


Chapter 18

Fostering a Circular Economy in Tourism: Insights From Egypt

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the state of the Circular Economy (CE) in Egypt's tourism sector, revealing both challenges and opportunities. The chapter uses a multi-faceted approach, combining secondary data analysis with a literature review. It systematically reviews and synthesises existing data from government reports, industry statistics, and prior research studies. It analyses barriers, demographic influences, and organisational dynamics and explores how technology can aid in overcoming these challenges. The chapter also draws on best practices from successful transitions elsewhere. Findings highlight the need for robust policies, targeted educational campaigns, and technological adoption. Effective CE transition in Egypt will require structured approaches, international collaboration, and tailored practices, such as adapting strategies to the Red Sea and promoting agritourism in the Nile Delta. This chapter is novel for its detailed analysis of CE adoption in Egypt's tourism sector, offering strategic pathways for advancing circularity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry plays a pivotal role in Egypt's economy, attracting millions of visitors yearly to its ancient monuments, pristine beaches, and vibrant cultural sites. However, the rapid growth of tourism has also brought about environmental

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challenges, necessitating a shift towards more sustainable practices. According to Economist Impact (2022), the tourism industry in the Middle East lags in the sustainability transition, marked by high resource consumption, significant waste generation, and the absence of industry-wide sustainability mandates. Ghanem (2016) emphasises the need for Egypt to enhance its efforts towards a transition to sustainable development, considering the prevailing economic, social, and environmental challenges. Circular Economy (CE) principles offer a promising framework to address these challenges by promoting resource efficiency, minimising waste, and fostering sustainable consumption and production patterns. By adopting circular practices, tourism businesses can reduce their resource footprint, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and minimise waste generation, thereby contributing to broader sustainable development goals. Thus, in recent years, the concept of a Circular Economy has gained traction within the tourism sector as a pathway to mitigate environmental impacts and promote sustainable development (Vatansever et al., 2021). Similarly, the global tourism industry increasingly recognises the imperative to transition towards more sustainable and circular practices in response to pressing environmental challenges associated with traditional linear consumption patterns (Manniche et al., 2020).

Concepts such as sustainable development and green growth have arisen over the past thirty years to tackle worldwide challenges associated with the current production and consumption model centred on growth. These challenges include issues like resource scarcity, climate change, and pollution. While the Circular Economy (CE) aligns with these concepts, it provides unique and actionable principles (Martins, 2021). The concepts of CE recognise the need for our world's finite resources to be used efficiently and sustainably, as opposed to the dead-end system of the linear economy. Kirchherr et al. (2017) consolidated more than 100 definitions of the Circular Economy, presenting it as an economic framework that moves away from the traditional “end-of-life” approach to emphasising the minimisation, reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials throughout the stages of production, distribution, and consumption. Despite the predominant focus on manufacturing industries (Sorin & Einarsson, 2020), the tourism sector has received limited consideration in CE initiatives and analyses (Manniche et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the tourism industry has substantial potential to enhance sustainability and profitability through CE practices (Manniche et al., 2020), underscoring the importance of acknowledging travel and tourism in the global shift towards CE (UNWTO, 2020).

The concept of Circular Economy holds relevance for the tourism sector, given its reliance on natural resources and the generation of significant waste and emissions (UNWTO, 2020). Traditional linear consumption patterns, characterised by take-make-dispose practices, are increasingly recognised as unsustainable. In contrast, Circular Economy principles advocate for a regenerative approach to keep

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