



What is Meaningful Tourism?

*Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt FRGS FRAS
Executive Director Meaningful Tourism Centre
CEO COTRI China Outbound Tourism Research Institute*

The Meaningful Tourism Centre

The MTC Meaningful Tourism Centre is a non-profit organization based in London, with its headquarters in Kathmandu and partner offices in several countries.

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 to various for both topics to organizations and institutions globally. Its founder and director, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt, has extensive experience in international tourism, particularly with China, and has been involved in the field for nearly five decades as a consultant, trainer, publisher, event organizer and university professor for international tourism management.

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 CEO 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





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 create a sustainable development, to mitigate and adapt to climate change and successfully perform transformative processes within a fast-changing world.



About 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)



About Meaningful Tourism

- Meaningful Tourism is a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development, aiming to create benefits and satisfaction for all key stakeholders: tourists, host communities, tourism employees, service-providing companies, and governments, while respecting the environment. It involves aligning benefits and satisfaction with measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for continuous improvement.
- The Meaningful Tourism approach includes sustainable practices in areas like hotel construction and financing, all grounded in principles of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing, with an emphasis on activities that benefit individuals, others, and future generations.

Meaningful Tourism



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 MT index
- A tool to support integrate the MT 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



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 intern. 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



The development of Meaningful Tourism (2020–2025)

- 2021 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt
- 2022 Start of annual Meaningful Tourism Awards (Singapore, Doha, Kathmandu)
- 2022 Publication of chapter Meaningful Tourism in Buhalis (ed): *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing* , Article in PhocusWire
- 2023 Publication of chapter Meaningful Tourism 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 – MT Award Winners 2023*, and *MT Weekly*
- 2024 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre Ltd. (UK), HQ in Kathmandu
- 2024 Start of Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshops
- 2025 PATA approves Vision Statement: Meaningful Pacific-Asia Tourism Industry
- 2025 Meaningful Tourism Forum at GITF 2025 in Guangzhou



Meaningful Tourism



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

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 MICE, VFR, health, education, etc.

Meaningful Tourism encompasses all connected activities, from sustainable construction of hotels and resorts to financing and insuring based on requirements of sustainable concepts.

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 climate change to survive.

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 these groups to facilitate clear progress tracking.

This creative method enhances critical thinking, technological skills, and change management, making it an enjoyable way to grasp sustainable development strategies in just one day, with an extended two-day option for students.



Why using a Transformational Game Workshop?

Tourism is undergoing significant changes due to climate change, advancements in artificial intelligence, and geopolitical tensions. As a result, tourism training and education must evolve from traditional knowledge delivery methods to focus on developing skills for critical thinking, information utilization, technological proficiency, adaptability to change and innovation, and enhancing interpersonal, intercultural, and interdisciplinary capabilities.

In this context, 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 company or organisation.

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop is offered as :

One-day workshop (for companies and organisations)

and as

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

Number of participants: Minimum 6 participants, best results with participant numbers between 12 and 18 for the one-day workshop and 12 and 30 for the two-day workshop.

Trainer: Certified Meaningful Tourism trainer, possible inclusion (online) of Prof. Dr. Arlt

Certification: Participants will receive a certification document and will be added to the list of certified participants on the MTC website. Organising destination, company or organisation also receiving certification

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop

One day workshop typical structure

One-Day Program Structure

Morning (3 hours)

Introduction and Role Distribution (Plenum)

Overview Meaningful Tourism and MT Game Workshop

Assignment of stakeholder roles

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

Using online tools (smartphone) if additional data needed

Presentation and Discussion of Findings and Requests (Plenum)

Each stakeholder (group) presents their interests and requests for future development, discussion of contradictions and solutions

Lunch Break



One day workshop typical structure

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 aligned solution, documentation of the agreed solution and strategy

Introduction SMART KPIs (Plenum)

KPI Development (Stakeholder groups)

Creation of measurable KPIs by and for each stakeholder group based on existing or realistically achievable data

KPI Presentation, Discussion, Decision and Documentation (Plenum)

