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Towards a paradigm shift in tourism for sustainable development

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World Heritage Catalysis

<https://www.whcatalysis.org>

Presenter



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ICOMOS
ICOMOS Norway (Board member)
ICOMOS ICTC (Bureau member)
ICOMOS SDG WG

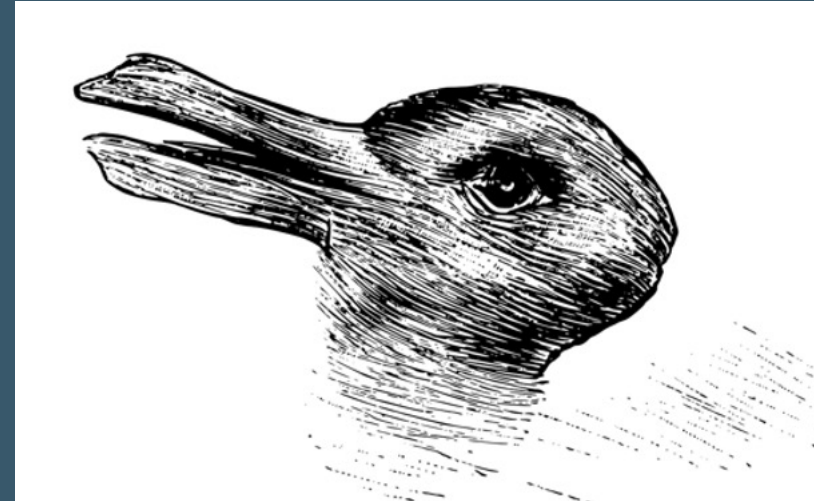
Presentation overview

1. Tourism in the current development paradigm
2. Why we need a paradigm shift
3. The transformation challenge (emerging ToC)
4. Discussion

Paradigm & paradigm shifts

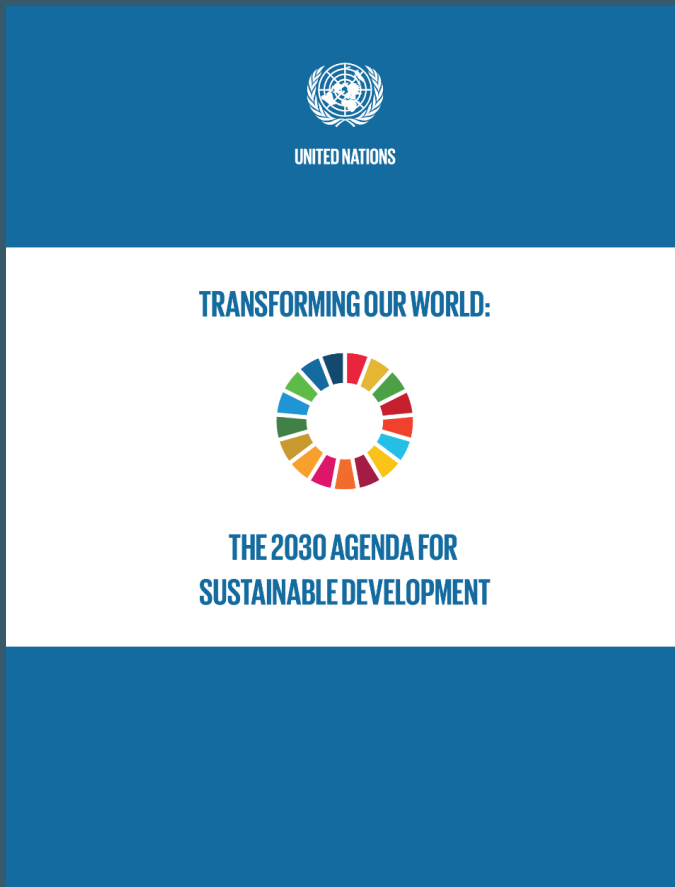
A **paradigm** is a set of overarching assumptions underpinning a general worldview. It is a framework that shapes the way people perceive the reality, consider knowledge and influence practice.

Paradigm encompasses ontology, epistemology and methodology
(worldview, knowledge, practice)



A **paradigm shift** is a major change in the worldview, concepts, and practice's of how something works or is accomplished.

Agenda 2030 as a development paradigm



<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics/economic-contribution-SDG>

Economic growth underpinning the Agenda



Target 8.1

Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries

Indicator 8.1.1

Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

Target 8.9

By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

Indicator 8.9.1

Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate

UNESCO World Heritage



2023: 168 States Parties, 1199 World Heritage sites (933 cultural, 227 natural, 39 mixed)

Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention (Adopted by GA 2015)

26. World Heritage properties are important travel destinations that, if managed properly, have great potential for inclusive local economic development, sustainability and strengthening social resilience. Sustainable forms of tourism development, including community-based initiatives, should be accompanied by inclusive and equitable economic investment to ensure benefit sharing in and around World Heritage properties¹⁹.

