow life and living in harmony with nature. The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced how leisure time is spent, determining new trends such as mindfulness, taking care of mental wellbeing or paying more attention to what products we use and where they come from. Tourism has its advantages, including enriching the tourist region, but it is also associated with a number of negative factors. Many tourists unfortunately do not care about the environment, infrastructure, cleanliness or even ensuring a peaceful life for the inhabitants of the place they are visiting.

There is more and more talk about sustainable travel, so the fact that regenerative tourism is becoming increasingly well-known and widespread should not surprise anyone. It is what enables the growth or regeneration of an area or environment. By practising regenerative tourism, not only do we not leave a negative footprint, but we have a positive impact on the places we visit.

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