

# INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM A KEY DRIVER FOR POSITIVE IMPACT



# Our Approach to Sustainable Tourism

**Tourism is much more than travel. It's a powerful engine for local economies.**

Globally, tourism creates 1 in 10 jobs and generates 10% of the world's income<sup>1</sup>. Until 2034, the sector is expected to grow to 11.4% of global GDP and account for 12.2% of the world's workforce, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council WTTC<sup>2</sup>. Most tourism businesses are small and locally owned, making it easier for people, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups, to start their own businesses. Tourism is inherently private sector driven, which means it thrives on entrepreneurship and innovation. It brings new life to rural and remote areas, helps protect cultural and natural heritage, and sparks creativity. It's a sector that adapts quickly and connects communities to global opportunities and therefore reduces migration push factors, allowing people to build better futures in their own communities.

## **Navigating the challenges of tourism development**

Rapid tourism growth can overwhelm local resources, strain infrastructure, and disrupt community life. It can put increasing pressure on the environment and threaten cultural heritage. We are committed to identifying and developing sustainable, scalable solutions that create better places for people to live in, protect the environment, and enable inclusive growth. Our work goes beyond "do no harm", we actively promote regenerative tourism models that restore and rejuvenate ecosystems and communities.

## **Our approach to sustainable tourism development**

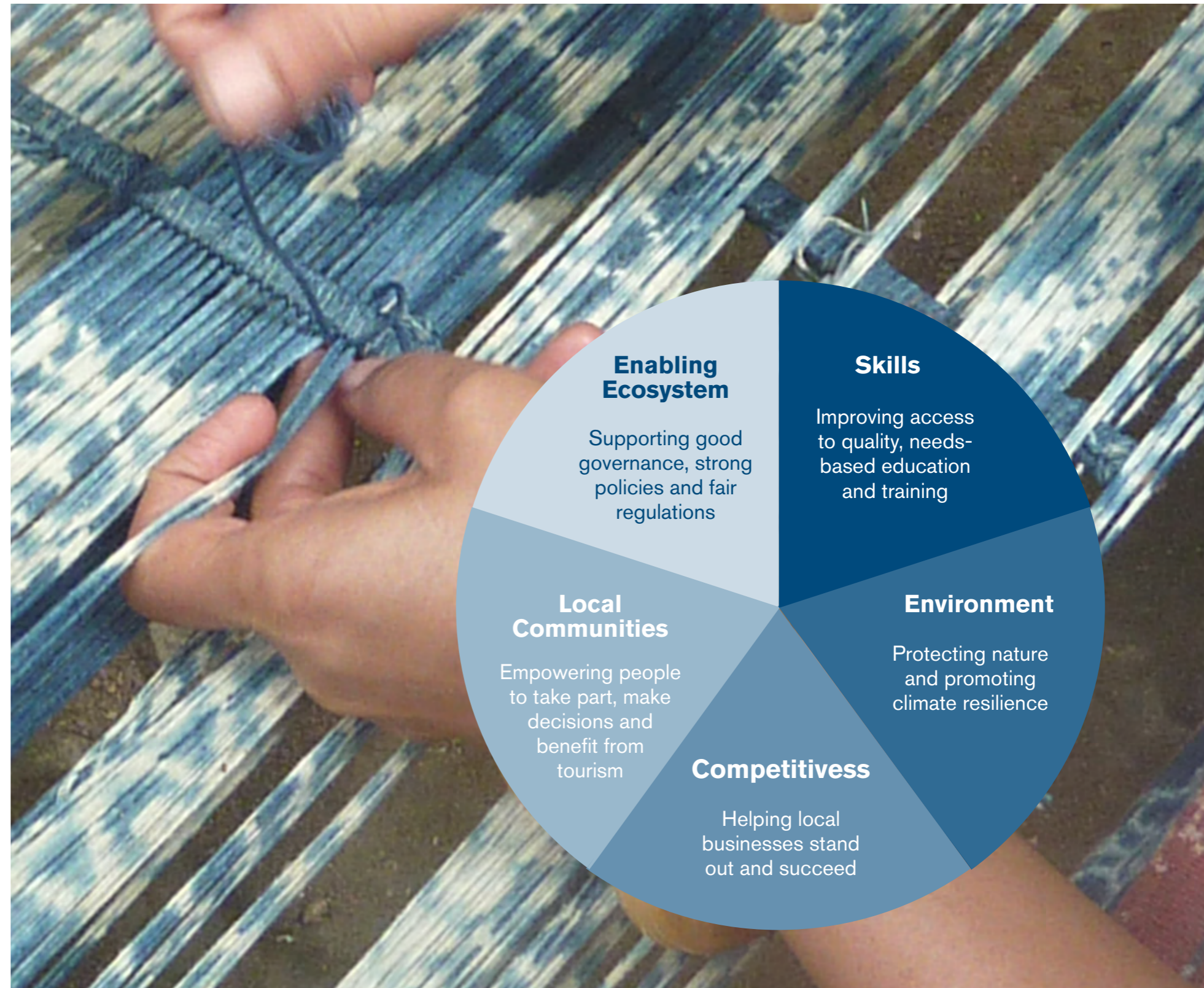
For Sustainable Tourism to leverage its potential to contribute to positive and inclusive impact, Swisscontact strengthens the tourism ecosystem to become a strong, resilient, and reliable driver of development. By focusing on the root causes of major development challenges in tourism, Swisscontact seeks opportunities and practical solutions that address these problems and create more resilient, reliable tourism systems.

