

# U.S. 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

In June 2022, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced its 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy.<sup>1</sup> The strategy's goal is to increase the number of inbound tourists from the pre-pandemic 79 million in 2019, to 90 million by 2027. The previous strategy was formulated 10 years ago in 2012 and updated in 2019, with the goal of increasing the number of inbound tourists to 100 million by 2021. Due to COVID-19, however, that goal was not realized. So it can be said that an ambitious goal is being presented, as if declaring "We will achieve a quick recovery to pre-coronavirus levels and make further progress!"

In the following report we will introduce the U.S. tourism administration's promotion system and then share the contents of the recently announced 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy. The details of the COVID-19 countermeasures implemented by the U.S. federal government—a historically rare subsidy system to support the tourism industry—will also be introduced.

## 2. The United States' Tourism Promotion System

Tourism administration at the federal level in the United States is primarily handled by the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) within the International Trade Administration (ITA) of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The NTTO implements policies and compiles statistics on the travel and tourism industry. While cooperating with the Department of Commercial Services—which is also in the Department of Commerce, and is responsible for promoting

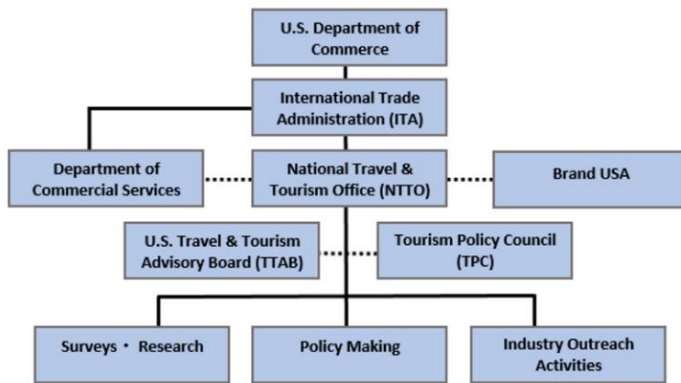
the export of U.S. products and services—the NTTO collects information needed to enhance its competitive position and provides information to relevant parties.

In addition, the Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP), which operates as "Brand USA", was established in 2010 as a non-profit, public-private partnership organization to promote the reception of inbound tourists. In cooperation with DOC's NTTO, Brand USA carries out various activities including promotional activities to attract foreign tourists.

The Secretary of Commerce is also responsible for planning and implementing policies while cooperating with the following two organizations:

- U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB): an organization that makes policy recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce on issues related to the U.S. travel and tourism industry. It consists of up to 32 representatives of private companies.
- Tourism Policy Council (TPC): an interagency body chaired by the Secretary of Commerce established to maximize the consideration of tourism interests in federal decision-making. It mainly coordinates policies and systems that can have a significant impact on international tourism, entertainment, and national heritage.

Although the federal government does not have individual regulations specific to the travel and tourism industry, the Bureau of Consumer Protection under the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has established travel and tourism regulations and is responsible for law enforcement against unfair or fraudulent commercial practices, including in the travel and tourism industry.



The U.S. Tourism Administration's Promotion System

Source: Created by the author with reference to OECD material<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the above, in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enacted in November 2021, a new position in the Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Office of the Secretary of Transportation was included, establishing a "Chief Travel and Tourism Officer". The position involves working with the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs to oversee the DOT-related portion of federal travel and tourism policies.

Support for the travel and tourism industry at the regional level is mainly provided by each state government and Destination Marketing/Management Organizations (DMO).

### 3. Outline of the 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy

In the 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy, four individual goals are listed under the overall goal, with summaries of strategies for achieving each of them.

Of particular note here is "II. Facilitate travel to and within the United States." Due to the coronavirus pandemic, travel and tourism, as well as the movement of people, ceased. Especially with regard to international travel, even after vaccination became widespread, it was necessary to present and confirm health certificates such as vaccination cards and negative COVID test results, which hindered smooth travel. The most distinctive feature of this strategy, which was announced after the coronavirus pandemic, is that it

advocates using the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to quickly introduce a safe and smooth immigration control system in cooperation with other countries.

Below is a copy of the goals and strategies written in the 2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy:

#### Overall Goal

Goal: Attract 90 million international travelers and \$279 billion in annual spending by 2027

#### Individual Goals

##### I. Promoting the United States as a Travel Destination

Goal: Leverage existing programs and assets to promote the United States to international visitors and broaden marketing efforts to encourage visitation to underserved communities.