Paradigm shift in implementation of the 1972 Convention from protection and preservation to also encompass contribution to sustainable development.

Heritage & Agenda 2030

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
	Target 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

Target 11.4

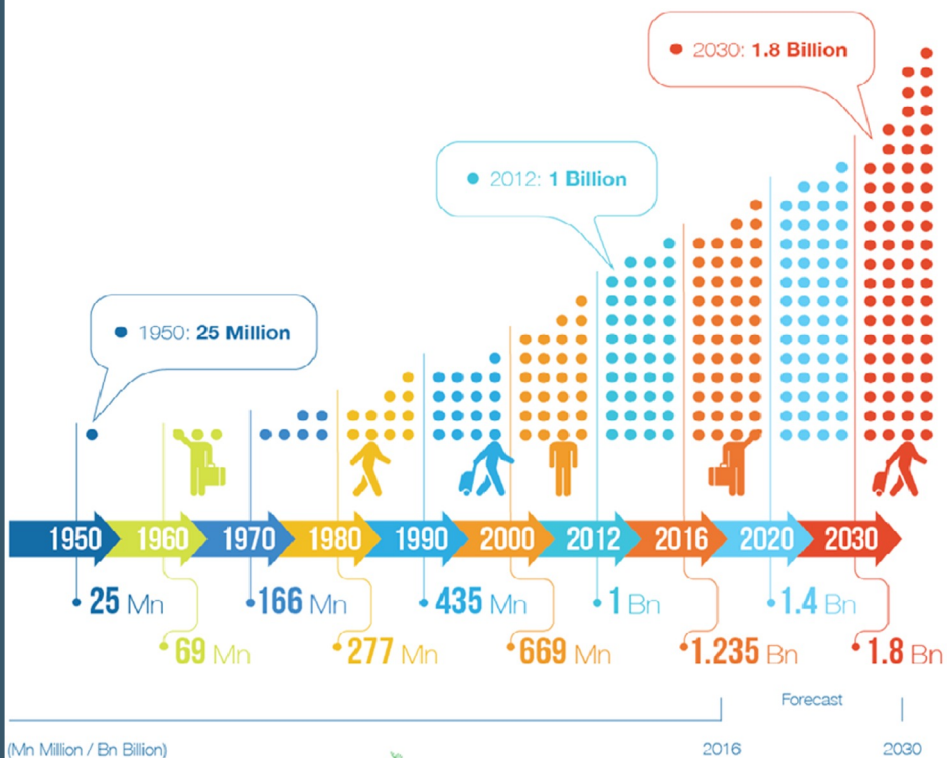
Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

Indicator 11.4.1

Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal).

The growth predicament

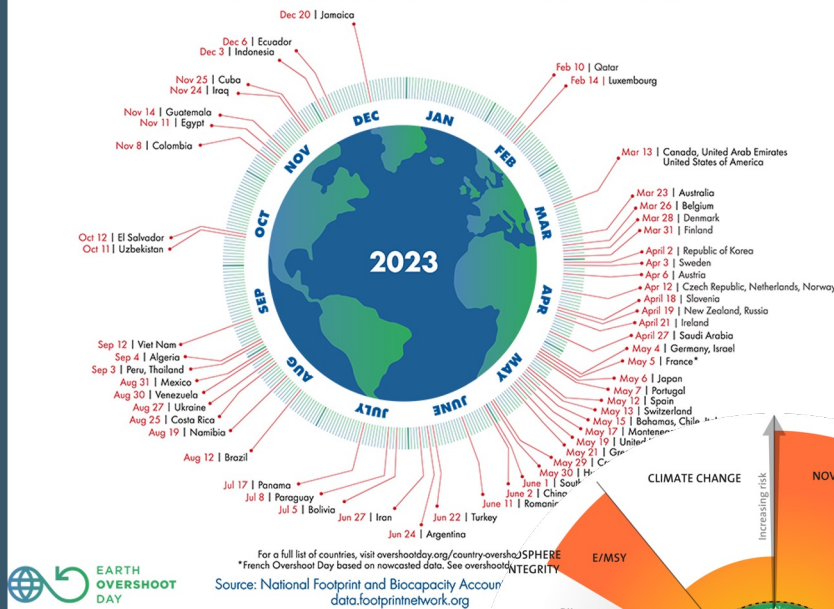
INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS 1950 - 2030