<sup>1</sup>Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Research (EIR)

<sup>2</sup>Source of information: Travel & Tourism set to Break All Records in 2024

# Five Strategic Priorities

Driving Solutions to Global Tourism Development Challenges



# Swisscontact Tourism & Hospitality Portfolio

## A global footprint in inclusive tourism development

**Since 1999**  
active in Tourism Development

**Over 20 active projects**  
with tourism and/or hospitality components

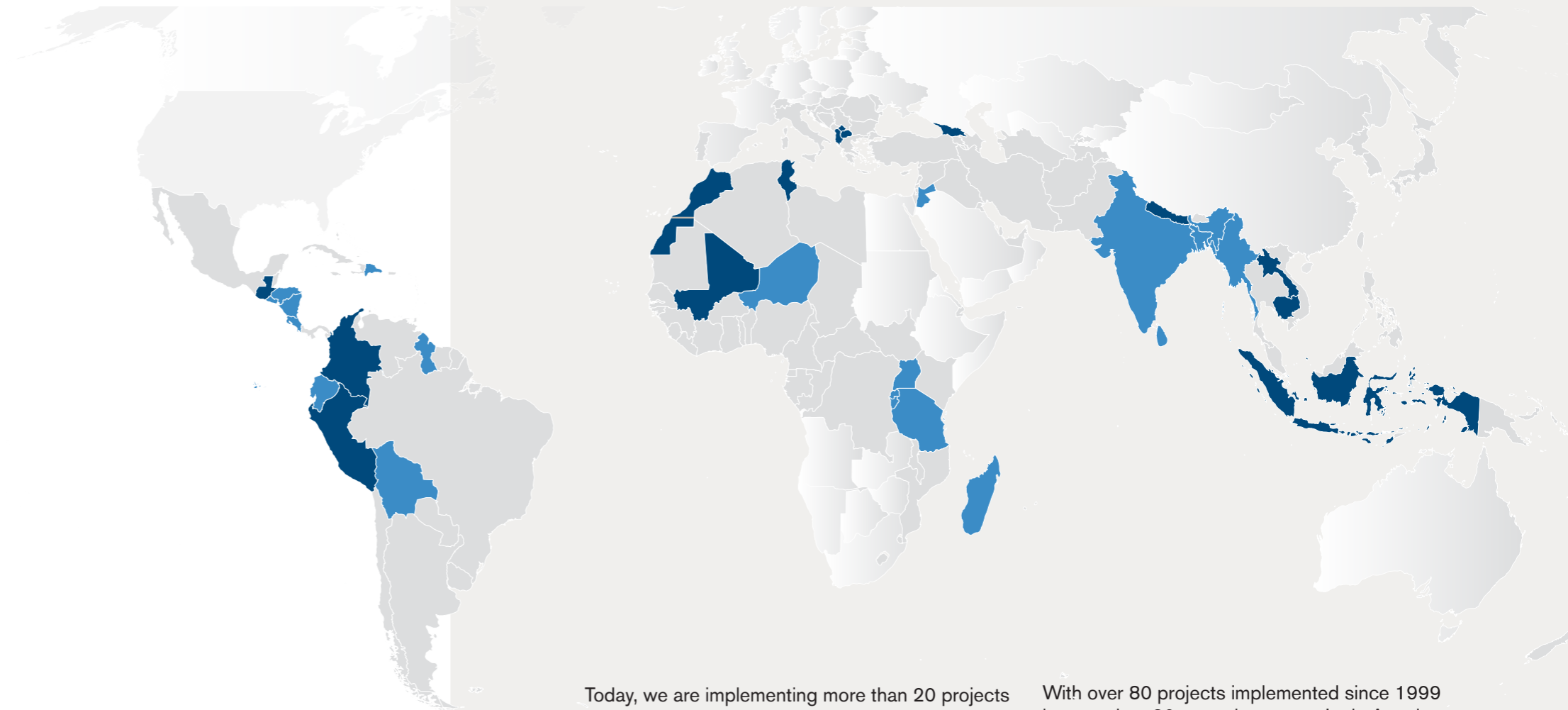
**Over 80 tourism projects and consultancies**  
implemented in 30+ countries