STRATEGY 1: Streamline the communication of U.S. travel policy to create a safer, more accessible, and welcoming experience for visitors.

- a. Coordinate with relevant federal agencies, Brand USA, and the private sector, including trade groups and media where appropriate, to uniformly communicate changes in health and safety requirements.
- b. Inform and share messaging with travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry associations.
- c. Improve U.S. government coordination by developing plans at U.S. embassies and consulates that support the growth of travel and tourism from international markets.
- d. Increase relevant U.S. government participation in travel fora and events and coordinate messaging.
- e. Communicate advances and innovations in secure, seamless, and contactless travel to the travel and tourism industry and the public.
- f. Facilitate travel opportunities for people with disabilities.
- g. Communicate changes in visitor access to U.S. tourism sites to facilitate travel planning.
- h. Increase communication through digital media, including social media and the internet.

- i. Encourage outreach to students and other long-term travelers who may have different requirements than leisure travelers.

STRATEGY 2: Effectively promote the diversity of the United States, including the depth of authentic American experiences, by engaging relevant communities and working with state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector to support marketing programs in collaboration with underserved communities.

- a. Extend outreach to diverse communities, including efforts to ensure that messaging and imagery connect with audiences of all abilities and backgrounds so everyone can see themselves enjoying federal lands and waters and feel welcome and safe there.
- b. Expand U.S. government collaboration with the domestic travel trade to supplement existing promotional efforts at the state, local, and tribal levels.

STRATEGY 3: Promote responsible and sustainable tourism.

- a. Leverage Brand USA and other private sector outreach to shape messaging that promotes sustainable tourism practices.
- b. Incorporate responsible travel messaging on federal agencies' websites.
- c. Encourage dialogue with state, local, and tribal destination management organizations and state and local outdoor recreation offices on sustainable travel messaging.
- d. Leverage geo-tourism and other programs of the federal land management agencies, such as Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace, which are centerpieces of natural resource protection and sustainability in the federal government.

STRATEGY 4: Leverage large-scale events, such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup, EXPO 2027 (if awarded to the United States) and the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, as well as other milestones such as solar eclipses in 2023 and 2024, to promote the United States as a travel destination.

- a. Tie marketing of U.S. travel and tourism to large-scale

events around the world, (e.g., EXPO 2027).

- b. Collaborate with the private sector to add travel and tourism marketing to U.S.-hosted international events (e.g., the 2026 FIFA World Cup).
- c. Collaborate with state, local, and tribal efforts to bid for large-scale international events.
- d. Collaborate on international marketing efforts with professional sports leagues to the extent consistent with constraints on unofficial endorsements.

## II. Facilitating Travel To and Within the United States

Goal: Reduce barriers to trade in travel services and make it safer and more efficient for visitors to enter and travel within the United States.

STRATEGY 1: Use improvements and new developments in technology to position the United States as a leader in verifying traveler identities.

- a. Ensure federal agencies can produce, accept, and use digital documentation likely to be encountered as the ICAO guidelines are finalized.
  - State should be prepared to pilot issuance and acceptance of digital travel credentials when the ICAO guidelines are finalized and to accept digital travel credentials for routine operations.
  - DHS should prepare its traveler systems to accept such digital travel credentials.
  - State and DHS should explore technologies to facilitate identity verification of travelers and streamline screening, including the use of mDLs and other digital identity documents, as well as biometric and facial comparison technology. For example, CBP uses facial comparison technology to verify travelers' identities, and TSA is piloting the acceptance of digital identity documents at TSA checkpoints. This exploration of possible technologies should include the protection of privacy rights, civil rights, and civil liberties.
- b. Explore technologies that allow travelers to use mDLs and other identity documents.
- c. Incorporate touchless technology.

- Incorporate touchless technology into DHS trusted traveler programs and State passport and visa processes.
  - Collaborate with airlines and airports to implement a traveler experience in which a person can choose to allow use of facial biometrics in identity verification processes at air carrier check-in, TSA checkpoints, aircraft boarding gates, and CBP entry and exit points. (Facial recognition biometrics means travelers are not touching a device to be verified, but rather are having a photo taken instead, or preloading photos in advance so the traveler does not have to hand over physical documents to be identified.)
- d. Pursue the use of foil-less visas for digital visa processing that provide for verification of the traveler’s identity.
- e. State should explore the direct capture of photographs for passports and visas to standardize image quality for improved comparisons against travel documents, reduce the probability of false rejections, and combat fraud.

