



Meaningful Tourism – An Introduction

Meaningful Tourism

The Meaningful Tourism paradigm defines six main stakeholders in tourism and hospitality.

All six need to receive *objective* benefits and *subjective* satisfaction from tourism and hospitality activities to support the sustainable development of destinations, companies and organisations, to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to successfully perform transformative processes within a fast-changing world.

Stakeholders of Meaningful Tourism

The six Stakeholders of Meaningful Tourism:

1. Visitors/Guests
2. Host Community
3. Tourism Employees (including tourism, hospitality, transport, retail, attractions)
4. Tourism and Hospitality Service providing companies
5. Governments on different levels
6. Environment (Local and Global)

Meaningful Tourism approach

- Meaningful Tourism is a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development, which includes all key stakeholders. It involves aligning benefits and satisfaction with measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for continuous improvement.
- The Meaningful Tourism approach includes sustainable practices along the whole production chain, from financing and hotel construction to waste management.
- Meaningful Tourism is based on principles of Positive Psychology, creating both meaningful rational behaviour as well as emotional Wellbeing.

Meaningful Tourism Tools

Meaningful Tourism offers:

- A tool to **analyse** and understand the situation of a destination / company
- A tool to mitigate contradictions between stakeholders and **align** interests
- A tool to develop a holistic sustainable development **strategy**
- A tool to develop SMART KPIs to **monitor** progress
- A tool to **compare** destinations / company in an Meaningful Tourism index
- A tool to support integrate the Meaningful Tourism paradigm into academic and vocational **education** in the form of trainings, university programs, etc.
- A tool to support public tourism **discourse** by providing transparent meaningful SMART KPI measurements

Meaningful Tourism Development

The development of Meaningful Tourism paradigm is a result of

- the limits of tourism **growth** reached end of 2010s decade (Overtourism, Flygsham)
- the **pandemic** of the early 2020s (mobility as a threat)
- the increasingly dramatic results of **climate change** 2025ff (for tourism: end of skiing, end of beach holidays, tourism moving indoors, less leisure tourists)
- the switch of the image of tourism from provider of **joy** and peace to source of unnecessary **pollution** since 2018
- the lack of **staff** and decrease of number of tourism students post-pandemic
- The return of governments/industry to **arrival numbers** as main KPI post-pandemic
- The proliferation of **partial solutions** (EVs, tourism tax, de-marketing)

Meaningful Tourism 2021 - 2025

Steps of Meaningful Tourism development

- 2021 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt
- 2022 Start of annual Meaningful Tourism Awards (Singapore, Doha, Kathmandu)
- 2022/23 Publication of chapters *Meaningful Tourism* in Buhalis (ed): *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*, and in Morrison/Buhalis (eds): *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism*
- 2023 Publication of Arlt (ed.): *Meaningful Tourism Index 2023*, Arlt (ed): *Best Practice Examples for a Sustainable Tourism Future* and *Meaningful Tourism Weekly*
- 2024 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre Ltd. (UK), HQ in Kathmandu
- 2024 Start of Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshops
- 2025 PATA approves new Vision Statement: *Meaningful Pacific-Asia Tourism Economy*
- 2025 Meaningful Tourism Forum at GITF 2025 in Guangzhou, Motto of GITF 2025: *Meaningful Tourism – Enduring Connections*
- 2025 Publication of *Meaningful Tourism Weekly*, several articles in *Bali Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture*

Meaningful Tourism, not Travel

Meaningful Tourism is not Meaningful Travel, as the latter concentrates on the experience of the travellers only.

Meaningful Tourism is not concentrating only on higher yields, as the number of affluent travellers is limited and solutions have to be found for the whole industry, not just for the rich or for the environmentally conscious travellers.

Meaningful Tourism includes non-leisure travel for Business Travel, MICE, Visiting Friends and Relatives, Health and Wellness tourism, Education, etc.