### Active projects in:

- Guatemala
- Colombia
- Peru
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Mali
- Kosovo
- Albania
- North Macedonia
- Georgia
- Nepal
- Lao PDR
- Indonesia
- Cambodia
- Timor Este
- Fiji
- Pacific Island Countries

### Past projects in:

- Honduras
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua
- Ecuador
- Bolivia
- Dominican Republic
- Costa Rica
- Guyana
- Uganda
- Tanzania
- Rwanda
- Burundi
- Madagascar
- Bangladesh
- Vietnam
- Sri Lanka
- India
- Myanmar
- Jordan
- Niger



Today, we are implementing more than 20 projects that strengthen the tourism and hospitality ecosystems by fostering positive development in one or more of the areas: skills, environment, competitiveness, communities, and the enabling environment.

Tourism is not a stand-alone sector. In many projects, we work across various sectors to create opportune, sustainable and resilient living spaces for local communities.

With over 80 projects implemented since 1999 in more than 30 countries across Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe, Swisscontact brings a proven track record in economic development through sustainable tourism. Our global network of local teams and experts ensures a deep understanding of diverse destinations and challenges. We work hand-in-hand with communities, businesses, and governments, combining international best practices with local knowledge.



Photo by Jefri Hanafiah

## How We Work

Tourism is a living system shaped by many actors, places, and activities. We work with the Sustainable Tourism Destination Management (STDM) Methodology, which is based on the St. Gallen Destination Management Model (SGDM). Swisscontact tailored the methodology to the realities of emerging and developing economies and has successfully implemented it in over 15 countries to date.

A key part of our work is mapping how visitors move through destinations and interact with local services, infrastructure, and communities. By understanding these patterns, we can identify both challenges and opportunities. Rather than imposing solutions, we act as facilitators, strengthening collaboration, capacity building and adaptive approaches to ensure that solutions are competitive, inclusive, and sustainable for the long term.

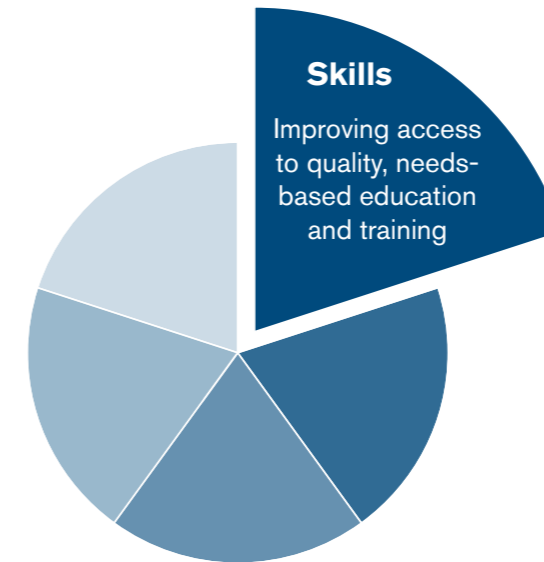


# Tackling Global Challenges

## Creating local solutions - Project experiences



## Skills and Knowledge as a Catalyst



The tourism sector, with its high employment potential and low entry barriers, offers strong opportunities for decent work, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups. Yet many people lack access to the relevant, practical skills needed to benefit from these opportunities and participate in the economy. Swisscontact promotes vocational education models in which the private sector helps design demand-driven, practice-oriented learning pathways. This empowers individuals to enter the labour market as skilled professionals or entrepreneurs, opening new economic opportunities and contributing to social inclusion and reduced unemployment.