STRATEGY 2: Expand remote processing opportunities to manage staff and other resources more effectively without compromising security.

- a. Explore the expansion of online functions and services that allow processes, as appropriate, that previously were only available in person or by mail (e.g., when issuing or renewing travel documents such as U.S. passports).
- State has recently begun testing its process to allow U.S. passport holders to renew passports online if they meet certain conditions. This process allows qualifying individuals to initiate and pay for their passport renewal online, upload a photograph, and receive automatic notifications regarding status, enhancing customer service and ease of travel for U.S. citizens.
- b. Modernize the passport acceptance process.
- While State is piloting online renewals, more should be done to minimize paper-based passport applications. For most applicants, in-person interactions will still need to occur, but an accompanying digital application process will eliminate delays in shipping applications, reduce application throughput times, allow increased ability for credit card payments, and reduce delays from

miscalculation of passport fees.

- Continue to pilot remote interviews for NEXUS renewals. The NEXUS program allows expedited processing for pre-screened travelers entering the United States and Canada. Program members use dedicated processing lanes at designated northern border ports of entry, NEXUS kiosks when entering Canada by air, and Global Entry kiosks when entering the United States via Canadian Preclearance airports.
  - Increase online services for I-94s. The CBP One application allows travelers to apply and pay for provisional I-94s as well as access electronic I-94 forms, identify authorized length of stay, and provide CBP with the last five years of travel by the applicant.
- c. Harness efficiencies at TSA checkpoints.
- TSA is testing concepts for a remote screening system that would allow passengers and their property to be physically screened away from the checkpoint. This screening system would promote faster, more focused reviews of security images. Additionally, improvements to screening technology algorithms could mean greater efficiencies throughout the checkpoint process. These efforts collectively would decrease bottlenecks and crowding and enhance the passenger experience.
- d. Explore various Advance Passenger Information program options at land borders to enable travelers to provide advance notification of their intended travel. Advanced notification would enable advance screening and vetting and reduce the time travelers would need to be screened on arrival.
- Continue to leverage the capabilities of the CBP One application for predictable processing. New technologies such as the CBP One application increase the potential for travelers to provide advance notification of their travel, enabling advance screening and vetting.
- e. Support advance screening protocols.
- Individual airports are developing and piloting protocols and implementing technology for advance screening appointments for certain travelers, allowing them to develop a far more predictable, convenient, and less

stressful travel experience. DHS and TSA will continue to support these industry initiatives and participate in the development of best practices for these protocols.

- f. Expand the ability within State, in collaboration with DHS, to process and approve securely and remotely certain nonimmigrant visa applications that do not require interviews, both domestically and overseas.
  - For example, State currently assists personnel in Mexico with remote processing of Border Crossing Card renewals and in Central America and the Northern Triangle with visa applications for temporary agricultural workers. This capability can be used at additional posts around the world as needed.

STRATEGY 3: Strengthen partnerships to assist in travel facilitation, including with international and private sector partners.

- a. Engage with state and local government, private sector, nonprofit, and academic and research institute stakeholders to share lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, develop ideas, and provide capacity for testing them.
- b. Develop and accelerate regional and border initiatives to increase information sharing.
- c. Increase efforts to develop cross-border interoperability and alignment to allow travelers to visit between bordering nations more seamlessly. The United States will continue to partner with Canada to implement President Biden's and Prime Minister Trudeau's February 2021 Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, which built upon the successful 2012 Beyond the Border initiative.
- d. U.S. officials should continue to engage with foreign partners on lessons learned and best practices relating to foreign travel resulting from the response to the pandemic.
- e. Continue and expand data-sharing agreements between countries to enable more automated security processes and reduce traveler delays.
  - Within appropriate legal frameworks and guidelines, secure passenger data-sharing agreements between countries, which can greatly enhance security and the

traveler experience by reducing the need for redundant security checks between trusted partners and allowing for more flexible passenger processing at lower risk.

