



Travalyst Annual Convening 2026

Data as the new currency

Executive Summary | March 2026

Event overview

The Travalyst Annual Convening 2026 brought together our coalition of industry partners, Board, Independent Advisory Group, and guest speakers as we explored the theme of “Data as the new currency”, and its role in unlocking a more sustainable future for travel and tourism. We were also joined virtually by our founder, Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, as we gathered for a day of discussion, debate, and ambition at one of our newest coalition partners SQUAKE's offices, ahead of ITB Berlin.



Julie Cheetham, CEO, Travalyst

Julie Cheetham, CEO, Travalyst, opened the day with the question:

“If data is the new currency, how do we invest it? How do we share the value created by sustainability data?”

Julie reflected on how increasing geopolitical instability, economic pressure, regulatory acceleration, and technological disruption can lead many to believe that sustainability is in retreat. But that data tells a different story. Commitment to sustainability is not decreasing, it is increasing. Sustainability is no longer framed primarily as opportunity creation, it is increasingly framed as risk mitigation. Crucially, data needs to be standardised, transparent, comparable, and trusted in order to help build a more sustainable future for travel and tourism.

Panels and discussions followed throughout the day, focusing on what market insights are telling us about the future of tourism, the impact of AI on the industry and how it will affect sustainability efforts, navigating regulatory complexity and shifting policy landscapes, and the role of open-access data in guiding policy decision-making.

Travalyst’s role in advocacy efforts at the highest levels of government was also discussed, with a strong emphasis on the importance of strategic partnerships, and Travalyst’s commitment to its initiatives being compliant with international standards and regulations.

The accelerated development of Travalyst’s Data Hub was also presented. This included the demonstration of a new native app - a significant step forward in enabling offline, field-based sustainability data capture, and particularly important for the inclusion of small businesses in global sustainability reporting. In addition, it was also announced that the Data Hub has entered a pilot phase of ingesting and distributing certification data, alongside introducing rail emissions information into its infrastructure. More information on the Data Hub’s latest developments can be found [here](#).

Signals of change: what current trends and market insight are telling us about the future of tourism

Panel discussion:

- ★ Dennis Tietz - Strategic Partnerships Development Lead, Google
- ★ Lucas Bobes - Group Environmental Officer, Amadeus
- ★ Nadine Pinto - Head of Sustainability: Touring, The Travel Corporation
- ★ Olivia Ruggles-Brise - Vice President, Sustainability, BCD Travel
- ★ Philipp von Lamezan - CEO and Co-Founder, SQUAKE
- ★ Pat Dwyer (Moderator) - Chair, Independent Advisory Group, Travalyst

This session brought together senior leaders from the Travalyst Coalition to explore the signals emerging from data, technology and market behaviour that are shaping the future of travel and tourism. The panellists focused on key trends and shifts in traveller behaviour and business practices, and examined if these trends are influencing whether sustainability is framed increasingly as risk mitigation rather than opportunity creation.

"We need more consistency when it comes to data - clarity and certainty are key. But this is not the case yet, and it's why coalitions like Travalyst are more relevant than ever."

Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer, Amadeus



Fabio Fornari, Senior Director of Sustainability Solutions, BCD Travel

"Standardised data presents a real opportunity, and this is where Google really wants to collaborate - as a coalition - to find these opportunities and accelerate them together."

Dennis Tietz,
Strategic Partnerships
Development Lead, Google

Signals of change (cont.)

Key discussion themes:

→ Shifting sustainability motivations

The industry is moving from sustainability as a marketing exercise toward genuine outcome-driven action. A key distinction was drawn between extrinsically motivated actors (those meeting compliance minimums) and intrinsically motivated ones (those seeing real strategic value), with the challenge being how to move the former toward the latter.

→ Data: the core challenge

Fragmentation of data, inconsistent methodologies, and lack of industry-wide standards were identified as major blockers. The panellists debated data quality vs. data completeness, and whether the pursuit of perfect data sets was becoming an excuse for inaction.

→ AI as an enabler

AI was seen as a significant opportunity to synthesise complex, multi-variable data and surface actionable sustainability insights quickly. However, concerns were raised about AI's own environmental footprint, over-reliance, and the risk of unintended consequences.