Meaningful Tourism is necessary

Meaningfulness as a concept of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing is open for different cultural interpretations based on the common understanding of activities beneficial for oneself, for others and for the future of mankind.

Adopting Meaningful Tourism as a strategy is not a “nice-to-have” issue, but necessary for most destinations and service providers to proactively react in a Schumpeter sense of Creative Destruction to the effects of changed customer demands, technological development and climate change to survive.



About Meaningful Tourism Centre

The MTC Meaningful Tourism Centre is a non-profit organization based in London, with its headquarters in Kathmandu and partners and trainers around the world. MTC focuses on two main areas: Meaningful Tourism as a practical tool for a holistic sustainable tourism development, and China's outbound tourism, the focus of COTRI China Outbound Tourism Research Institute since more than 20 years.

MTC provides research, training, and consulting services for both topics to companies, organizations and institutions globally. Its founder and director, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt, has extensive experience in international tourism and has been involved in the field for nearly five decades as a consultant, trainer, publisher, event organizer and university professor.



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt
Founder and Director MTC

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt FRGS FRAS



- Born 1957 in West-Berlin, M.A. and PhD FU Berlin, studies in Taiwan and Hong Kong
- First visit to People's Republic of China in 1978, first FIT travel in China 1981
- 1991-1999 owner of Inbound Tour Operator China -> Europe
- Since 2004 Founder and CEO COTRI China Outbound Tourism Research Institute
- Since 2021 Founder and Executive Director Meaningful Tourism Centre
- 2002 – 2020 Professor for International Tourism Management at German Universities
- 2007 – 2019 Visiting professor at universities in China, United Kingdom and New Zealand
- Since 2003 Research Fellow Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (Tokyo)
- 2003 Research project Sustainable Tourism Development in Japan (Tsukuba)
- 2009 Research project Future of China's outbound tourism in times of Climate Change (Oxford)
- Since 2012 Fellow Royal Geographical Society (London)
- Since 2015 Fellow Royal Asiatic Society (London)
- Since 2015 Member of UN Tourism (formerly: UNWTO) Expert Panel (Madrid)
- Since 2015 Member of Expert Committee of WTCF World Tourism Cities Federation (Beijing)
- Since 2017 VP Western Europe (2024: South Asia) ITSA International Tourism Studies Association (London)
- Since 2017 Fellow of International Association of China Tourism Studies (Guangzhou)
- Since 2022 VP EU China Commission (Brussels)
- 2022 First-level signatory of Responsible Tourism Magna Carta (London)
- Since 2024 Living in Kathmandu/Nepal

The Holistic Strength of Meaningful Tourism

Positive & Holistic

Focuses on co-creating benefits rather than just reducing negatives.

Achievable & Measurable

Emphasizes concrete progress through transparent SMART KPIs instead of abstract ideals.

Physical & Mental Well-being

Covers both the physical reality and the mental/emotional perception in an age of anxiety.

Addresses a Search for Meaning

Taps into the general societal search for more meaningfulness in all aspects of life.

Meaningful Tourism levels

Meaningful Tourism is not using a certification process, which is not transparent for guests/travellers and often leads to complacency after the certificate is issued.

You are invited to become a Meaningful Tourism movement member on three levels, underlining the ongoing process and engagement.

Levels

Level 1 Meaningful Tourism Movement Member

Level 2 Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Member

Level 3 Distinguished Meaningful Tourism Movement Member

Meaningful Tourism levels

| Levels | SME / Individual company | DMO, NTO, large corporations |
|--------|---|---|
| 1 | Self-Assessment and Commitment (1 year) | MTTGW / CTT Carbon Credit trading process started |
| 2 | Accepted Self-Assessment (1 year), to continue; MTTGW or Implementation Support or new Self-Assessment & Commitment, otherwise one level down | MTTGW / Source Market training again / CTT done, otherwise one level down |
| 3 | New Self-Assessment & Commitment or Participation in MTTGW / Source Market training / CCT (1 year), otherwise one level down | MTTGW / Source Market training again (one per year to keep level, otherwise one level down) |