- Enhance current programs to expand data sharing with other countries, such as the new border security information sharing requirement for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).
- Further study internally (and as necessary with Congress) TSA's One Stop security pilot program to determine whether remaining policy and operational challenges could be overcome. Such a change would allow international travelers arriving in the United States from certain countries to continue to other U.S. destinations from select international airports without TSA rescreening, thereby streamlining transfers.
- f. Develop strategies for incorporating health data as part of travel screening.
  - Just as with identity documentation, proof of vaccination and other health-related documentation will likely become digital, as that format provides additional security and allows for faster processing. It is important that any digital health documentation systems are interoperable, mutually recognized, and for equity reasons, do not preclude continued acceptance of non-digital documentation such as CDC's white card for COVID-19 vaccinations.
  - To ensure U.S. preparedness in the event of future health crises, the Department of Health and Human Services should partner with State and DHS to develop a report on how the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic affected international travel.
- g. Provide quick and easy information to travelers.
  - The rapid increase of information delivered via mobile applications has greatly increased the expectations of customers for a variety of digital products. The federal government should be open to exploring public-private partnerships that could pull together multiple travel-related information sources to enhance the passenger travel experience.

### III. Ensuring Diverse, Inclusive, and Accessible Tourism

## Experiences

Goal: Extend the benefits of travel and tourism by supporting the development of diverse tourism products, focusing on underserved communities and populations. Address the financial and workplace needs of travel and tourism businesses, supporting destination communities as they expand their tourism economies. Deliver world-class experiences and customer service on federal lands and waters that showcase U.S. assets while protecting them for future generations.

STRATEGY 1: Assist communities in providing accessible travel and tourism experiences that allow travelers to immerse themselves in the culture of the communities.

- a. Consistent with applicable law, ensure federal grant funds and planning resources are readily available, widely communicated and made available across the travel and tourism sector, especially for small-scale tourism providers.
- b. Meaningfully engage culturally diverse communities in travel and tourism initiatives.
- c. Provide technical assistance to ensure communities are fully aware of the unintended consequences of over-tourism and have the capacity to compete for and manage the resources necessary to foster a travel and tourism economy that promotes equity and environmental justice.
- d. Support research to identify untold stories and omitted perspectives at tourism destinations.
- e. Advocate for additional resources for federal agencies to translate and create public materials (e.g., websites, signage, visitor center exhibits, outreach and marketing products, mobile applications, and safety information) in multiple languages and Braille.
- f. Collaborate with communities and resource management agencies to reduce physical and social barriers to access, and ensure sites are safe and welcoming for diverse visitors.
- g. Consistent with applicable law and guidelines, improve digital accessibility on federal websites, in federal publications, and on federal digital platforms, as well as physical accessibility through investments in infrastructure, interpretation, and visitor services.

STRATEGY 2: Identify and address infrastructure and environmental challenges from increased visitation associated with specific land and water destinations and adjacent communities, with an emphasis on opportunities for increasing visitor diversity.

- a. Conduct data analysis to identify areas exceeding capacity and areas where visitation can be encouraged.
- b. Consult community stakeholders and partners to plan for the most desired improvements, identify cross-management or sustainability needs, and advocate for funding that supports capacity-building efforts.
- c. Encourage the public and private sector to prioritize investments in infrastructure projects to mitigate environmental challenges.
- d. Coordinate and collaborate on federal, state, local, and tribal planning efforts to advance infrastructure solutions, such as worker housing, water and sewer upgrades, clean transportation technologies, and broadband.

STRATEGY 3: Balance increasing demand for high quality experiences with local community needs and environmental constraints and highlight alternatives to vulnerable destinations.

- a. Invest in tribal communities through continued implementation of the NATIVE (Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience) Act.
- b. Coordinate with recreation partners to highlight lesser visited locations.
- c. Assist communities in creating tourism experiences in less-traveled areas by collaborating with organizations, such as the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable.
- d. Promote sustainable tourism in coordination with regional, state, local, and tribal tourism and outdoor recreation offices.
- e. Implement appropriate visitor use management methodologies to identify desired conditions for resources and the visitor experience and develop appropriate management actions to achieve them.

STRATEGY 4: Cultivate and amplify an ethos of conservation, stewardship, and resilience with travel and tourism stakeholders, including visitors, affected industries, marketing agencies, and the destination community, that ensures the meaningful involvement and equitable treatment of underserved populations.

