



Job Description

General Manager

Overview

Employer:	Castara Retreats (Sole Trader, UK)
Vacancy Title:	General Manager
Start Date:	01 September 2024 (ideally)
Location:	Castara, Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago
Base Salary:	2,700 – 3,700 USD per month Gross (re. taxes, see below link)
Education:	Minimum Bachelor’s Degree Hospitality, Tourism, Business
Experience:	Minimum three years in managerial position in the Caribbean accommodation sector
Probation Period:	Six months

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1. About Castara Retreats

Castara Retreats is a collection of 17 eco-lodges on the exquisite island of Tobago. Please visit: <https://castararetreats.com/> for more information, taking particular attention to our '[sustainable story](#)'.

2. Role and responsibilities

The General Manager (GM) is resident on Tobago and is responsible for all aspects of operations at Castara Retreats achieving an excellent guest experience and business profitability. The GM provides leadership and strategic planning to managers, staff, and the network of external partners.

There are six departments at Castara Retreats: 1) housekeeping, 2) restaurant, 3) guest liaison, 4) maintenance and gardens, 5) wellness, and 6) administration, as well as a Regenerative Tourism Coordinator & Assistant to the General Manager. All departments report to the GM who in turn reports to the International Manager and Owner, Steve Felgate.

At Castara Retreats, sustainability is front and centre of our ethos, values, and overall business strategy. As such, the General Manager should see the regenerative tourism strategies as a local and global priority and will be passionately driven to work with other stakeholders to make meaningful progress towards its objectives year on year. They will champion this progress within the global community of responsible/ethical travellers and establish Castara Retreats as an exemplar for green tourism whose reputation and commercial growth is inextricably linked to its green credentials.

The General Manager works closely with Steve, consulting together to understand the role, its alignment to the regenerative tourism strategy and the culture in which everything takes place. Together they agree on priorities and targets for the months ahead with regular progress reviews and Steve acting as mentor and coach. Once the essential tasks are in hand, they will identify a long-term development plan for the General Manager, enabling Steve to step back, confident that Castara Retreats can operate independently.

The GM will also work remotely and closely with the UK marketing and sales team acting as a skilful conduit between the UK and Tobago team, ensuring that the small detail is attended to and there is a seamless quality of service to guests.

Castara Retreats is renowned for its warmth and generosity of spirit that consistently exceeds guest expectations through a diverse and inclusive local team where everyone brings their unique self to their role. The General Manager is experienced, capable and confident, with a warm approach, who inspires others to give their best. An ability to adapt to and work within the local culture is important. We are looking for someone

with a mature, calm, and composed demeanour who is approachable and able to foster a positive and inclusive inter-department environment.

The role requires close daily collaboration and working alongside others within the Tobago team – accommodation, wellness, and restaurant – contributing within a flat organisational structure that encourages everyone to work to their strengths, and to be supportive to one another. We are a small enterprise accommodating up to 42 guests: everything is small scale, intimate, and natural. The staff are perceived by guests as happy in their work who are respected and well rewarded for their good efforts. Where there are gaps in quality or service, the teams and individuals are encouraged to be open to feedback, and for coaching in how to further improve. Problems, complaints, and errors are seen as opportunities to learn.

This culture will resonate with the General Manager who will be active and creative in coaching others to improve their contribution, with individual development plans and goals to enable everyone to learn new skills and consolidate their learning. The General Manager shall foster interdepartmental staff collaboration, apply team spirit, motivational, personal communication, and conflict resolution skills to coordinate and align the implementation of agreed actions with department heads and staff.

The role is very hands on, involved in the detail of the everyday operation, and without the constraints of status and seniority. Guests notice and are inspired when they see staff offering an exceptional service, in a uniquely local style.