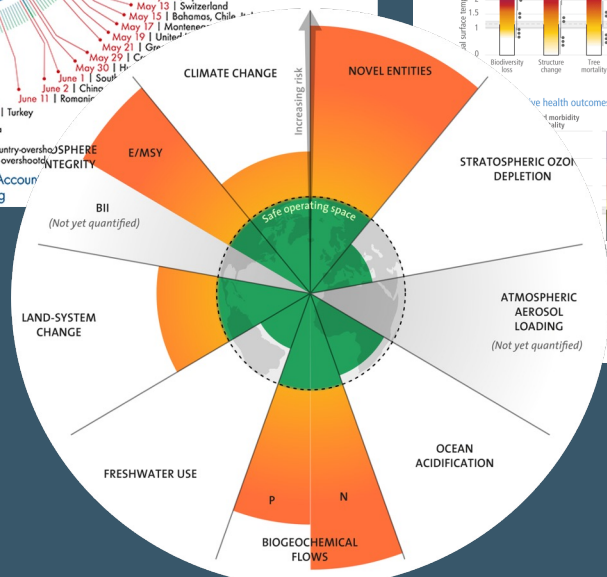
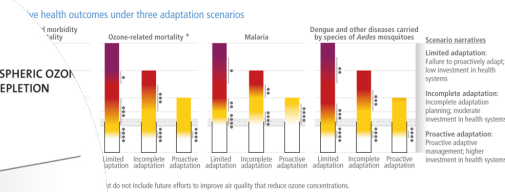
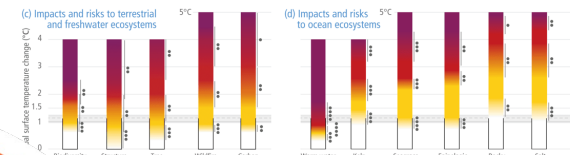
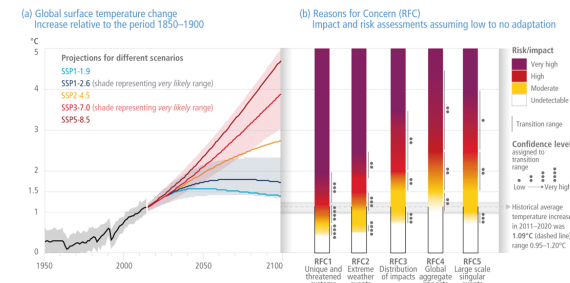
Source: © Highlights 2017 - World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), July 2017

Country Overshoot Days 2023

When would Earth Overshoot Day land if the world's population lived like...



Global and regional risks for increasing levels of global warming



<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/figures/summary-for-policymakers>
<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

An agenda off track



In 2023 of the roughly 140 targets:

12% are on track

> 50% are moderately or severely off track

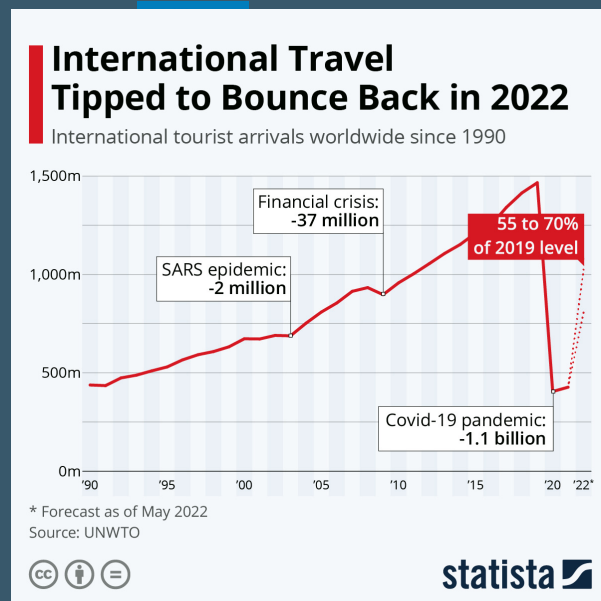
> 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.



Recovery & resilience

Sustainable and resilient tourism will be key to post-COVID-19 recovery, as tourism is a powerful driver of sustainable development, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Sustainable and resilient tourism should be in harmony with the environment, promote the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage, protect livelihoods and benefit local communities.

UNESCO Culture Sector



End of July 2023, international tourist arrivals reached 84% of pre-pandemic levels.

700 million tourists travelled internationally between January and July 2023, 43% more than in the same months of 2022.

<https://www.e-unwto.org/loi/wtobarometereng>
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism/>
Culture Sector Knowledge Management info_sheet_sustainable_tourism

Great! or, hold on.....

What what did we learn from the pandemic?

Did anything change?

*You say, we need to strengthen the resilience of
the tourism sector, but....*

Calls for transformative change

ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism (2022)

*There is a need and opportunity to **recalibrate the perpetual economic growth-based approach to tourism**, recognizing and mitigating its unsustainable aspects".*

*Climate change is calling for a **transformational and regenerative approach** to cultural tourism where the priorities focus on building resilient and adaptive communities and heritage places.*

*The Charter aims to align the work of cultural heritage and tourism stakeholders in the **pursuit of positive transformative change**, offering principles for regenerative tourism destination management that is conscious of heritage values, as well as their vulnerability and potential.*

7 principles.