 CAMBODIA

### Project Example

Hospitality Kampuchea HoKa project addresses Cambodia's critical skills gap in the hospitality sector. The gap is caused by rapid tourism growth, lack of standardized vocational training, and limited access for disadvantaged youth. HoKa builds a competent workforce and promotes inclusive economic development.

### Video:

Explore the stages of the Hospitality Kampuchea training programme

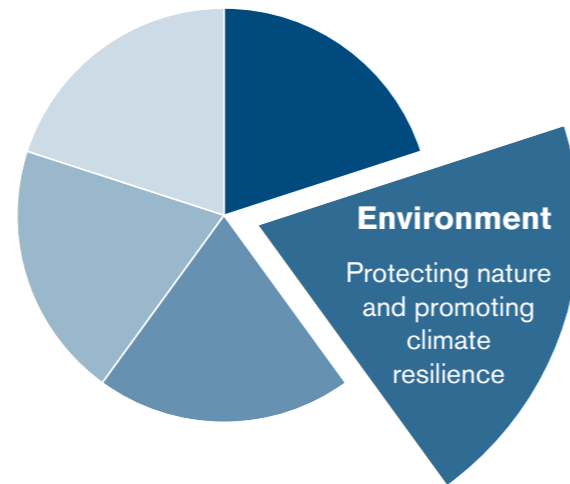


### Key insight:

Through involving the government, training of trainers (ToT), and establishing private sector based consulting services, HoKa is embedded in the local tourism system. This is a requirement for scalability and durability.

## Building Climate Resilience and Environmental Stewardship

Tourism-dependent destinations are increasingly exposed to the impacts of climate change. Exploitative and profit-centric tourism models increase environmental degradation. Yet the sector's agility, innovation potential and the growing demand for responsible travel make it well placed to help address climate and environmental challenges. Many destinations, however, lack the knowledge and experience to respond effectively to these changes. Swisscontact supports climate adaptation, mitigation and environmental protection, promoting regenerative tourism models that help restore the living places of local communities and reduce the sector's ecological footprint.



 PERU

### Project Example

The Green and Resilient Destination Tambopata project supports conservation-based tourism models to build a more resilient tourism ecosystem that enhances competitiveness and increases Indigenous community participation. This is achieved by strengthening sustainable land use, fostering coordinated action between tourism and conservation actors, and improving the availability of reliable data for destination management.

### Key insight:

Tourism in Tambopata depends on healthy forests. Protecting biodiversity is not just conservation, it's the region's core tourism asset. This makes tourism a powerful driver to engage local stakeholders in conservation.

**Video:** Día Internacional del Turismo Programa Destino Tambopata, Perú





ALBANIA, COLOMBIA,  
NORTH MACEDONIA, PERU

**Project Example**

The Swiss Import Programme SIPPO addresses capacity gaps of Business Support Organisations, to help local tourism companies access international markets. SIPPO supports the establishment of system-wide services like market intelligence, digital literacy, sustainability guidance, or marketing interventions to enable export-ready companies to participate in international trade.

**Video:**  
About SIPPO  
Swiss Import Promotion  
Programme



**Boosting International Competitiveness & Reducing Revenue Leakage**

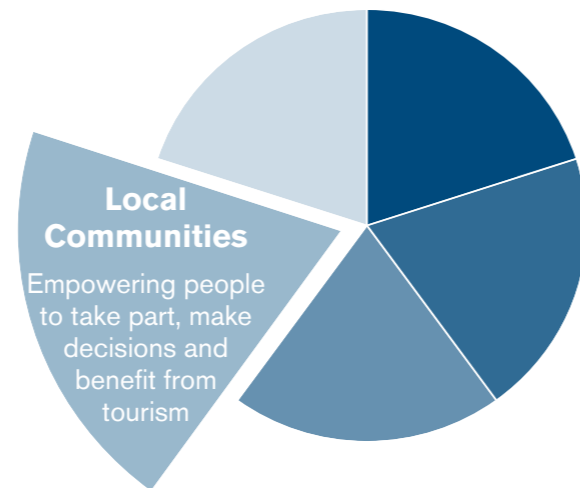
Increasing demand for sustainable and experience-driven tourism creates opportunities for developing countries with rich natural and cultural assets. Yet many destinations struggle to position and compete internationally. Swisscontact strengthens tourism competitiveness by supporting Business Support Organisations, empowering SMEs, improving access to finance, fostering innovation, and increasing digital literacy. We also support destinations in building stronger branding and market linkages to access new international markets more successfully.