3. Specific duties and responsibilities

3.1. Strategic and commercial

- Agrees with the owner the annual priorities for moving strongly towards the Regenerative Tourism Strategies and the Green Key targets.
- Based on communication with the owners and the Regenerative Tourism Strategies, set quarterly operational priorities and milestones and coordinate their implementation across all departments.
- Increase occupancy in the low season months by improving visibility of Castara Retreats in the Trinidad and Tobago and the Caricom region.
- Promotes the restaurant locally to increase footfall and profitability by improving its visibility in the local Tobago and Trinidad market for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

3.2. Communication and networking

- Takes ownership of guest complaints and collaborates with relevant UK and Tobago managers to understand what happened to prepare skilful and appropriate responses.

- Acts as conduit between the teams in Tobago and the UK to facilitate effective communications and coordination of services including price increases, group arrivals, special events, media and agent on-site inductions, guest information guide, signage, website information etc.
- Works with the marketing and communications manager in the UK to provide weekly, high quality and engaging social media and newsletter content.
- Develops productive relationships and networks across the tourism sector to enhance the reputation of Castara Retreats as an exemplar of regenerative tourism.
- Engages with local stakeholders e.g. Tobago Tourism Agency, the Tobago Tourism and Hospitality Institute, the Division for Tourism, Antiquities, Culture, and Transport, the Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Management Organisation, the Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville, etc.

3.3. Operations (processes and procedures)

- Ensures the quality of all services are managed to an exceptional standard to ensure overall guest satisfaction and the on-going profitability of the eco resort.
- Establishes and supports a reception and guest service rota from 8am – 6pm and timetables for incoming guests arriving “out of office” hours to be received and introduced to their accommodation.
- Oversees various financial aspects of the local business including the on-line payment systems, book-keeping, procurement, invoicing, and payroll.
- Overall responsibility to define, document, and implement procedures for the safe operation of all services and activities at Castara Retreats including in the restaurant, the accommodations, the wellness centre, and the gardens, pathways, and driveways and in accordance with local Fire, Health and Safety regulations and for Trinidad and Tobago Industry Certification (TTIC) and Green Key.
- Ensures compliance with all legal requirements for hotel operations in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Is alert to service shortfalls and pressures (in reception, guest liaison, the restaurant etc) and where necessary gets involved in the active running of operations that require additional support.

3.4. Capacity building and people management

- Adopts a programme and project management approach to leading and successfully implementing priorities and sustainability initiatives across the business.
- Establishes a strong professional relationship with the Guest Liaison Manager and Maintenance Manager (Porridge holds both positions and has led the team

in Tobago for the past 20 plus years and is a front of house star who is very popular with guests).

- Trains the existing local management team to operationalise a local reservations service.
- Fosters collaborative working relationships across the various departments.
- Leads, collaborates with, and is a role model to the local management team to plan and implement their priorities, including new projects aligned to the regenerative tourism strategies.
- Define and agrees simple, measurable performance standards across the local management team with regular reviews and feedback to recognise accomplishment and to establish targets for further progress.
- Instinctively committed to supporting, mentoring, and developing the Tobago team to internationally recognised standards.
- Promotes equality and diversity for staff and sustains an inclusive and supportive work environment.

3.5. Maintenance and interior presentation

- Oversees the presentation and equipping of each accommodation, enhancing their luxury rustic appearance and comfort through a local network of quality sources.
- Oversees inspection of all site infrastructure (buildings, paths, sewerage, water etc), to ensure all is operational, well maintained, and safe with up to date and accurate records of inspections and maintenance.
- Liaises closely with other managers to ensure timely, and up to standard, remedial work and improvements to accommodation and site infrastructure.

4. Education, qualifications, experience

Kindly refer to all requirements in your application.

Essential

We are looking for a candidate with:

- a proven history in hospitality or other customer facing organisations with a passion for delivering a memorable experience and exceptional service to guests
- tertiary degree in tourism, hospitality, business management, or related field
- previous managerial position, preferably in a boutique hotel with a track record of motivating and leading teams
- strong communication and interpersonal skills are essential with a fluency in the English language
- the availability to offer work flexibility when needed, including weekends, holidays, and evenings and on-call 24/7
- strong administrative and finance skills - comfort working with budgets, payroll, revenue and forecasting

- IT literacy (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and email)

Desirable

- Knowledge of small (boutique hotel) operations
- Additional language skills
- Travel experience
- Social and environmental engagement

5. Salary and benefits

20 days annual leave

Base Salary: 2,700 – 3,700USD per month Gross

A discretionary performance-based bonus (5 – 20% of base salary).