Meaningful Tourism implementation Self-Assessment

- For individual companies and organisations
- Self-assessment based on 24 SMART KPIs provided by MTC
- Commitment to improve performance for at least two KPIs with defined starting point and goal and action planned to achieve goal
- Assessment and commitment evaluated by MTC, if accepted, recognition as Meaningful Tourism Movement Member
- After 6 months: Online consultation on progress
- After 12 months: Documentation and renewed self-assessment and commitment

Meaningful Tourism implementation Self-Assessment – How does it work?

- Using the information available (including videos and publications) and the specific information provided by MTC, starting a process of self-assessment involving as many stakeholders as feasible horizontally and vertically.
- Analyzing the situation mostly based on existing data, if necessary added by further information.
- If needed, online support provided by local Certified MTC trainer or MTC headquarter

Meaningful Tourism implementation Self-Assessment – How does it work?

- Identifying at least two SMART KPIs where improvements are necessary and possible, discussing and deciding on starting point and intended goal and on actions planned to achieve goal within 12 months.
- Sending the self-assessment form including the improvement plan for at least two KPIs to MTC.
- Receiving answer with confirmation or with advise for improvement of information provided if necessary for edited application.

Meaningful Tourism implementation Self-Assessment

- Cost for companies with less than 10 employees 99 USD
- Cost for companies with 10 or more employees 199 USD
- Included services:
- Provision of materials for self-assessment including 24 SMART KPIs
- Evaluation of self-assessment and commitment
- If accepted, for one year recognition as Meaningful Tourism Movement Member (Logo, listing on MTC website, MT Weekly)
- After 6 months: Online consultation on progress (30 min.)
- After 12 months: Evaluation of documentation, if accepted recognition as Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Member for second year

Meaningful Tourism implementation Self-Assessment

- To keep status, after one year new round of self-assessment and commitment to improve at least two KPIs within a year
- Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Members receive preferred treatment for publications, conferences, MTC PR and Social Media communication
- Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Members enjoy reduced prices for participation in further trainings and workshops and for Implementation Support

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

- Achieving the status of Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Member is not the end of the process, but the beginning.
- According to the form, size and resources of the member an internal structure of a group/committee, regular meeting taking care of the Meaningful Tourism activities and an external structure including as many as feasible and possible stakeholder representatives is established
- The SMART KPIs are customised for the local situation, with additional KPIs added if feasible

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

- For each KPI the starting data point is defined and methods of measurement (using available public and internal data, if necessary additional data collection) established
- Data are collected and put into database or dashboard regularly
- Member is following MTC publications and free online lectures and workshops
- Member is participating in activities ideally provided by regional/national organisations involved in Meaningful Tourism
- Activities for renewal / extension of membership are prepared on time

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

For all activities MTC and the MTC Certified trainers are ready to assist on a one-time or permanent base according to a customised agreement.

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop

The Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop is an engaging and practical learning experience that familiarizes participants with the Meaningful Tourism concept. Led by certified trainers around the globe, the workshop adopts a game-based approach where attendees take on roles within the six stakeholder groups, prioritizing alignment over compromise.

It emphasizes the creation of SMART Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all groups to facilitate progress tracking.



Why using a Transformational Game Workshop?

Employing a gaming framework that integrates online resources aligns with these emerging needs. The transformative training game introduces participants to the Meaningful Tourism professional development program, offering an engaging and interactive experience aimed at understanding the importance of delivering both measurable objective benefits and subjective satisfaction for all stakeholders.

Through role-playing and problem-solving exercises, participants focus on alignment rather than compromise, gaining insights into the complexities of tourism management and are enabled to develop holistic sustainable solutions for their destination, company or organisation.