- a. Collaborate with the Recreate Responsibly and Together Outdoors coalitions to develop educational and outreach materials, incorporating Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles to share with the public and industry.
- b. Work closely with state, local, and tribal governments to understand their relationships to local natural resources, including those that are managed or at risk if not managed.
- c. Promote equity, environmental justice, inclusion, and resilience principles in projects that seek federal assistance for travel and tourism.
- d. Offer technical assistance to destination communities to support sustainable tourism planning in coordination with destination managers, prioritizing equity, environmental justice, inclusion, and resiliency principles.
- e. Incorporate responsible travel messaging at federal sites.
- f. Develop templates for sustainable travel pledges (similar to those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Monuments Fund) that communities can tailor to their destinations.

STRATEGY 5: Increase access to technology for visitor management and interpretive services.

- a. Support broadband expansion, digital inclusion, and internet assistance programs that support U.S. travel and tourism economies.
- b. Boost access to publicly available data to enable communities to determine which locations near them are most visited and from where visitors to those locations are coming.
- c. Consistent with applicable law, collaborate with the private sector to develop and promote mobile applications that show current visitation at federal sites.
- d. Improve access to digital interpretive services and encourage federal agencies to reach visitors through a

variety of means, including social media, mobile applications, virtual field trips, web cameras, and 360-degree video.

STRATEGY 6: Identify and address barriers and opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to access funding and technical assistance to sustainably plan, build, market, and manage tourism economies that promote equity and environmental justice.

- a. Compile information on federal funding, training, and technical assistance for tourism planning (including outdoor recreation) and conduct periodic interagency meetings to share information about existing grant and technical assistance programs that support travel and tourism.
- b. Promote federal assistance for the development and marketing of local tourism that advances economic opportunities for diverse U.S. businesses, workers, and places, including programs from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), U.S. International Trade Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, among others.
- c. Work with state, local, and tribal governments, higher education institutions, including minority-serving institutions (MSIs), and nonprofit entities to provide information on and links to grants and technical assistance.
- d. Encourage interagency collaboration by awarding points in competition or otherwise prioritizing grant funding to applicants who can demonstrate cooperation with multiple federal land and water managers.
- e. Conduct training and share best practices across federal agencies that routinely work with communities on travel and tourism.
- f. Recruit AmeriCorps, Conservation Corps, and returned Peace Corps volunteers to support the development and promotion of tourism in underserved communities.
- g. Support inclusion of small-scale providers, indigenous tourism operators, sustainable or regenerative tourism operators, and other non-traditional travel and tourism providers on relevant federal advisory boards and

committees.

STRATEGY 7: Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in customer service positions on federal lands and waters. Support diversity in business development and entrepreneurship opportunities created by demand for outdoor recreation and tourism.

- a. Provide interagency support and increased access to capital for local entrepreneurs and small businesses, particularly among diverse and underserved populations.
- b. Consistent with applicable law, support and fund local workforce development and entrepreneurship ventures that create and sustain well-paying, quality jobs and boost skills among residents to fill workforce gaps.
- c. Place higher emphasis on recruitment for federal natural resource positions from a variety of higher education institutions, including Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions; Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions; historically Black colleges and universities; Hispanic-serving institutions; Native American-serving non-tribal institutions; predominantly Black institutions; tribal colleges and universities; and MSI community colleges.
- d. Support federal agency hiring programs, internship and volunteer programs, employee health and wellness programs, investments in employee housing, and training programs that help recruit and retain a diverse workforce, with an emphasis on land management and other agencies interacting with state, local, and tribal governments in support of their tourism efforts.
- e. Increase awareness and understanding of registered apprenticeship programs for organizations seeking to build a workforce pipeline.
- f. Connect organizations interested in developing registered apprenticeship programs with intermediaries and provide technical assistance to organizations interested in registered apprenticeship programs.
- g. Connect travel and tourism organizations with workforce programs in their communities, such as state and local workforce boards and community colleges. Partner with

American Job Centers and Job Corps Centers to recruit a diverse workforce.

#### IV. Fostering Resilient and Sustainable Travel and Tourism

Goal: Reduce travel and tourism’s contributions to climate change and build a travel and tourism sector that is resilient to natural disasters, public health threats, and the impacts of climate change. Build a sustainable sector that integrates protecting natural resources, supporting the tourism economy, and ensuring equitable development.

STRATEGY 1: Ensure members of underserved communities in the travel and tourism sector are aware of and can easily access federal assistance before, during, and immediately following disasters and health crises. Develop greater institutional capacity in federal agencies to provide funding and grant assistance in connection with disasters and health crises, including preparedness, mitigation, recovery, and resilience.