Enjoy 50% discount on food and drinks in the restaurant and with family and friends

Complimentary massage and reduction in price of yoga sessions

Staff accommodation available on special terms

For tax information see:

<https://www.finance.gov.tt/services/income-tax/paying-your-taxes>

6. Legal and contractual

Must be

- a) Either eligible for residency in Trinidad and Tobago, either a Trinidad and Tobago national or a Caricom resident eligible for a Caricom skills certificate, confirming a right to work anywhere in the Caribbean
- b) or be able to eligible for a work permit application (e.g. clean police record, no tax violations, possess qualifications that are difficult to source locally), see: <https://nationalsecurity.gov.tt/faq/how-to-apply-for-a-work-permit-for-trinidad-and-tobago> (note Castara Retreats would apply for the successful candidate).

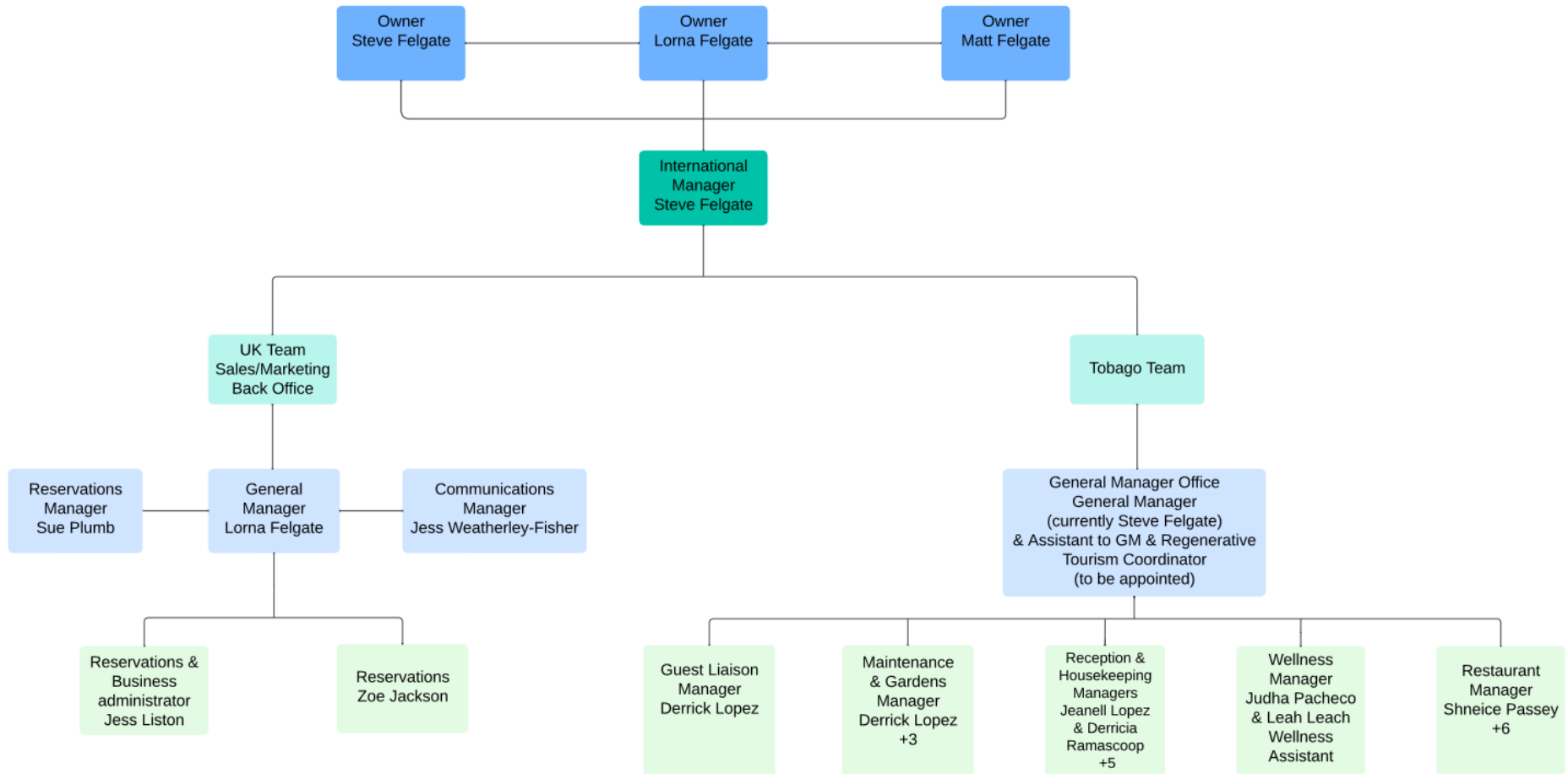
The appointment is made with a 6-month probationary period (please note: probation period can be extended at the discretion of the owner, Steve, if some probation objectives have not been met fully within the period).