: Meaningful Tourism

Transformational Game Workshop

- **One-day workshop** (for destinations, companies and organisations)
- **Two-day workshop** (intensive workshop for companies and organisations, academic version for Higher Education institutions)

Trainer: Certified MTC trainer, local language, using customized materials

Number of participants: Minimum 6 participants, best results with participant numbers between 12 and 24 for the one-day workshop and 12 and 30 for the two-day workshop.

Venue: Meeting room for Plenum sessions + breakout space for group work.

Certification: Participants will receive a certification document and will be added to the list of certified participants on the MTC website.

Why It's Different?

- ❖ **Game-based learning** means people remember and apply what they learn.
- ❖ **Non-hierarchical collaboration** creates genuine stakeholder alignment.
- ❖ **Globally tested** yet adapted to local contexts.
- ❖ **Scalable and replicable** for multiple regions and project types
- ❖ **White-labelling** or co-branding possible
- ❖ Offered in many **different languages**

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop

One day workshop typical structure (can be amended according to customer demand)

Morning (3 hours)

Introduction and Role Distribution (Plenum)

Overview Meaningful Tourism and MT Game Workshop, Assignment of stakeholder role

Definition of own interests in specific company / organisation (Stakeholder groups)

Using online tools if additional data needed

Presentation and Discussion of Findings and Requests (Plenum)

Each stakeholder (group) presents their interests and requests for future development

Lunch Break

Afternoon (3 hours)

Solution Alignment (Stakeholder groups)

Stakeholders develop solutions aligning interests using MT principles

Final Solution Presentation, Agreement and Documentation (Plenum)

Stakeholders present refined solutions and discuss final alignment solution, documentation

Introduction SMART KPIs (Plenum)

KPI Development (Stakeholder groups)

Creation of measurable KPIs by and for each stakeholder group

KPI Presentation, Discussion, Decision and Documentation (Plenum)

Presentation of KPIs, refinement based on feedback and discussion, documentation

Final Discussion, Feedback, Certificates, Group photo

Two day professional workshop:
Higher intensity
Two day academic workshop: More basic information

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop One day 1,500 USD

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop Two days 2,000 USD
plus travel cost and accommodation trainer
including customisation of content, certifications

Additional online presence of Prof. Dr. Arlt during part of training 500 USD

Full semester B.A. / M.A. program on request

Implementation Support programs on request

Meaningful Tourism

Source Market Workshop

Meaningful Tourism Source Market Workshops provide additional information about how transformational experiences are best offered to visitors from the main source markets of a destination, how to prepare and train local communities and employees, how to empower companies to adapt products and storytelling, how to create political frames and how to include different customers groups in the quest to protect the environment.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Source Market Workshop Full day plus travel cost and accommodation trainer including customisation of content, certifications | 1,500 USD |
|---|-----------|

Carbon Credit Trading Workshop

MTC is offering in partnership with AIROI Co. workshops and assistance to engage in reduction of energy and water consumption and waste production for larger companies and organisations. Hotels, office buildings, fairgrounds, museums etc. all can enter a triple-win situation by reducing the amount of energy and water used and by reducing the waste produced with technical and organisational measures provided by experts from AIROI.

Triple win:

- Less cost for energy, water and waste disposal
- Income from Carbon and Water credits traded by AIROI on behalf of the customer
- Daily experience of the visitors / guests that the service provider is actively supporting sustainable behaviour and Meaningful Tourism

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

- Achieving the status of Certified Meaningful Tourism Movement Member is not the end of the process, but the beginning.
- According to the form and field of industry of the member an internal structure of a task force taking care of the Meaningful Tourism activities and an external structure including as many as feasible and possible stakeholder representatives is established
- The SMART KPIs are customised for the local situation, with additional KPIs added

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

- For each KPI the starting data point is defined and methods of measurement (using available public and internal data, if necessary additional data collection) established
- Data are collected and put into database or dashboard regularly
- Member is following MTC publications and free online lectures and workshops, also actively participating in fairs and conferences
- Member is participating in activities ideally provided by regional/national organisations involved in Meaningful Tourism
- Activities for renewal / extension of membership are prepared on time

Meaningful Tourism implementation Continuous improvement

For all activities MTC and the MTC Certified trainers are ready to assist on a one-time or permanent base according to a customised agreement.