ICOMOS
international cultural tourism committee

ICOMOS Resolution 21GA 2023/16 Cultural Dimensions of the SDGs

Noting thateconomic growth is a key indicator of development which has the potential to exacerbate the exploitation (privatization, commercialization and monetization) of nature and culture globally;

*Conscious of the need for heritage and development actors to identify the significance and **transformative potential of culture** in sustainable development beyond the designated SDG Target 11.4....;*

*Acknowledging **the need to go beyond the current discourse of 'sustainability'** and apply a systems approach **supporting generative and restorative economic activities** that strengthen integrated social, cultural and environmental systems that can be sustained and enhanced;*

Change vs transformation



Incremental change

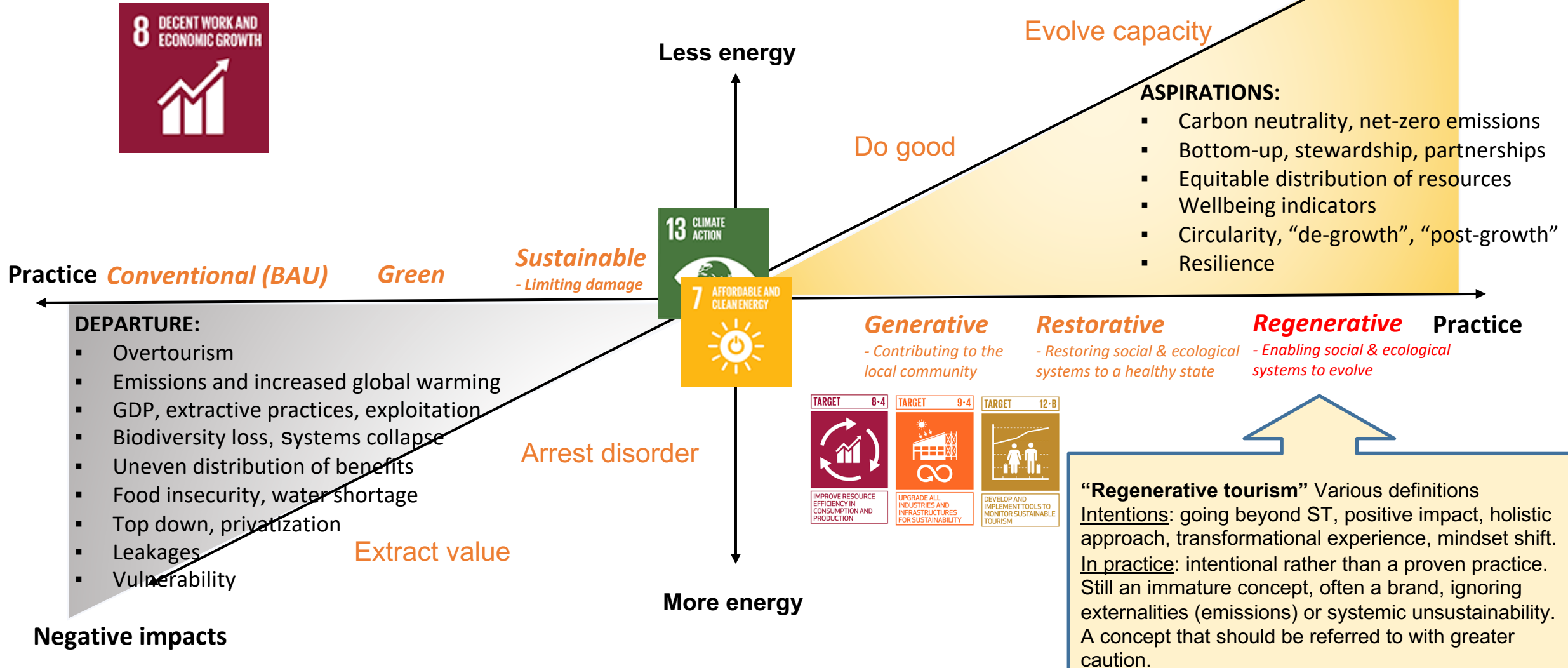
- gradual and ongoing improvements to systems and practices