→ Consumer behaviour and communication

Consumers express willingness to pay more for sustainable travel, but only when impact is clearly communicated. The challenge is striking a balance between accessible messaging and avoiding greenwashing, while complying with regulations such as the EU Green Claims Directive (GCD) and the EU Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (ECGT).

→ The Travalyst Coalition's role

The coalition's unique value lies in convening diverse industry players to agree on common data standards, methodologies, and messaging, rather than duplicating efforts.

"What we've seen is a significant shift in sustainable travel, from being a marketing instrument to becoming outcome-driven, and from opportunity to risk."

Philipp von Lamezan, CEO and Co-Founder, SQUAKE

* Key takeaways:

- Sustainable travel is increasingly a risk and cost management issue unless there is a business case to be made. Understanding and framing it this way resonates more with a wider group of stakeholders.
- A shared data standard is essential, but must come from within the industry, not just from regulation. The Travalyst Coalition is uniquely placed to drive this forward.
- AI can accelerate insight generation, but only with quality data inputs and responsible implementation.
- Action shouldn't wait for perfect data. Progress on well-understood levers should continue in parallel with efforts to improve data infrastructure.
- Broader industry representation is needed. The Travalyst Coalition will continue to expand to drive systemic impact.



Amélie Losanes, Managing Consultant, Sustainability, Advito

Are we losing the narrative? Politicians are choosing to pause, while the climate is only accelerating

Panel discussion:

- ★ Alexandria C. Miskho - Environmental Attorney and Former Senior Advisor
- ★ Darin Graham - Climate Reporter, Skift
- ★ Martin Nolan - Chief Legal Officer, Skyscanner
- ★ Susanne Becken - Professor of Sustainable Tourism, Griffith University, Australia
- ★ Kees Jan Boonen (Moderator) - Director of Legal and Public Affairs, Travalyst

This panel brought together expert academic, business, and media perspectives to explore the growing paradox between accelerating climate impacts and wavering political support. The discussion examined how the travel industry should navigate this shifting landscape, and how to maintain momentum on sustainability commitments.



On screen: Alexandria C. Miskho, Environmental Attorney and Former Senior Advisor

Key discussion themes:

→ The political paradox of climate action

Despite climate impacts becoming more acute and undeniable, political commitment has weakened significantly. Panellists noted that domestic US policy changes, including withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, are having broad and deep impacts on the global climate ecosystem.

→ Markets moving faster than politics

Panellists discussed how economic and market forces are outpacing political rhetoric. Renewable energy saw record growth in the US in 2025, and major corporations like Marriott are now stating that climate change is raising costs - not that it could. The shift in corporate language from conditional to declarative was highlighted as a significant signal of where business reality has arrived.

→ Reframing the sustainability narrative

Panellists argued that sustainability messaging must be adapted to current political and cultural contexts without abandoning underlying goals. Framing around energy security, affordability, risk mitigation, and business resilience is seen as more effective with a broader range of stakeholders, including governments and investors. Solutions-focused, relatable stories were also highlighted as important to make more of an impact.

→ Industry fragmentation as a strategic weakness

The travel sector's fragmented approach to public affairs and advocacy was identified as a significant obstacle. Coordinated, coalition-based engagement can, and should, act as the alternative.

→ The role of NDCs, COP, and non-binding frameworks

The discussion explored how nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and COP declarations, while not legally binding, remain important tools for aligning ambition and accessing climate finance - particularly for small island nations. Tourism's inclusion in NDCs was highlighted as an underutilised opportunity that could unlock significant policy and funding benefits. COP31 in Turkey was identified as a key upcoming moment for the travel industry.

"We're seeing conversations shift in levels of urgency. Particularly around climate risk, resilience and adaptation, from far reaching 10 - 20 year timescales, to 'what do we need to do now?'"

Alexandria C. Miskho, Environmental Attorney
and Former Senior Advisor

Are we losing the narrative? (cont.)