MTC is providing standard packages and customised offers according to the needs of the company or organisation.

MTC is also organising customised stands at selected tourism fairs around the world.

List of Certified Trainers (as of February 2026)



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt

Dr. Ali Akaak

Bernadette Atosha

Eyong Ayuk Ako-Ebot Ph.D

Everest Bahati

Gaurav Bhan Bhatnagar

Santosh Bidari

Dr. Nurgül Boz

Florian Caks

Mayte Redondo Castuera

Dr. Stacy Von Cranach

Dr. Gansukh Damba

Caro Degryse

Chinthana Duminduhewa

Dr. Giancarlo Fedeli

Max Dubravko Fijacko

Emmanuel Frimpong

Deepti Gautam

Catherine Germier

Sonja Gottlebe

Max Haberstroh

Sahan Hanifa

Frank Hoerl

Samira Holma

Wondemsew Mesafint Keadie

Dr. Kristel Kessler

Rameswar Khadka

Umar Khan

Iyasmin Khandekar

Samuel Lupeska

Yuliska Labawo

Karunya L.S.



List of Certified Trainers (as of February 2026)

Paula Machado

Brigit Murugi

Paul Moxness

Raveesh Mrigendra

Biubwa Omar

Vishal Pandey

Mahadevan Parasuraman

Carole Perez

Jaana Raisanen

Ropafadzaishe Rushwaya

Faisal Razu

Nampetch Siramanon

I Nengah Subadra

Rhea Vitto Tabora

Lars von der Wettern

James Young



Certified Trainers of Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop



**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang
Georg Artt**



Florian Caks
Austria and Namibia



I Nengah Subadra
Bali, Java and
Sumatra



Faisal Razu
Bangladesh



Catherine Germier
Cambodia and Laos



**Eyong Ayuk Ako-
Ebot Ph.D**
Cameroon



Paul Moxness
Canada



Max Dubravko Fijacko
Croatia



Bernadette Atosha
Dem. Rep of Congo



**Wondemsew
Mesafint Keadie**
Ethiopia



Jaana Raisanen
Finland



Caro Degryse
France & Belgium



Frank Hoerl
Germany



Lars von der Wettern
Germany & Spain



Emmanuel Frimpong
Ghana



**Gaurav Bhan
Bhatnagar**
India, Delhi Northeast



Karunya L.S.
India, Tamil Nadu



**Mahadevan
Parasuraman**
India, Tamil Nadu



Raveesh Mrigendra
India, North



Iyasmin Khandekar
India, West Bengal



Dr. Giancarlo Fedeli
Italy



Brigit Murugi
Kenya



Sonja Gottlebe
Madagascar, Reunion
& Mauritius



Samuel Lupeska
Malawi



Dr. Gansukh Damba
Mongolia



Deepti Gautam
Nepal



Rameswar Khadka
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Santosh Bidari
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Yuliska Labawo
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Dr. Kristel Kessler
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Umar Khan
Pakistan



Rhea Vitto Tabora
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Paula Machado
Portugal



Carole Perez
South Korea



**Mayte Redondo
Castuera**
Spain



**Chinthana
Duminduhewa**
Sri Lanka



Sahana Hanifa
Sri Lanka



Samira Holma
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Max Haberstroh
Switzerland



Dr. Stacy Von Cranach
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Dr. Nurgul Boz
Turkiye



Vishal Pandey
UAE



Everest Bahati
Uganda



James Young
Vietnam




Biubwa Omar
Zanzibar and Tanzania



**Ropafadzaishe
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Zimbabwe

For further information and booking contact the Meaningful Tourism Centre:



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 • Newsletter: <https://meaningful-tourism-weekly.ghost.io/>

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