Transformative change

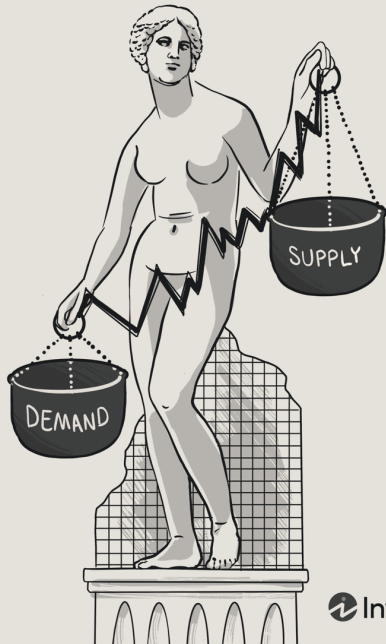
- system wide reorientation.
- a fundamental shift in the way society governs itself.
- new logics for new systems

EMERGING PARADIGMS UNDER AGENDA 2030

PROGRESS & SOLUTIONS ORIENTATION



Blindspot to underpinning systems & assumptions



Neoclassical Economics

[nē-ō-'kla-si-kəl, e-kə-'nä-miks]

A broad theory that focuses on supply and demand as the driving forces behind the production, pricing, and consumption of goods and services.

 Investopedia

The predominant economic paradigm

- Individual's purpose is to maximize utility
- Company's purpose is to maximize profits.
- Rational actors with fixed preferences, acting independently on perfect information
- Efficient allocation of scarce resources

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Determining how we **relate and govern** (people and nature):

transactional relationships, 'natural and cultural resources, 'heritage properties',

Blindspot to the economy

(currently a fundamental unsustainable social construct)

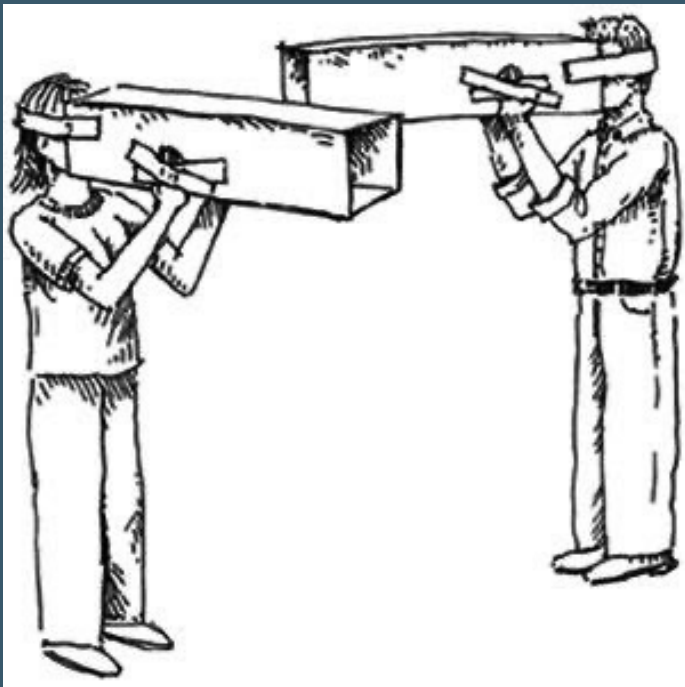


© Ann Kiernan
<https://www.ft.com>

- ! Growth is exponential (not linear)
- ! Fiat money holds no intrinsic value but is issued as interest bearing debt and backed by trust
- ! Global debt (currently \$307 trillion) is increasing and can never be paid off
- ! Servicing of this debt and economic growth require continuous extraction of natural, cultural and human resources

> The “sustainable development” agenda will remain extractive unless we reconsider SDG8, reform the financial & monetary system, and support the emergence of new forms of socio-economic relationships and organisation.

Strategic blind spots



© Unknown

Areas in which a person or organisation **lacks understanding or insight**, potentially leading to flawed decision making.

Examples:

Tourism professionals < heritage protection

Heritage professionals < economics

Neoclassical economist < heterodox finance innovation

Co-fi innovators < tourism and heritage protection

Blindspot to different futures

The future does not exist!

It is created in our imagination, and how we anticipate it matters because it changes the present.

Futures illiteracy - lack of knowledge and skills to image the future in a meaningful way

Human
Agency vs
Complexity

Futures Illiteracy generates:

- Fear of uncertainty
- Bias to seeking path dependency
- Fetishism of immortality
- Pre-occupation with endogenous continuous improvement – reform
- False sense of temporality of change
- Seeking permission to not plan or prepare, inhibits the imagination

THE TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Relating to an uncertain future

Planning & management:

