

Academic Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



What does the net-zero transition mean for tourism?

The impacts of climate change on tourism were highly visible this summer. Over 130 countries have set net-zero emission targets to avoid dangerous climate change. Climate solutions also have important implications, and the net-zero transition will transform global tourism. In this study [Daniel Scott](#) and [Stefan Gössling](#) examine what the International Energy Agency's net-zero 2050 roadmap would mean for tourism.

Destination net-zero: what does the International Energy Agency 2050 roadmap mean for the future of tourism?

Dr Daniel Scott

The landmark Paris Climate Agreement represents the commitment of the international community to avoid the most dangerous consequences of climate change by limiting global warming to 'well below +2°C'. To achieve this, global emissions must reach net-zero (NZ) by 2050. Although over 130 countries and the tourism sector have committed to NZ targets, research on the transition risk to a NZ economy is virtually absent in the tourism literature. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has developed the most detailed global roadmap to NZ and provides important insights into largely unrecognized transition risks for tourism. Achieving NZ would require tourism to reinvent itself at both global and destination scales, requiring new cross-sector and internationally co-operative policy innovation and massive investment in infrastructure and technology deployment. The broad incoherence of tourism and climate policy represents an increasing vulnerability for future tourism development. A suite of indicators selected to represent key IEA recommendations was used to compare the transition risk for the tourism sector.



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The societal net-zero transition compels a critical and urgent new research agenda for tourism scholars to develop a vision of tourism in a decarbonized global economy in mid-century.
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The geography of transition risk will influence tourism patterns unevenly. The lowest transition risk was found in countries in Europe, North America, and China, while the highest risk was largely concentrated in Small Island Developing States. The climate justice implications are inescapable. While the NZ transition will be disruptive for some tourism businesses and destinations, the impacts absolutely pale in comparison to those associated with high emission futures. The definitive call for urgent climate action in the tourism sector compels a new research, policy, and planning agenda to support a just NZ transition.

Further Reading:

Scott, D. & Gössling, S. (2022). Destination net-zero: what does the international energy agency roadmap mean for tourism? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.

Link: bit.ly/3RdZj4v