

Promoting Sustainable Tourism by the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia

Policies, Initiatives, and Future Outlook



Conservation



Community



Sustainability



Future

TOURISM PERFORMANCE 2024

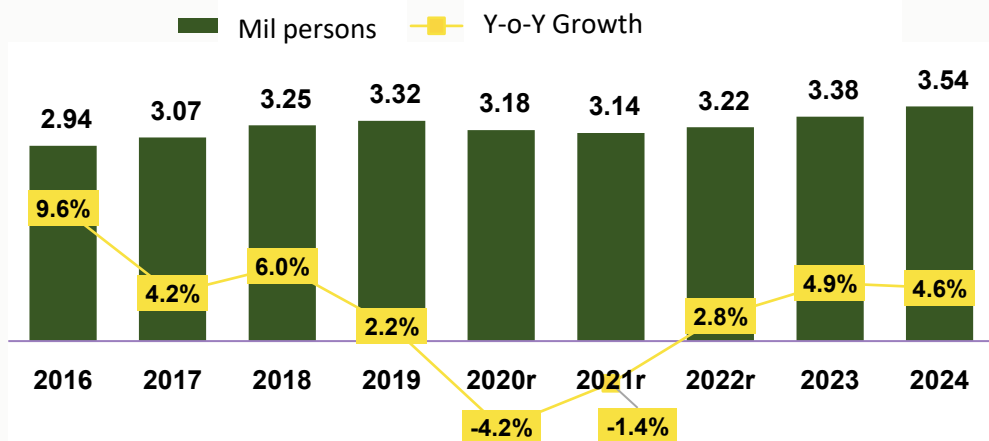
GDP Contribution

Tourism contributed 15.1% to Malaysia's GDP in 2024

GDP Contribution

RM291.9b (15.1%)

Employment in Tourism Industry



Tourism Spending



RM 107.0 billion
2023: RM75.8 bill
Inbound

YoY (%)
41.1%
2023:
124.3%

RM 98.4 billion
2023: RM78.7 bill
Domestic

YoY (%)
25.1%
2023: 32.9%

Policy Framework Overview

“

Transform Malaysia's tourism industry by harnessing public-private sector partnerships and embracing digitalisation to drive innovation and competitiveness toward sustainable and inclusive development in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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REINFORCE COMMITMENT TO STRATEGY 1: **SUSTAINABLE** AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

4 STRATEGIC ACTIONS



SA 1

Championing responsible tourism especially at environmentally fragile areas

SA 2

Managing the development of tourism islands in synergy with conservation

SA 3

Applying inclusive development to include women, youth and disadvantaged groups

SA 4

Monitoring the tourism industry's contribution to the UN SDGs

IMPLEMENTATION OF NTP 2020-2030 THROUGH


NATIONAL ECOTOURISM PLAN 2016-2025





ECOTOURISM

Tourism experience evolves through collaboration between Government, the private sector and local communities that include:

 Respect for nature

 Contribution to conservation

 Benefit to local communities

 Components of education and awareness

 Sustainability

5

FOCUS AREAS

01

Investment in ecotourism

02

Synergy between ecotourism and conservation

05

Ecotourism product development & management

03

Tourism consensus in ecotourism side

04

Ecotourism marketing

KEY TRAVEL TRENDS: NATURE-BASED TOURISM (NBT)

Capturing High Value Nature-Based Visitors to Malaysia

GLOBAL NBT TRENDS



Low impact
itineraries



Cultural
encounters



Custom
itineraries



Hosts as the heart
of experience



Giving back



Wellness and
mindfulness



Being at one
with nature

MALAYSIA'S NBT MARKET



Eco
engaged
19%



Pampered
escapists
9%



Sensibly
everything
12%



Spontaneous
adventurers
28%



Relaxing
travelers
32%



Most popular experiences are the **luxury lodge** and **responsible boat tour**



Experiences that evoke deepest appeal offer more immersive trips in **both nature and culture**