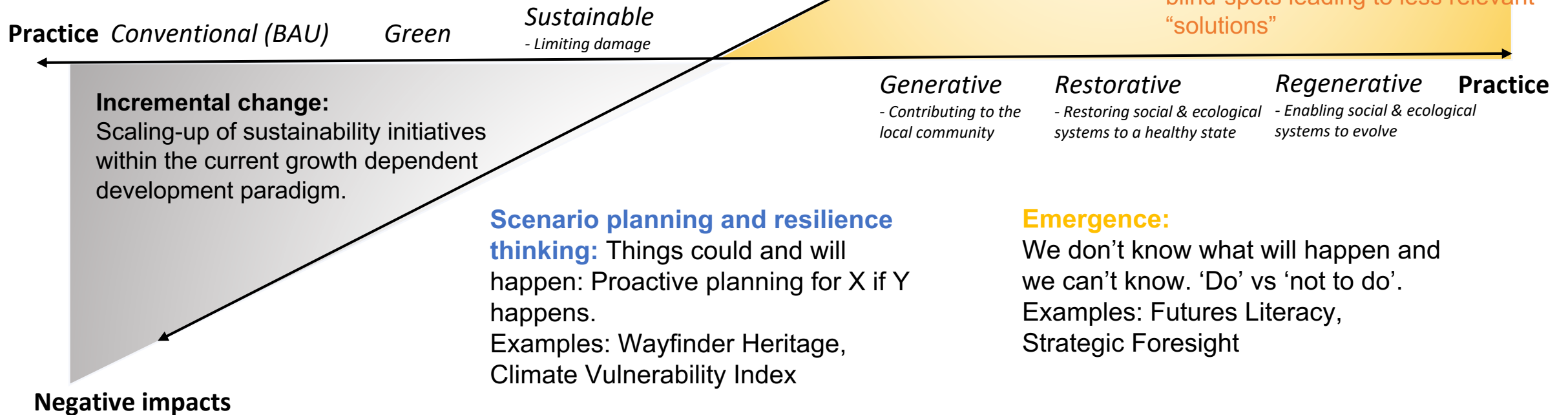
risk assessment, probability, predictabilities:
Protect, preserve & control. Rules and “best practice”.
Reproduction and justifying power structures.
Example: Operational Guidelines, Impact Assessments

Positive impacts

Innovation risks:

- perpetuating old patterns and carrying forward systemic flaws of the old paradigm
- blind-spots leading to less relevant “solutions”

Ontological barrier



World Heritage Catalysis



*An emerging community of practice applying **strategic and transformative approaches** in tourism destination and visitor management aiming to **protect natural and cultural heritage** while **building adaptive, resilient, and peaceful communities.***

Tourism as a transformational pathway

Tourism as a transformational pathway needs to decouple the host-visitor relationship from the exploitative and extractive economy and instead support non-exploitative reciprocal exchanges.

The term 'circular economy' is typically understood to refer to material flows, with less attention given to finance.

However, without a flow of payments in the opposite direction to materials, a circular economy cannot become self-sustaining, making investment less attractive.

Credit Commons Society 2022

WHCatalysis hypothesis:

Tourism products and services can either be:

Generative by creating new products and services that contribute to the wellbeing and sustainability of the local community, and/or

Restorative by helping to maintain and strengthen ecosystems

Generative/Restorative tourism products/services in a **circular economy involving both resource and financial circularity** may (possibly) contribute towards a **regenerative development paradigm**.

Leverage points

To realise the transformative potential of World Heritage sites through **strategic visitor management** (framed by **VMAST**), **circular economics** (supported by **WHETS**) and **collaborative governance** (enabled by **WHAO**)

VMAST

UNESCO's Visitor Management Assessment & Strategy Tool

A tool helping site management authorities assess and improve visitor management for heritage protection and localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

> Improving practice

Silo >
Complex, strategic, adaptive

WHETS

World Heritage Exchange Trading Systems

Building a commons economy through mutual credit systems.

> Improving provisioning

Linear >
Circular

WHAO

World Heritage Autonomous Organisation

Applying sociocracy and web-3 technology to support participatory and polycentric governance.

> Improving governance

Top down, exclusive >
Collaborative, distributed

THE TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE CHALLENGE

WHCatalysis emerging approach

VMAS

Exposing complexity and opportunities

WHTF

Unlocking potential for transformational practice

Positive impacts

- Heritage governed as commons
- Circular economy: resource & (non-extractive) financial circularity

Practice *Conventional (BAU)*

Green

Sustainable
- Limiting damage



Generative
- Contributing to the local community

Restorative
- Restoring social & ecological systems to a healthy state

Regenerative
- Enabling social & ecological systems to evolve

Practice

- Natural and cultural heritage governed as resources
- Neo-classical linear, growth based economy where money is issued as debt

Negative impacts

WHETS

Building a non-extractive commons economy through collaborative finance
Funding the commons

WHAO

Commons governance
Decentralised & participatory governance

Futures Literacy > Strategic foresight



Miller, R. (Ed.). (2018). Transforming the Future: Anticipation in the 21st Century (1st ed.). Routledge.

