

Global tourism vulnerable to climate change

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Climate change will have widespread consequences on the future of tourism, a new study from the University of Waterloo has found.

Researchers identified the highest levels of [climate](#) change vulnerability in regions where [tourism](#) growth is expected to be the strongest, and

often coincides with countries that invest most heavily in their tourism sector.

"Our research provides new insight into the geography of climate change risk to the global tourism economy and what that means for [economic development](#) in countries that depend on tourism," said Daniel Scott, a professor at Waterloo's Faculty of Environment, and executive director of the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change (IC3). "The greatest risk exists in many developing countries, particularly small island states where tourism is also the largest sector of the national economy and the largest employer."

Scott collaborated with a research team from Linnaeus University, in Sweden, to develop a Climate Change Vulnerability Index for Tourism (CVIT), which provides a systematic analysis of the vulnerability of the tourism sector in relation to 181 countries.

Vulnerability hotspots are found in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and small island developing states (SIDS) in the Caribbean, as well as Indian and Pacific Oceans. Countries with the lowest CVIT scores are found in western and northern Europe, central Asia, as well as Canada and New Zealand.

"These climate change risks are not well understood and are not being considered for national climate change strategies or tourism development plans, and that urgently needs to change if tourism is to be a part of the new climate economy of the future," said Scott. "Without responses from the [global community](#), [climate change](#) will pose a growing headwind against tourism development, compromising tourism competitiveness and its ability to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals in many countries."

The World Travel & Tourism Council's announcement earlier this week

at the Travel and Tourism Climate Action Forum of their ambition for the global tourism industry to be climate neutral by 2050 and to work with the United Nations, governments, and traveler to prioritize the Sustainable Development Goals is an important step forward.

Scott's study appears in the *Annals of Tourism Research*.

More information: Daniel Scott et al. Global tourism vulnerability to climate change, *Annals of Tourism Research* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2019.05.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.05.007)

Provided by University of Waterloo

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