Only **12%** of the NBT market undertakes **ecotourism**

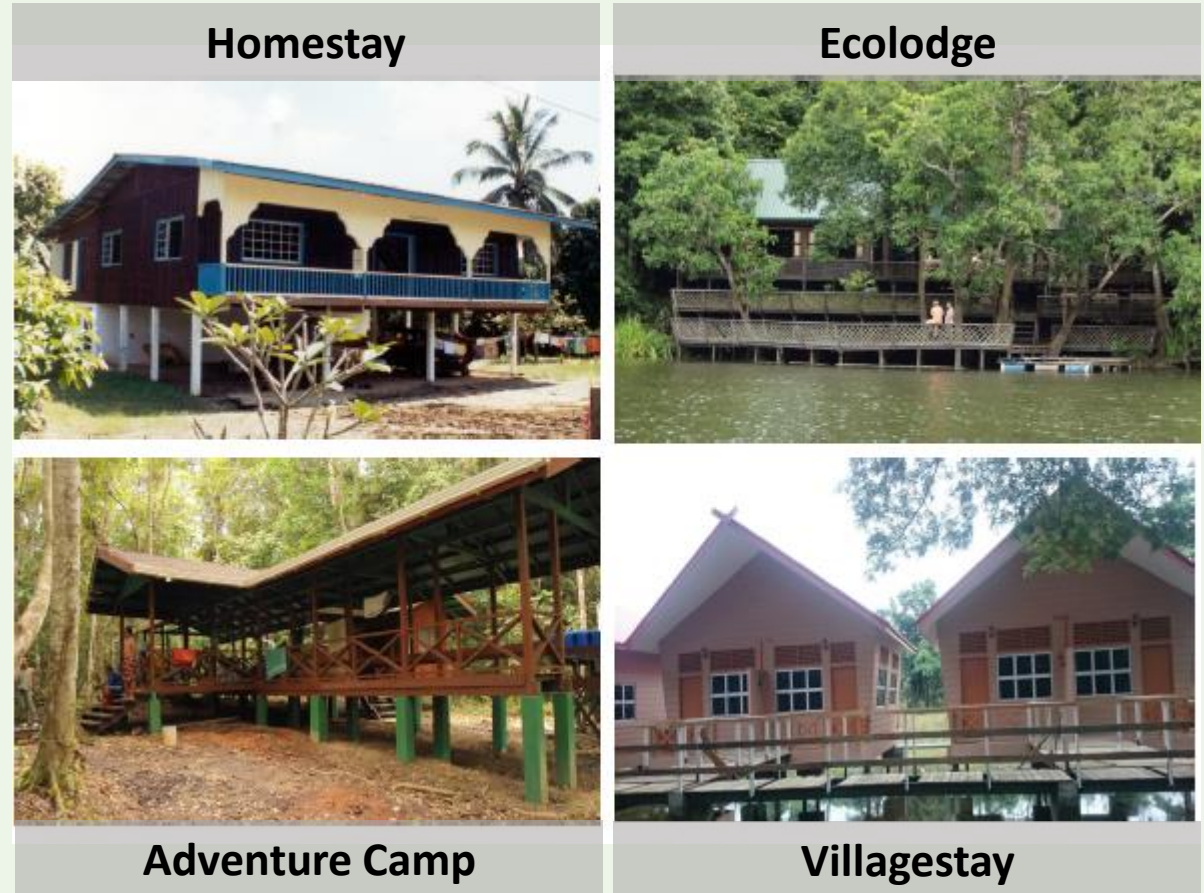
SOURCE: The World Bank, NBT Consumer Research (2023)

NBT BEST PRACTICE: MISO WALAI HOMESTAY

Promoting Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Resilience

REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY & NATURE-BASED TOURISM

- Kampung Batu Puteh Tourism Cooperative (KOPEL) has more than 350 members to date
- Established in 2003 with the following goals:
 - ✓ Provide job opportunities and generate income for the local population
 - ✓ Support the preservation of local culture to be showcased to visitors
 - ✓ Provide educational opportunities for village youth to upskill
 - ✓ Provide avenues for local women to gain employment



Accommodation mix for different segments

NBT BEST PRACTICE: MISO WALAI HOMESTAY (Cont.)