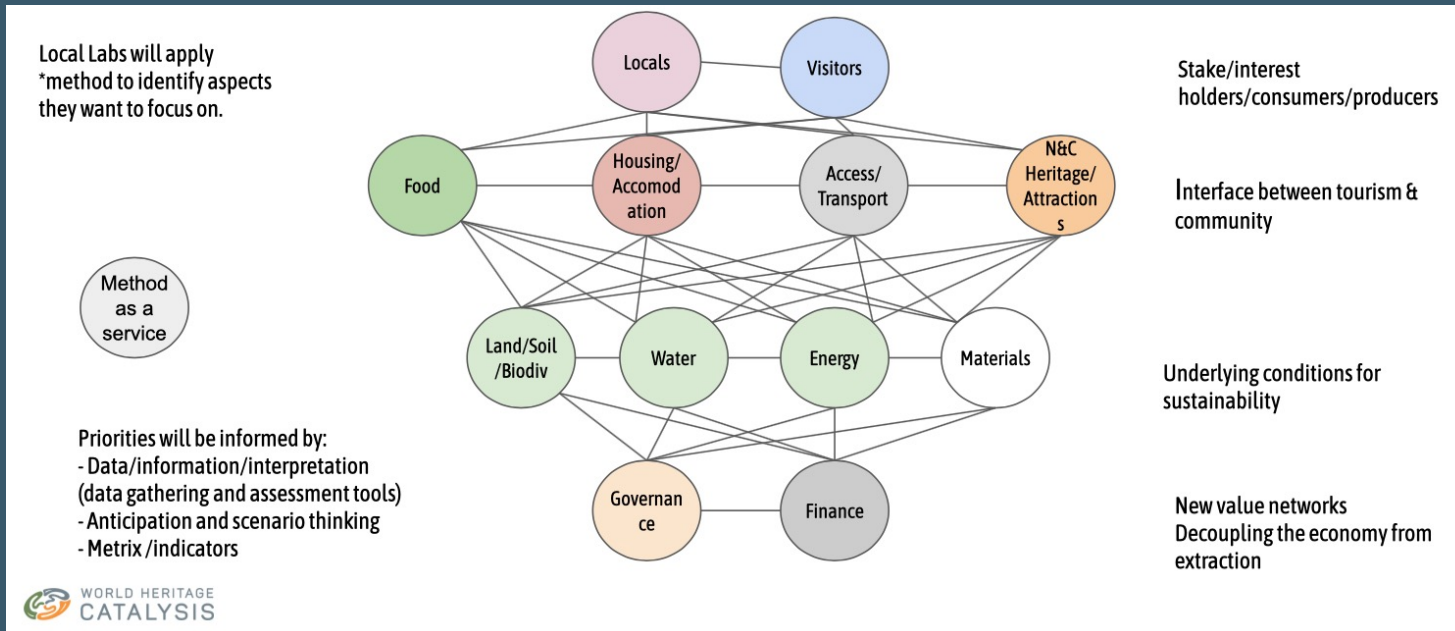
- ❖ crucial for making informed decisions and understand the potential impact of present actions on the future.
- ❖ **anticipation** as a skill, capacity and practice
- ❖ liberating imagination from constraints from ideas of likely or desired futures seriously flawed by past experience and what we think we know.

“Solutions” → Emergence

<https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-literacy>
https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight_en

World Heritage Tourism Futures (WHTF) Labs

Inviting community stakeholders to apply anticipation in strategic processes.



APPROACH:

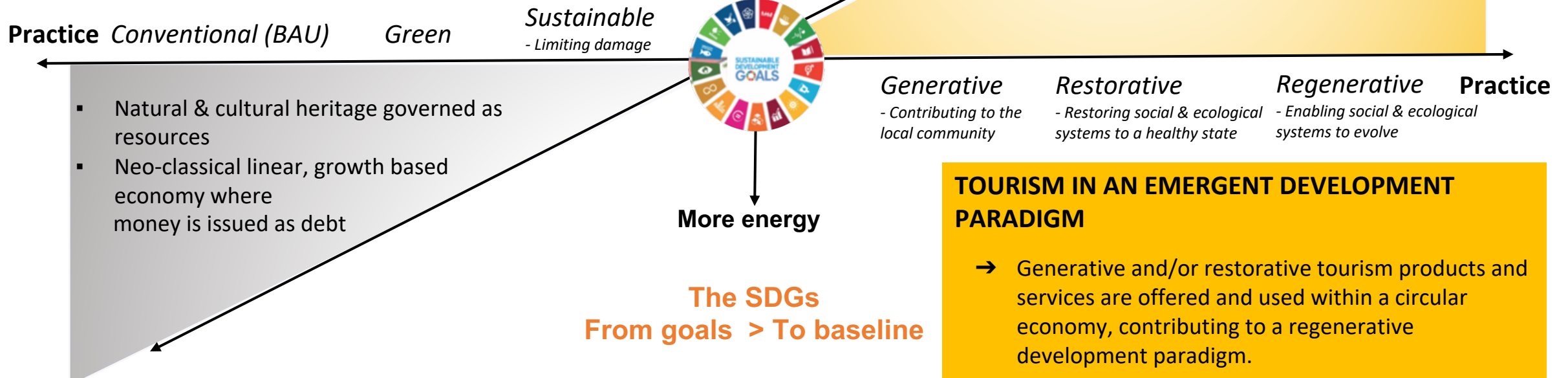
- Probable futures
- Preferred futures
- **Reframed futures**