* Key takeaways:

- **Political withdrawal from climate frameworks does not negate the business imperative.** Companies are acting on climate risk regardless of government positioning, because the financial and operational risks are real and growing.
- **Language and framing matter.** Sustainability goals remain constant, but how they are communicated must adapt to the political moment. Energy security, cost control, and resilience are more persuasive frames in some contexts than climate ethics.
- **The travel industry must show up more consistently at policy tables.** Fragmented, occasional engagement weakens influence; sustained, coordinated coalition advocacy is far more effective.
- **NDC inclusion is an underexploited lever.** Tourism-specific language in national climate plans can unlock climate finance and shape regulation.
- **Real-world business case studies are powerful advocacy tools.** Examples like MGM Resorts achieving 100% daytime solar through private energy procurement demonstrate that sustainability and commercial logic are aligned, and these stories need to be told more confidently and more often.
- **COP31 in Turkey represents a significant opportunity** for the travel industry to elevate its presence and influence, given Turkey's position as a major tourism economy.
- **Declarations and commitments are only as valuable as their implementation.** The Travalyst Coalition has a role not just in signing frameworks but in hosting ongoing roundtables, tracking action plans, and holding partners accountable between COP cycles.



Martin Nolan, Susanne Becken, and Kees Jan Boonen

“How do we keep things on the political agenda? It’s about communicating proof points and data points. Communicating the changes that we are seeing in the industry both positively and negatively. Relatability is key.”

Martin Nolan,
Chief Legal Officer,
Skyscanner



On screen: Darin Graham,
Climate Reporter, Skift

Closing discussion

We were joined by our founder, Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, to close the day. The Duke reflected on what the Travalyst Coalition has achieved over the last few months, and on the importance of working together to drive meaningful change in the sector, to make travel a force for good.

A discussion with attendees in the room followed, alongside closing remarks from our Board Chair, Gianni Marostica. Themes included utilising the current period of political uncertainty as an opportunity to build strong foundations, community building and knowledge sharing across geographies, and accelerating the shift from hope to impact through coordinated action.

“Just as Travalyst is working to make travel a force for good, we must also work together to ensure AI is a force for good in tourism as well.”

Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer, Amadeus



Gianni Marostica, Board Chair, Travalyst



On screen: Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, Founder, Travalyst

Closing discussion (cont.)

Key discussion themes:

→ Destination data and unbalanced tourism

A recurring theme was the asymmetry between global data availability and local access to it. Many destinations currently lack the tools to use visitor data for effective planning. The Travalyst Coalition is uniquely positioned to help bridge this gap.

→ Influencing traveller behaviour

Research and platform experience consistently show that travellers gravitate toward more sustainable options when they are clearly presented, even without deep understanding of the underlying data. The key insight is that supply-side action must come first. Sustainable choices cannot be made if they are not available.

→ AI - opportunity, ethics, and misunderstanding

AI was discussed both as a productivity enabler and as a topic widely misunderstood within and beyond the industry. There was a call to distinguish between large language models (seen as a small fraction of AI's total capability) and the broader potential of machine learning optimisation. Ethical guardrails, transparency, data privacy, and energy consumption were all identified as essential considerations.



Kirsty Webster, Sustainability Lead, Skyscanner

“Whilst we’re beginning to have the data to be able to nudge traveller behaviour, we need to know what we’re nudging to. It’s not one-size-fits-all, and we need to work closely with destinations to understand what’s going to have the maximum positive impact.”

Kirsty Webster, Sustainability Lead, Skyscanner



Key takeaways:

- **Data sharing must become a collective norm.** Competitive instincts around data are understandable, but impact at industry scale requires open sharing. The Travalyst Coalition can catalyse this shift.
- **Supply drives sustainable demand.** Certified and sustainable options must exist in volume before consumer behaviour can meaningfully shift — the current certified supply at under 1% of total inventory is a critical bottleneck.
- **No single company can solve this alone.** Working together as a coalition is the only way to achieve the scale and credibility needed to drive systemic change.
- **AI has significant potential but is under-governed.** The coalition has an opportunity to provide guidance to explore how machine learning optimisation can be applied responsibly for sustainability goals.
- **Local and destination voices must be heard.** The people most affected by tourism data are often the least able to access or act on it. Closing this gap is both a justice issue and a practical planning need.
- **Corporate sustainability commitments are holding despite political headwinds.** Companies continue to invest in sustainability even if they are quieter about it publicly - a sign of long-term commitment that the coalition should support and amplify.
- **2026 is a year to build foundations, not just respond to headwinds.** Using the relative quiet in the political sustainability agenda to get systems, standards, and partnerships firmly in place for when momentum accelerates again.



For more information please contact partnerships@travalyst.org