Promoting Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Resilience



- Located in **Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah – A Biodiversity Hotspot**
- **10 species of primates** (including Orang Utan, proboscis monkeys and Bornean gibbons)
- **50 mammal** species including iconic Pgymy elephants
- **More than 250 bird** species including hornbills

Tourism Activities

- Boat cruise
- Wildlife observation
- Jungle trekking
- Nature interpretation walk
- River safari
- Camping
- Homestay & cultural immersion
- Cooking classes
- Traditional games
- Traditional music & dance

Conservation Projects

- Forest Restoration Project
- Lake Restoration Project
- Orang Utan Bridge
- Cave Restoration Programme
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Wildlife Monitoring
- Added biomass and solar power projects



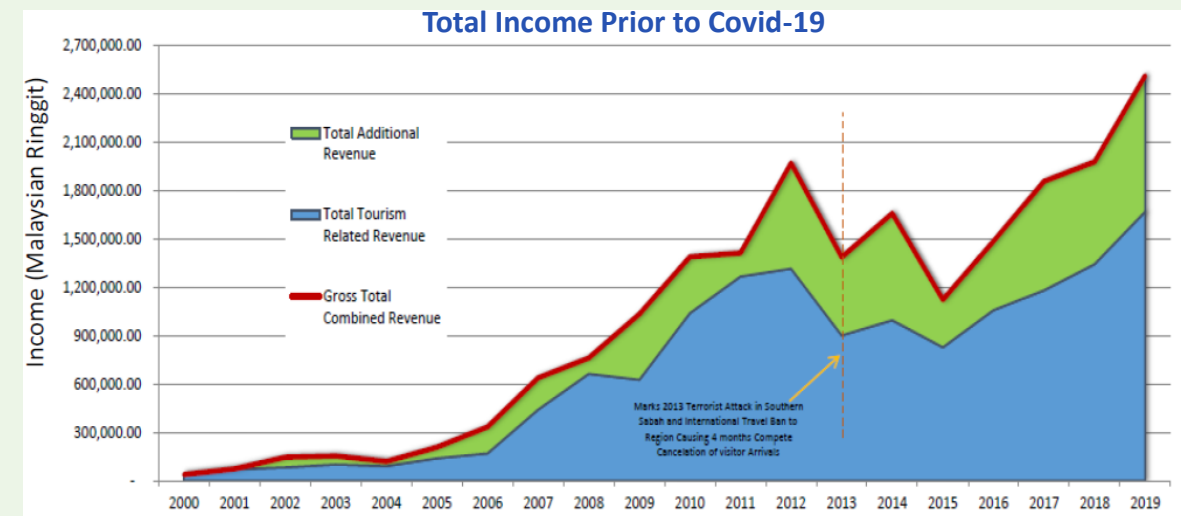
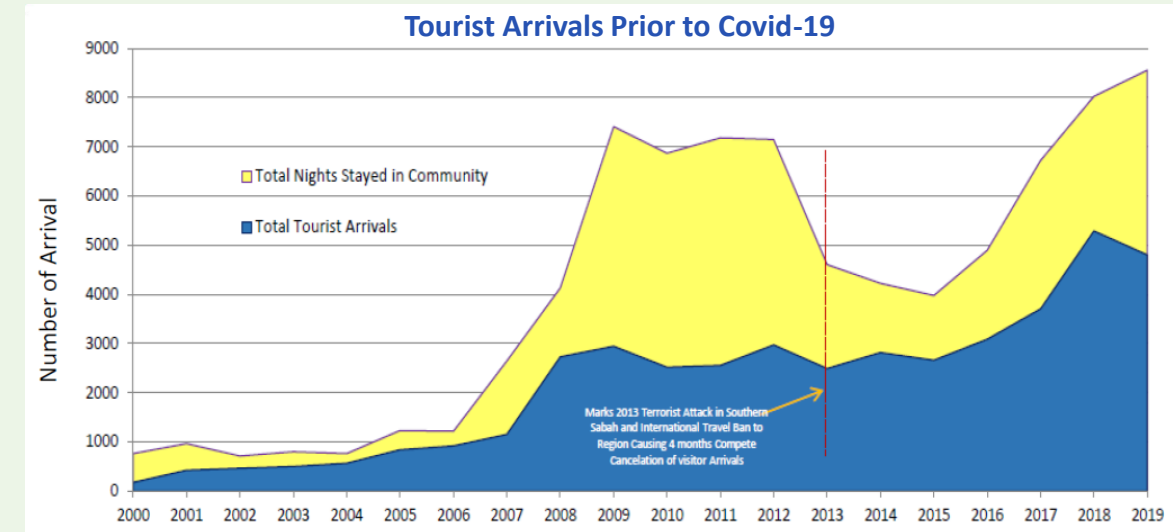
SOURCE: Prof. Amran Hamzah, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (2022)

NBT BEST PRACTICE: MISO WALAI HOMESTAY (Cont.)