by removing building blocks typically used to imagine the future.

WHCatalysis emerging approach to supporting a PARADIGM SHIFT IN TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM IN THE EXTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

→ Tourism developed and managed to support perpetual economic growth (GDP) causes enclosures, privatisation and commercialisation with increasing tourism dependency and community vulnerability.



The SDGs
From goals > To baseline

TOURISM IN AN EMERGENT DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

→ Generative and/or restorative tourism products and services are offered and used within a circular economy, contributing to a regenerative development paradigm.

Negative impacts

Positive impacts

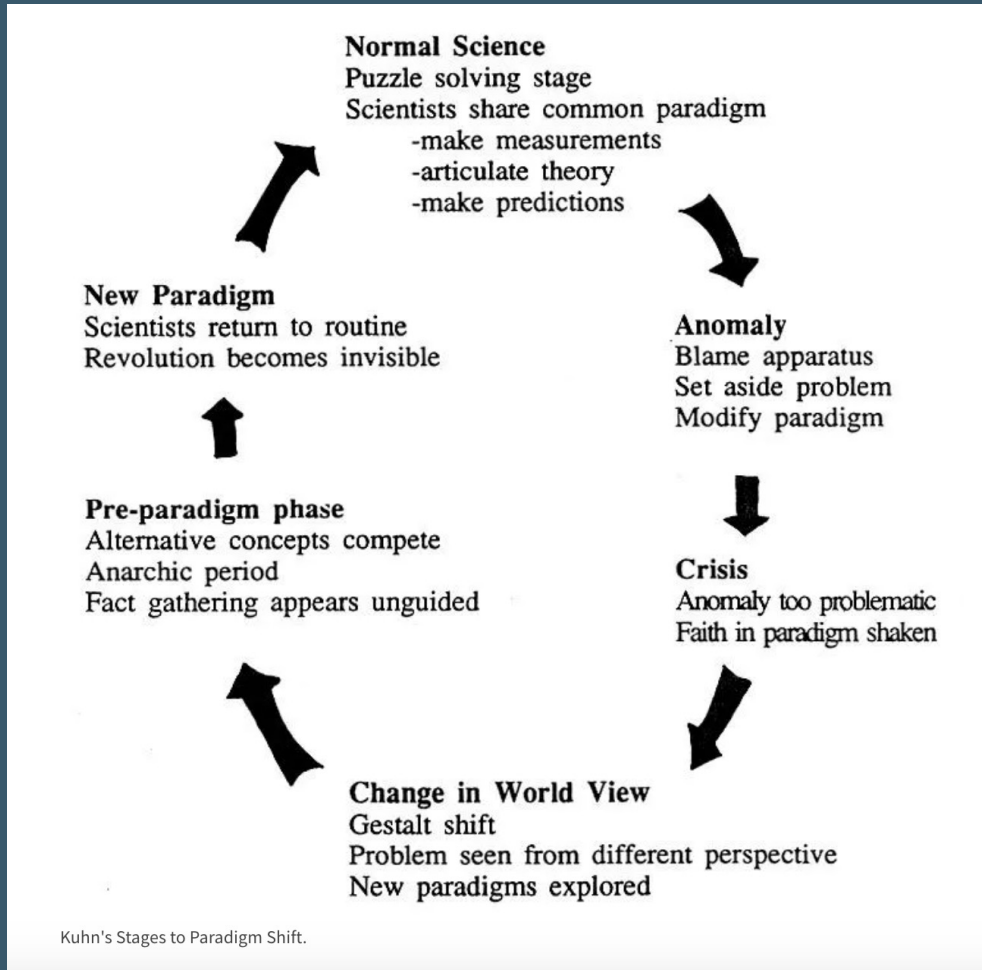
VMAS

WHTF

WHETS

WHAO

Engaging with the emergence



How does the presentation resonate / challenge you?

Where are you/we according to Kuhns stages?

Let's discuss! 😊

THANK YOU!

Cecilie Smith-Christensen

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<https://www.whcatalysis.org>

<https://www.vmast.net>