





Nature-based tourism offers a powerful pathway for countries to support jobs and other development goals while protecting nature and the ocean. The World Bank Group works with countries to unlock new economic opportunities for local people, communities, and enterprises while elevating the value of countries' natural and cultural heritage.

In regions rich in natural capital but limited in economic opportunity, nature-based tourism can unlock jobs, diversify rural economies, and reduce poverty. Tourism accounts for one in ten jobs globally, and spending on lodging, food, transport, and activities ripples through local economies—supporting supply chains, small businesses, public services as well as biodiversity conservation. Each year, an estimated eight billion visits are made to protected areas, which cover 17 percent of the world's land and eight percent of marine areas. For every dollar governments invest in protected areas and nature-based tourism, the rate of return is at least six times the original investment [World Bank, 2021]. In addition, tourism is a lifeline for Small Island Developing States, generating \$30 billion in annual revenues and sustaining millions of jobs.

The World Bank Group supports countries to sustainably harness their natural and cultural assets to generate jobs, strengthen local economies, and empower communities. To support this effort, the World Bank Group's environmental multi-donor trust funds—PROGREEN, PROBLUE, Global Program on Sustainability (GPS), and Global Wildlife Program (GWP)—help leverage investments in sustainable tourism and jobs, and strengthen the analytical foundation for understanding the economic impacts of nature-based tourism.

Q Dominica

PROGREEN played a catalytic role in shaping the Leveraging Ecotourism for Biodiversity Protection Project by supporting the development of the National Forest Policy and providing targeted guidance on biodiversity finance, tourism demand, and sustainable land use—laying the groundwork for improved protected area management and nature-based tourism.

São Tomé and Príncipe

PROBLUE supported the development of a gender-responsive development plan for the tourism sector, which identified opportunities for vocational training and digital skills to boost women's participation. These insights informed the design of the Coastal Resilience and Sustainable Tourism Project, co-financed by PROBLUE. Complementing this, PROGREEN provides technical assistance and policy support to the same project, advancing sustainable agroforestry, biodiversity conservation, and nature-based tourism.

9 South Africa

The Global Wildlife Program supports the Catalyzing Financing and Capacity for the Biodiversity Economy around Protected Areas Project, which works to enhance the country's stewardship of its rich natural resources, while addressing rural unemployment, inequality, and poverty.

Tunisia

Across the country, tourism contributes over 13% of GDP and supports 350,000 jobs. GPS supports the implementation of ecosystem accounting under the 2035 Sustainable Tourism Strategy. The strategy guides policy and investment decisions to balance economic growth with environmental conservation, supporting the country's stewardship of forests, oases, and ancient sites, while promoting sustainable tourism.

In addition, the World Bank Group's environmental programs jointly supported the development and application of the LEWIE-lite* methodology to measure the local economic impacts of nature-based tourism. A series of country case studies based on this methodology found that every tourist dollar boosts local incomes and revenues, benefiting tourism businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, as well as retail, services, and agriculture.





US\$ 3 million → US\$ 70 million

In Queen Elizabeth National Park, a **US\$3** million investment generated almost **US\$70** million in economic benefits for surrounding communities. Each tourist dollar produced US\$2.03 in local income.



Madagascar US\$ 757

In Nosy Tanikely Marine National Park, a US\$352 thousand investment yielded almost US\$23.2 million in economic benefits. Each tourist dollar generated US\$2.48 in local income.

In both countries, tourism-related jobs employ a higher percentage of women than non-tourism sectors, reinforcing the global trend of tourism as a key job-entry point for women.

* LEWIE-lite: a streamlined version of the Local Economy-Wide Impact Evaluation (LEWIE) methodology

WBG Environment



Nature-Based Tourism at the WBG