7. Application

Please apply through [our website](#).

8. Annex 1: Castara Retreats Org Chart

Castara Retreats: Organisational Structure



9. Annex 2: Castara Retreats Regenerative Tourism Strategies 2024

Vision

Castara Retreats is a regional role model for the regenerative tourism accommodation sector, resilient, prosperous, and inclusive, thus inspiring a ‘community of practice’ which shares the opportunities of tourism to benefit local culture, our environment, and economy.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide our external and internal stakeholders with information how Castara Retreats intends to achieve its vision.

Stakeholders

Our external stakeholders are:

- clients
- tour operators
- the media
- governmental agencies
- the Tobago Biosphere Management Alliance
- the non-governmental sector in Tobago, specifically the Castara Tourism Development Association
- the private sector in Tobago
- the primary school in Castara
- the Castara Tourism

Our internal stakeholders are:

- owners of Castara Retreats
- management
- staff
- strategy implementation partners

Castara Retreats Regenerative Tourism Strategies

Environmental

1. Improving biodiversity, ecosystem-services, climate change resilience, and conservation in the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Social

2. Improving social justice
3. Improving livelihoods and wellbeing in our host community
4. Supporting individual wellbeing of staff and clients

Governance

1. Engaging and empowering staff to embrace and implement activities aimed at achieving Castara Retreat's Regenerative Tourism Vision
2. Informing our tourism stakeholders
3. Improving fair working conditions and staff recognition
4. Meeting the Green Key Certification Criteria

Strategy 1

Improving biodiversity, ecosystem-services, climate change resilience, and conservation in North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Activities

- Form a long-term, income sharing partnership with an experienced, networked, and reputable local NGO strengthening its conservation and regenerative development efforts in the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve by providing unrestricted financial support.
- Attract BSc or MSc students to annually evaluate the impact of CR's Regenerative Tourism Strategies.
- Adhere to relevant national legislation and international best practice in the areas of environment and health (as far as applicable and achievable).

Strategy 2

Contributing to social justice

Activities

- In recognition of all that Castara Retreats, as a British Enterprise, has received from Tobago and in reparation for historical harms caused by colonialism on Tobago, even before our company existed, we commit to provide annual funding for local projects to protect and enhance local culture and biodiversity.

Strategy 3

Improving livelihoods and wellbeing in our host community

Activities

- Support one Castara-based entrepreneur per year (in response to request) supported by providing operational guidance and linkages to CR's clients. The selected entrepreneur should align with CR's social and environmental guidelines, and provide products or services that are of interest to CR clients.
- Provide information on community-based products and services to CR's clients via website, virtual concierge (if applicable), signage, etc. to encourage local spending.
- Support quarterly engagements at the Castara Primary School through outsourced school outreach experts to raise the awareness of children on the

challenges faced by nature as the climate changes as well as tourism opportunities and inspire them to become climate activists and champions.

