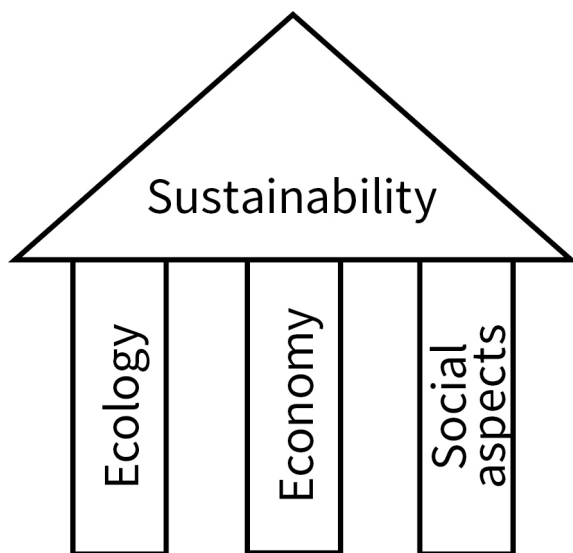


Every journey, regardless of its type, has an impact. In recent years, the negative effects of travel, such as mass tourism, increased CO₂ emissions, and the destruction of natural habitats, have become more apparent.

So, how can we combine travel and sustainability to minimize the negative impacts while enhancing the positive aspects of travel? The three-pillar model of sustainability is an effective way to explore the key components of sustainability.



The foundation of this model is the notion that environmental, economic, and social objectives must all be implemented equally and concurrently in order to achieve sustainable development.

The three aspects are mutually dependent. These three dimensions of sustainability are:

- **Environmental sustainability:** This is closely related to the original idea of not overusing nature. An environmentally sustainable way of life uses natural resources only to the extent that they can regenerate. It is about ensuring that we do not exhaust the earth's resources, so they remain available for future generations.
- **Economic sustainability:** This means that

society should live within its economic means, avoiding overspending or exploiting resources in a way that leads to long-term harm. An economic system is sustainable when it can continue to function effectively in the long term without causing irreversible damage. For example, this includes maintaining economic prosperity in the country of production, ensuring businesses follow long-term strategies instead of focusing solely on short-term profits.

- **Social sustainability:** A society should be organized in a way that minimizes social tensions and avoids conflicts escalating. Social sustainability ensures that conflicts are resolved in a peaceful and civil manner, allowing for a fair and just society where everyone's needs are met.

Sustainable management, therefore, is about making sure that we leave future generations an intact ecological, economic, and social structure that will allow them to thrive just as we do.

Give up travelling, limit it, or rethink?

Tourism is not just an enjoyable pastime and an important part of the economy, but it also has an impact on the environment and climate. People who care about living sustainably take this into account when planning their travels. Factors such as travel distance, the type of transport, and the choice of accommodation all significantly determine the 'travel-related carbon footprint'.

The WWF offers more information on the topic of travel-related carbon footprint at the following link: www.wwf.at/artikel/reise-klima-fussabdruck

Many ideas, projects, and models aim to promote conscious and responsible travel. However, as Hernán J. Martin states in his online report: "The

concepts of travel and sustainability will always conflict and can't be fully balanced."

He also believes that all travellers have the power to influence the direction of their travel choices. After all, supply and demand reflect the market. The greater the demand for socially and environmentally responsible travel, the more likely it is that providers will respond.

But what can you do to make your own travel more sustainable? Here are some ideas and tips:

- Consciously and critically choose your destination.
 - ⇒ For example, prefer destinations that are closer.
- Make a conscious decision about your means of transportation to get there.
 - ⇒ Try to avoid or reduce air travel and instead opt for eco-friendly alternatives or carpooling.
- Choose local transport carefully – once at your destination, use environmentally friendly transport options.
- Be mindful when selecting accommodation – choose places with low water consumption, those with environmental certifications, or ones that are easily accessible by public transport.
- Adapt your behaviour at your destination and respect locals and nature.
 - ⇒ For example, instead of buying single-use bottles, bring a reusable water bottle to avoid contributing to the waste problem.
 - ⇒ Choose small local restaurants with limited menus instead of large buffets, where food waste is more likely.
- Pay a fair price – if something seems too cheap, it could be a red flag. Often, the workers, the environment, or the local population pay the price.

Sources and further information

- What is meant by sustainable travel:
<https://instituteofsustainabilitystudies.com/insights/lexicon/what-is-meant-by-sustainable-travel>
- Eco-Friendly Travel:
<https://earth.org/eco-friendly-travel-exploring-sustainable-tourism>
- Travel Tips:
www.worldwildlife.org/pages/responsible-travel-tips
www.bbc.com/storyworks/travel/fit-for-purpose/sustainable-travel
- Thoughtful Travel is a series on the ways people behave while away, from ethics to etiquette and more:
www.bbc.com/travel/tags/thoughtful-travel
 e.g.
www.bbc.com/travel/article/20250509-8-ways-to-travel-more-sustainably-in-2025
www.bbc.com/travel/article/20250217-is-it-time-to-change-how-we-buy-travel-souvenirs
- The Wanderlust magazine shares tips and ideas on how to travel more responsibly:
www.wanderlustmagazine.com/inspiration/sustainable-travel

Notes