**Key insight:**  
The Trade Promotion Academy is the SIPPO e-learning platform for continuous improvement of knowledge around export promotion, market access, or institutional development. It is available for everyone.

## Unlocking Inclusive Potential for Vulnerable Livelihoods

Community participation is essential for sustainable tourism development. Yet many women, youth, migrants, minorities, or Indigenous groups lack the knowledge, networks, and supportive conditions to benefit from the sector. Swisscontact strengthens local capacities by providing practical training, expanding access to networks, and supporting communities in shaping tourism offers that reflect their culture and aspirations. This expands economic opportunities, improves local living conditions, and protects the ecosystem.



📍 NEPAL

### Project Example

DIGO is a sustainable tourism project that promotes inclusiveness and greener practices to benefit local communities and the environment. In rural areas, it enables access to the market for local communities by providing simple, tailored and practical training. The Community Coaching on Sustainability (COCOS) programme equips them with practical tools to plan, develop, and manage tourism independently.



### Key insight:

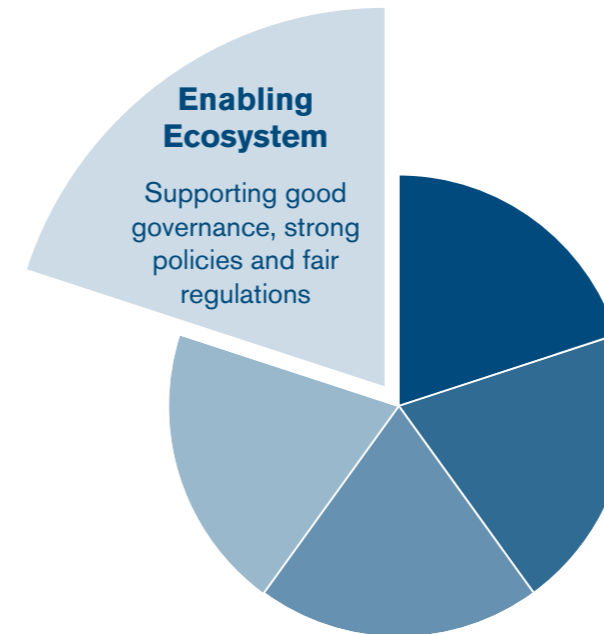
COCOS was developed and successfully implemented in Indonesia between 2018 and 2022, with training institutionalized within local governments. It is now being replicated in Nepal, where it demonstrates strong adaptability and contextualization.

**Video:** Flores Community Coaching, Sustainable Tourism Destination Development in Indonesia





## Strengthening Governance for Systemic Impact



Strong governance is essential for sustainable tourism development. Tourism's multiplier effect creates links across local economies, offering opportunities to improve policies and how destinations are managed. Yet many places lack the coordination and local structures needed to guide the sector well. Swisscontact strengthens tourism governance by bringing public, private, and community actors together and supporting institutional development. Through our Destination Management expertise, we help build local governance models that reflect community priorities and support sustainable development.

 MOROCCO

### Project Example

In the rural Béni Mellal-Khénifra region in Morocco, TDSM II supports good governance at both local and regional level, by supporting the development and implementation of a Regional Tourism Action Plan. The project also strengthens advocacy skills at a national level, and fosters stakeholder collaboration to strengthen the offer and positioning of the destination.



### Video:

Presentation of actions carried out as part of the programme (in french)



### Key insight:

Through advisory and support of local coordination initiatives, the project brings key actors together to jointly plan and manage the destination. Facilitation strengthens local institutions rather than replacing them, ensuring they can continue the work sustainably after the project ends.



# We create opportunities

**Swisscontact**  
**SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

[www.swisscontact.org](http://www.swisscontact.org)

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