Strategy 4

Supporting individual wellbeing of staff and clients

Activities

- Provide incentives to encourage staff to take up CR's health and wellbeing offerings in the yoga studio and restaurant.
- Offer at least one capacity building incentive to support wellness department staff to enhance their professional experience and qualifications.
- Expand the current offer of complimentary therapies.
- Expand the number of in-house residential yoga retreats offered through building on existing networks and word-of-mouth promotion.
- Design and facilitate an immersive mindfulness experience set in the surrounding rainforest.

Strategy 5

Engaging and empowering Tobago and UK staff to embrace and implement activities aimed at achieving Castara Retreat's Regenerative Tourism Vision

Activities

- Engage a local NGO with demonstrable regenerative tourism expertise to monitor and mentor the implementation of CR's regenerative tourism strategies on the local level.
- Hire a Regenerative Tourism Coordinator and Assistant to the General Manager responsible for coordinating the implementation of Castara Retreats' Regenerative Tourism Strategies and liaising with the above-mentioned NGO partner organisation.
- Publish CR's Regenerative Tourism Strategies, evaluate against defined indicators (e.g., "activities") and update annually.
- Recruit an experienced hotel professional as general manager, based in Tobago, with a positive person-centred approach and the values, creativity, and drive to lead Castara Retreats to its sustainable future.
- Improve the capacity of staff to use their increased personal knowledge to inform and inspire guests regarding CR's regenerative efforts as well as health and wellbeing offerings in the yoga studio and restaurant.
- Ensure that the local management team understands and embraces CRs sustainability agenda before the strategy will be published
- Set SMART quarterly milestones and empower all local staff to implement those.
- Involved all staff (Tobago and UK) in quarterly training and development workshops to enhance their knowledge and understanding on sustainability, and to participate in setting sustainability objectives year on year.

- Encourage all staff to implement CR's regenerative tourism strategies in their roles and challenge bad practice.
- Strengthen the restaurant team's capacity in sourcing, provisioning, storing, and delivering a modern Caribbean menu driven by locally sourced, low waste, sustainable principles.
- Strengthen restaurant leadership and management capacity through either developing current staff members and recruiting a qualified professional.

Strategy 6

Engaging our tourism stakeholders

Activities

- Publish CR's Regenerative Tourism Strategies on our website to inform tourism organisations and individuals interested in promoting Tobago, Castara community, and Castara Retreats as a green destination.
- Make information about Green Key visible for guests and staff onsite and online including information on how they can play a part and including the opportunity to compensate their emissions through a local carbon offset scheme or donations.
- Optimise CR's website regarding searches for green accommodations in the Caribbean.
- Leverage CR's PR and marketing networks to internationally promote Castara community and the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve as a community-led green tourism destination.
- Accumulate international and regional recognition, through achieving awards and certification for sustainability/green practices.
- Leverage the 2024 Blue Flag/Green Key annual global conference in Tobago to promote Castara and the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve as a green destination, and widen our network of international partners
- Update agent networks and booking platforms on Castara Retreats' sustainability credentials so they are better prepared to identify and promote Castara Retreats as a green destination of choice.
- Inform and engage visitors about and in our regenerative tourism goals and provide options on how they could play a part.
- Leverage PR/media networks to promote Castara Retreats and the North-east Tobago UNESCO Biosphere Reserve as an eco-destination with sustainability and protecting biodiversity at the heart of its tourism strategy.

Strategy 7

Improving fair working conditions and staff recognition

Activities

- For Tobago staff, adhere to all national legislation and best including equality,

diversity and inclusion (EDI) practise regarding labour conditions.

- Equitably hire women, differently abled, and vulnerable persons including in management positions.
- Maintain CR's commitment to employing at least 90% of our staff for all roles from the local community.
- Implement a bonus programme to create the feeling of stewardship amongst employees with payments determined by annual profit, length of employment, and annual performance.
- Continuedly support staff members to become stakeholders in tourism through establishing their own tourist-facing services at Castara Retreats, promoted to guests as a means of enhancing individual livelihoods and financial autonomy.
- Build staff capacity to take up alternative job opportunities through the induction and on-the-job training meeting international eco-resort standards at Castara Retreats.