- a. Provide a mechanism for ongoing communication between federal agencies and tourism destinations about their needs following a disaster.
- b. Leverage community-focused programs to improve access for underserved populations to government resources in the travel and tourism sector.
- c. Improve communication with the private sector as part of the federal assistance process.
- d. Align capacity-building, environmental, conservation, and climate resilience priorities.

STRATEGY 2: Support communities in resiliency planning, including diversification by industry and sector.

- a. Leverage funding for agency planning in alignment with federal, state, local, and tribal priorities and broader sustainability efforts.
- b. Incorporate resiliency planning into programs across the federal government, as applicable.
- c. Work with the private sector and state, local and tribal governments to share best practices with small businesses and communities on reducing their exposure to climate-



related risks and incorporating sustainable tourism practices.

- d. Incorporate climate change resilience and adaptation strategies into infrastructure investment and management and visitor use management on federal lands and waters.
- e. Collaborate with destination management organizations and the private sector on regional tourism planning and diversification to increase the ability of the travel and tourism industry to adapt to changing demand for services.
- f. Provide NOAA data and tools to communities to inform and build resilience to extreme events and climate-related hazards, including through nature-based solutions.

STRATEGY 3: Reduce the travel and tourism sector's carbon emissions.

- a. Support and encourage baseline and ongoing measurement of emissions and the setting of science-based emissions reduction or net-zero targets throughout the travel and tourism sector.
- b. Implement measures to reduce travel and tourism emissions consistent with the United States' Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52 percent by 2030.
- c. Invest in electrical equipment and infrastructure, including electric vehicles, public transit, bike paths, and walkways, including at visitor centers, and in renewable electricity generation to serve these uses.
- d. Support the use of sustainable fuels for transportation, including aviation, cruise ships, buses, other modes of public transportation, and taxis and ride-share services.
- e. Support the integration of climate impacts into financial markets, including enhanced climate risk disclosure for tourism businesses and projects.

STRATEGY 4: Support nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation.

- a. Continue collaboration with state, local, and tribal governments to invest in nature-based solutions and green and blue infrastructure as a first line of defense against

extreme weather events and natural disasters.

- b. Invest in projects to protect, conserve, and restore existing ecosystems such as coral reefs, kelp forests, seagrass meadows, mangroves, coastlines, and forests.
- c. Provide information and resources on nature-based solutions for communities to incorporate into their tourism planning and strategies.

STRATEGY 5: Support and protect the nation's natural assets to ensure travel and tourism resources for the future.

- a. Implement and support initiatives and legislation, such as the Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful Report and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, that prioritize increasing access to outdoor recreation opportunities and expanding collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife populations, habitats, and corridors.
- b. Support locally led and designed conservation efforts and visitor use management strategies and encourage incorporating conservation into community tourism planning.
- c. Pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation and disaster recovery that includes state, local, and tribal governments, conservation organizations, fishing and hunting organizations, and the private sector.
- d. Identify links between tourism and existing conservation tools, such as grant programs for local parks and coastal restoration projects, preservation of natural infrastructure, and management strategies for marine fisheries, coral reef conservation programs, mangrove protection and restoration programs, and national marine sanctuaries.
- e. Consistent with applicable law, work with the private sector and Brand USA, as well as state, local, and tribal governments, to promote the development of programs and experiences that engage visitors in activities that support conservation and stewardship.
- f. Support implementation of laws that promote outdoor recreation on federal lands and waters to provide needed maintenance and improved resilience for critical facilities and infrastructure in national marine sanctuaries, national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges,

and other public lands and waters.

- g. Identify and address gaps that impede equitable visitor experiences on federal lands and waters.

**STRATEGY 6:** Build a sustainable tourism ecosystem in the United States and position the United States as a sustainable destination in the international travel and tourism market.

- a. Provide grants and funding for sustainable tourism businesses, especially for small businesses in the travel and tourism sector, in alignment with federal conservation priorities. Examples of current programs that help communities improve their development practices are the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) 2021 Climate Action Plan to incorporate resiliency uniformly across DOT programs, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Smart Growth Program in the Office of Community Revitalization.
- b. Prioritize the use of green and blue and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- c. Collaborate with destination management organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector, including the outdoor recreation industry, to share information on and best practices for economic opportunities related to resilient and sustainable tourism.
- d. Identify opportunities for ecotourism to support existing conservation and restoration efforts.
- e. Support the creation and use of common standards of sustainability for tourism businesses and a system of standardized labeling to identify sustainable and green and blue operators.
- f. Collaborate with local, state, and tribal governments and the private sector to create more parks, green and blue spaces, and safe outdoor opportunities in nature-deprived communities and urban areas.