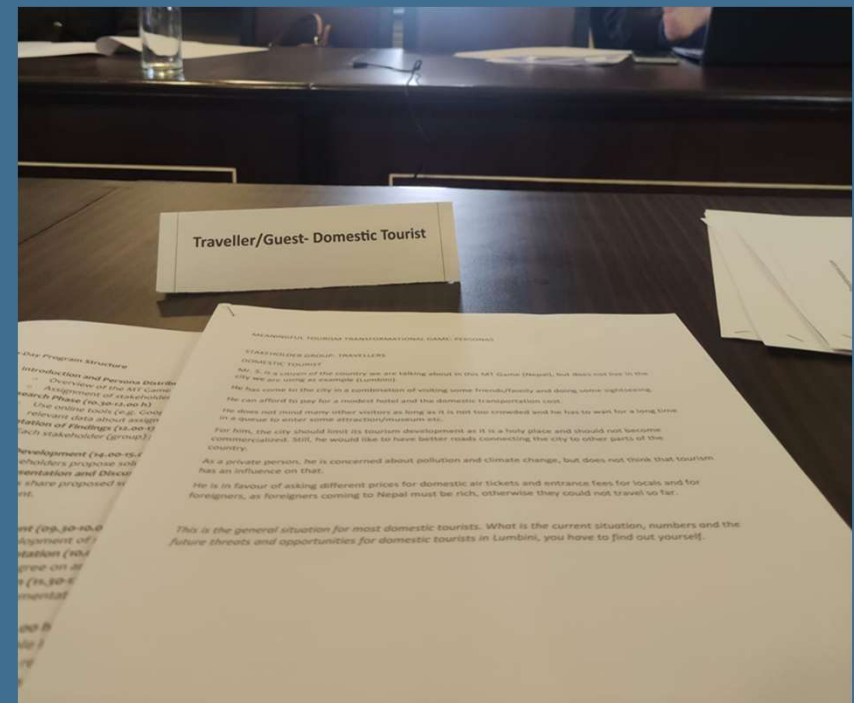
Presentation of KPIs, refinement based on feedback and discussion, documentation

Final Discussion, Feedback, Certificates, Group photo



Learning objectives

1. Understand the Meaningful Tourism paradigm:
Align benefits and satisfaction across all stakeholders.
2. Engage in role-play:
Assume perspectives of stakeholders to address real-world challenges.
3. Develop solutions:
Create actionable strategies that align stakeholder interests.
4. Measure impact:
Define and develop measurable KPIs for sustainable outcomes.



SMART GOALS

- S** SPECIFIC
- M** MEASURABLE
- A** ACHIEVABLE
- R** REALISTIC
- T** TIMELY

Key Performance Indicators

Imagine you're on a road trip. While the number of snacks in your car or the songs on your playlist might add to the experience, they aren't critical to reaching your destination. In contrast, the fuel in your tank, the direction you're headed, and the road signs you follow are vital. Similarly, in the business realm, KPIs are these essential signposts. They stand out because they are directly tied to our most pressing goals and ambitions.

Consider a healthcare facility aiming to "Enhance patient experience." While a noble goal, it lacks the structure needed to be a transformative KPI. Applying the SMART framework, the goal might evolve to: "Increase the patient satisfaction score by 25%, focusing on outpatient services, based on quarterly feedback surveys over the next year." This revised KPI is:

Specific: It focuses on the patient satisfaction score and outpatient services.

Measurable: The metric used is the feedback survey score.

Achievable: The target is challenging but based on prior research and capabilities.

Relevant: Enhancing patient experience is core to a healthcare facility's mission.

Time-bound: There's a clear one-year timeline with quarterly checkpoints.

Workshop outcomes for participants

- Deep understanding of the Meaningful Tourism paradigm
- Enhanced problem-solving and critical- thinking skills
- Understanding of different objective interests of different stakeholders
- Learning how to craft mutually beneficial solutions that are actionable and scalable.
- Experience in stakeholder alignment and development of measurable, practical positive outcomes
- Certification of participation, demonstrating knowledge of Meaningful Tourism principles



Workshop outcomes for company / organisation

- Initiating a reflection on current practices and necessary updates to changing circumstances
- Enabling staff / members to achieve a deeper understand the objective interests of different stakeholders
- Providing a creative and non-hierarchical environment to develop a new holistic sustainable strategy based on measurable benefits and satisfaction of all stakeholders
- Development of practical SMART KPIs to manage and measure success for each stakeholder group



Certified Trainers of Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop



**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang
Georg Art**



Emmanuel Frimpong
Ghana



Dr. Birgit Trauer
Australia



Florian Caks
Austria and
Namibia



I Nengah Subadra
Bali, Java and
Sumatra



Faisal Razu
Bangladesh



Catherine Germier
Cambodia and Laos



Paul Moxness
Canada



Max Dubravko Fijacko
Croatia



Jaana Raisanen
Finland



Lars von der Wettern
Germany and Spain



Frank Hoerl
Germany



Eirini Daouka
Greece



Giancarlo Fedeli
Italy



Rakshit B Khadka
Nepal



Santosh Bidarri
Nepal



Yuliska Labawo
Northern Indonesia



Dr. Ali Akaak
Oman



Kristel Kessler
Oman



Rhea Tabora
Philippines



Sofia Costa
Portugal



Dr. Nisha Abu Bakar
Singapore



Septi Bukula
Southern Africa



**Mayte Redondo
Castuera**
Spain



Grace Mrema
Tanzania and Kenya



Jurairat Povibool
Thailand



Dr. Nurgul Boz
Turkiye



Vishal Pandey
UAE




James Young
Vietnam



Biubwa Omar
Zanzibar

For further information please contact the Meaningful Tourism Centre:

 Whatsapp: +49 1525 3526044

 Email info@meaningfultourismcentre.org

 Website: <https://meaningfultourismcentre.org>



Meaningful Tourism Centre

GATE Global Academy of Tourism & Hospitality Education

Mahankal-9 Mandikhatar

Kathmandu, Nepal