Strategy 8

Meeting the Green Key Certification Criteria

Activities

- Annually review the Green Key Certification Criteria and ensure that all mandatory criteria as well as an increasing number of optional criteria is met resulting in an annual renewal of the Green Key Certification.

10. Annex 3: Information on Regenerative Tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to the sustainability of the tourism industry as a whole whereas responsible tourism refers to the individual actions that people, businesses, and destinations take to create a sustainable tourism industry. Sustainable tourism operates within realistic limits and is described as the ‘strategy’ while responsible tourism is the ‘tactics’.

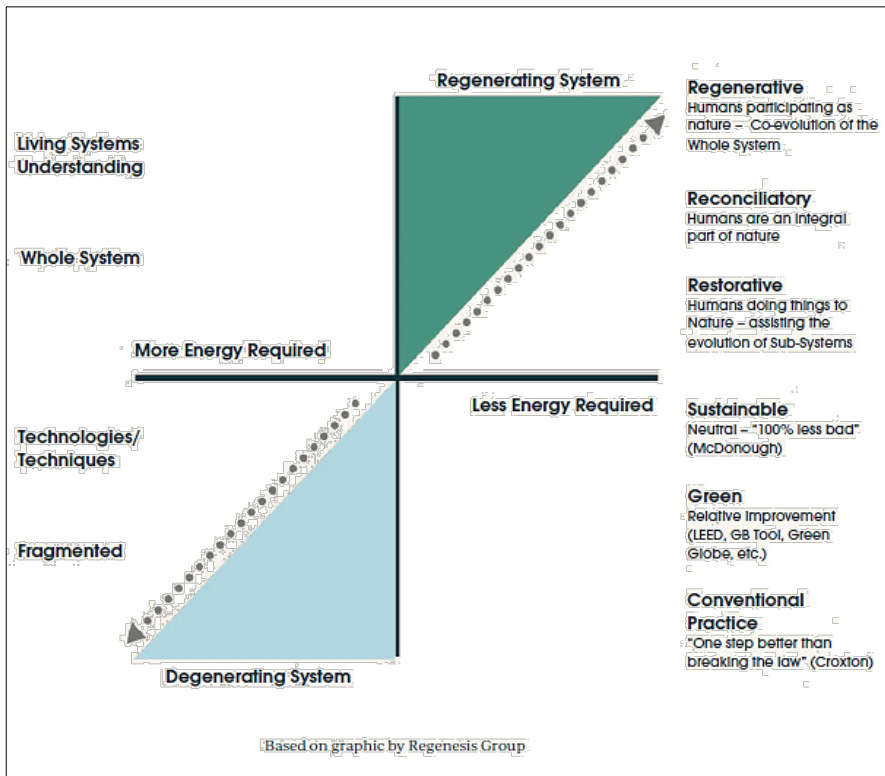


Figure 1. Regenerative Tourism Model (Catchon Finn and Partners)

While sustainable tourism projects are working on being efficient, regenerative tourism focuses on engaging and understanding the living system including the responses to the environment, adaptation, growth and development. If such systems of life in the places people visit are respected and appreciated, there is a chance

that these perspectives are taken back to the tourist generation region, resulting in a positive ripple effect. Regenerative tourism provides hope to the calamity we have reeked on the planet in the name of development by providing renaissance to the role of humans on the planet. Sustainable tourism only articulates long-term and responsible resource use for industry growth and development while regenerative tourism presents a level of profound consciousness that the visitor must experience and form a sense of inspiration when they return home and practice a more regenerative lifestyle. In this tourism approach a renewed collaborative relationship with nature and community must be transformed and developed.

Involving not just positive impact and sustainability, regenerative tourism addresses many of the above trends to not only take responsibility for minimising the negatives of tourism, ensure the sustainability of people and places, and positively heal and impact them for the future, but importantly to do it in a new holistic way, examining the systems change required – including new models and measures for tourism to help co-create “flourishing destinations”