**STRATEGY 7:** Pursue innovations to provide timely data on climate-related events, natural disasters, and other crises.

- a. Communicate data on climate-related events and risks to travel and tourism communities in a way that is more

easily understood, relevant, and actionable.

- b. Encourage linkages among data-producing programs to avoid data silos and facilitate a more holistic approach to data-based resiliency.
- c. Increase access to regional and localized data related to climate change and natural disasters.
- d. Increase the data available in connection with natural disasters and health events.
- e. Collaborate with the private sector to enhance metrics for evaluating travel and tourism’s environmental impact.
- f. Produce national travel and tourism statistics more frequently and provide additional travel and tourism data at the state level.

#### 4. Travel and Tourism-related Support Measures Taken as Countermeasures Against COVID-19

Conventionally, in the United States, tourism promotion is handled within the private sector or at the local level. Tourism support measures at the federal level—such as export promotion of travel and tourism services by NTTO and tourism promotion by Brand USA, etc.—receive limited political involvement of the federal government and Congress. However, in this case the federal government has implemented a subsidy system with the aim of supporting the tourism industry, which has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021. An economic relief bill had been in place since the previous Trump administration, and this bill included the expansion and extension of those policies. Within the plan, the following two subsidy systems were established as support measures related to the travel and tourism industry.

##### a. State Tourism Grant

**Funding amount:** \$510 million

**Purpose:** Allocate funds to each state and US territory to compensate for the rate of lost employment/GDP in the travel

and tourism industry during the pandemic. (States can also competitively reallocate funds to each relevant government agency and non-profit organizations, including DMOs.)

**Main Use**

- State/county/community tourism marketing and promotional campaigns aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 guidelines
- Workforce development to support the travel, tourism and outdoor/recreation industries
- Economic development plans for the impact of the pandemic on local travel, tourism and outdoor/recreation industries
- Technical assistance to businesses, sole proprietors and non-urban areas to address the changes the pandemic has brought to the travel, tourism and outdoor/recreation industries
- Improve (renovate) existing travel/tourism and outdoor/recreation facilities (convention centers, etc.) to revitalize travel/tourism activities and improve functionality in response to social distancing regulations during the pandemic
- Infrastructure projects that lead to long-term increases in tourism in communities adjacent to natural tourism areas such as national and state parks and national marine protected areas
- Other EDA-approved activities to support local travel, tourism, and outdoor/recreation industries

**Main Funding Recipients**

The DOC finished distributing subsidies to all U.S. states and territories by December 8, 2021. The projects that were funded varied according to local needs, ranging from marketing campaigns to bring back tourists (Alaska and Vermont) to improvements to the state's most-visited parks (Oklahoma), from infrastructure development in public water access (Minnesota), to adding educational curriculum for preserving the state's historic parks (Louisiana).

**b. Competitive Tourism Grant**

**Funding amount:** \$240 million

**Purpose:** Support the activities of non-profit organizations

including relevant government agencies and DMOs (for-profit organizations are ineligible) to revive the industry economy and increase future economic resilience in communities where the pandemic has hit the travel, tourism and outdoor/recreation industries particularly hard.

**Main Use**

- New (expanded) infrastructure projects
  - Labor force development projects
  - Projects that promote diversity, equity and inclusion
  - Projects that promote economic diversification and (preferably) strengthen the travel and tourism industry
  - Projects that further the promotion and commercialization of new technologies
  - Projects that help mitigate climate change
  - Projects intended to grow U.S. exports
- ※With the exception of multi-state tourist destinations, projects related to marketing and promotional campaigns are not eligible. Funding for each project typically ranges from \$500,000 to \$10 million, and submitting a dual application with state tourism subsidy program is also possible.
- ※As of July 2022, no funding recipients have been announced.

These subsidy systems can be said to be ground-breaking in light of the conventional tourism policy of the US federal government. In particular, it is worth noting that a subsidy system was established that strongly supports regions working to promote tourism, and is clearly distinguished from the subsidy system that has strong implications of compensating for losses. We would like to pay attention to what kind of tourism policy the U.S. federal government will promote going forward, given its new inbound visitor target and new travel and tourism strategy.

## References

1) National Travel and Tourism Strategy 2022

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