Promoting Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Resilience

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Agility of community leadership
2. Head start in community forest restoration – Unique Selling Point
3. Partnerships with voluntourism companies
4. Establish trust and reputation
5. Nurture citizen science
6. Embrace technology and IoT



NBT BEST PRACTICE: MISO WALAI HOMESTAY (Cont.)

Promoting Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Resilience

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS & SUCCESS STORIES

Regional model for sustainable tourism development and ecological sustainability

Conducts training for communities, NGOs and foresters from the region

Ecological restoration work aligned to UN Agenda 2030 & Sustainable Development Goals

Recipient of inaugural UNWTO Best Tourism Villages award (2021)



SOURCE: Prof. Amran Hamzah, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (2022)

Sustainable Program/Standard



ASEAN Green Hotel Standard

The ASEAN Green Hotel Standard promotes environmentally friendly practices across the accommodation industry in ASEAN member states



Kelab Program Pelancongan Pelajar (K3P)

Providing students with early exposure to Malaysia's tourism, arts, and culture industry.



Malaysia Tourism Quality Assurance (MyTQA)

An initiative by the Ministry designed to elevate the service and quality of tourism products throughout Malaysia



Nature Guide Region Specific Tourist Guide



Knowledgeable and certified tourist guides play a vital role in delivering high-quality, safe, and sustainable tourism experiences, enriching visitors' understanding of Malaysia's diverse offerings.



Malaysian Homestay Experience Program

The program provides an alternative tourism product, while generating income for rural communities.



Voluntourism

The program is aimed at recruiting individuals to contribute to the development of the tourism sector, especially in the context of sustainability and community engagement.



LESTARI Platform

Future Outlook

MEASURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM



INSTO

Commitment to the INSTO Principles

Institutional Capacity

Data Monitoring

Data-driven decision-making



SFMST

↳ Economic

↳ Environmental

↳ Social

Visit Malaysia 2026 Campaign

Malayan Sun Bear Mascot

Reflecting Malaysia's conservation efforts



Challenges in Promoting Sustainable Tourism



Knowledge Barriers

- Low tourist awareness about impacts
- Local communities view sustainability as cost
- Limited public education on practices



Economic Barriers

- Prioritizing short-term growth over sustainability
- Strained infrastructure due to over-tourism
- Investor pressure for fast returns stifles long-term planning



Data Constraints

- Reliable data on carrying capacity, emissions missing
- Fragmented or inconsistent Tourism Satellite Accounts
- Difficulty measuring intangible cultural and community impacts



Financial Constraints

- High upfront costs for sustainable infrastructure
- Small operators lack capacity for green solutions
- Insufficient fragmented government funding



Governance Barriers

- Fragmented coordination across agencies
- Weak policy enforcement without implementation
- Local communities excluded from decision-making



Environmental Pressures

- Climate impact: rising temperatures, coastal erosion
- Carbon footprint: aviation, transport, accommodation
- Biodiversity conflict: balance growth vs. ecosystem protection



Community Resistance

- Initiatives without tangible economic benefits
- Unequal income distribution leading to resentment



Changing Tourist Behaviour

- Prioritizing convenience, price, and comfort
- Misperceptions about sustainable tourism costs

What's Next?



Data Improvement

Develop strategies to enhance data collection, quality, and availability for tourism sustainability measurement.



Institutional Collaboration

Strengthening agency collaboration and empowering local communities through inclusive decision-making and shared benefits.



Indicator Development

Create new indicators and refine existing ones to better measure the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of tourism sustainability.



Future MST Reporting

Establish frameworks for regular reporting and monitoring of Malaysia's tourism sustainability performance.



CHILDREN ON A BICYCLE

THANK YOU

**"Tourism Preserves, Conserves & Protects
Culture, Heritage & Mother Nature"**

Malaysia's Sustainable Tourism Roadmap

Building a resilient, inclusive, and eco-conscious future for the industry.

Governance & Community

Strengthening agency collaboration and empowering local communities through inclusive decision-making and shared benefits.

Data driven

Leveraging smart data, digital tools, and innovation to enhance resource management and improve visitor experiences.

Green Standards

Expanding green certifications, enforcing low-carbon practices, and prioritizing nature-based tourism to protect biodiversity.