Sharing Information on Trends, Issues and Solutions on Ecotourism

Submitted by: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
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Introduction and definitions

International Tourist Arrivals, 1950-2020
Current situation and forecasts UNWTO Tourism 2020 Vision

Middle East
Africa
Asia and the Pacific
Americas
Europe

1995: 536 mn
2009: 800 mn
1.0 bn
1.6 bn

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Ecotourism

• All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.

• Contains educational and interpretation features

Ecotourism

• Minimises negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment
• Supports the maintenance of natural areas by:

- generating economic benefits for host communities, organisations managing natural areas
- providing alternative employment and income opportunities
- increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets
Ecotourism Strategies
*Results of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002*

- National ecotourism committees in 47 countries
  - Sustainable development or biodiversity committees, national parks’ authorities, inter-ministerial cooperation.

- National policy or strategy for ecotourism development in 48 countries
  - Ecotourism in national strategies of tourism, nature or rural tourism, economic development, protected areas, regional and local tourism strategies.

- Publications, research, new legislation, certification programmes, increased awareness and cooperation.

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UNWTO Ecotourism Publications

- Sustainable Development of Ecotourism
  A Compilation of Good Practices - 2001
- The World Ecotourism Summit - Final Report - 2002
- Sustainable Development of Ecotourism
  A Compilation of Good Practices in SMEs – 2003
THE RURAL TOURISM CONCEPT

- COUNTRYSIDE
  - MOUNTAINS
  - LAKES
  - RIVERS
  - SCENERY
  - FOREST
  - NATURE

- RURAL HERITAGES
  - TRADITIONAL
  - ARCHITECTURE
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - HERITAGE
  - PRE HISTORY
  - CASTLES/CHURCHES
  - VILLAGES

- RURAL LIFE
  - CRAFTS
  - LOCAL EVENTS
  - COUNTRY FOOD
  - AGRI-TOURISM
  - TRADITIONAL MUSIC

- RURAL ACTIVITIES
  - RIDING
  - CYCLING
  - FISHING
  - WALKING
  - WATER-SPORTS

- THE RURAL TOURISM COMMUNITY

Marketing of Ecotourism

- Understanding visitor motivations and disseminating research results
  - UNWTO series of ecotourism market studies: France, Italy, Germany, Spain, UK, Canada, USA

- Profile of Tourists Practicing Ecotourism
  - Over 35
  - Slightly more women than men
  - Above average income
  - With the highly educated and higher social class being represented
  - Spanish and Italian ecotourists tend to be younger, with lower budgets
The Ecotourism source Market

Quantitative demand and market volume

- Small niche market in constant growth.
- Measuring the ecotourism market is not easy.
- Tendencies for instance:
  - Germany: 6 – 8% of all tour operators, either small or very small.
  - Spain approx. 5-6% of outbound tourism is nature - or ecotourism
  - USA: 62 of the 1200 TOs by National Tour Association (5%)

- Reservation and booking
  - Mainly made via specialized eco-tour operator agencies and through their catalogues.
  - Booking on line (via Internet) is increasing tremendously.

Motivations, preferences

- Part of focused nature tourism holidays, “being in wilderness areas” and “viewing wildlife” are main motivations (quality of the landscape, preserved environment, presence of National Parks)
- Nature and culture are strongly linked together (“meeting local people”, “sharing time with them”, “respecting their tradition and life styles”, “discovering local products and gastronomy”)
- Sport activities and trekking.
- Tourists do care about the ecotourism concept (e.g. conservation, education, interpretation) and they are ready to pay extra for it.
- High demand for a quality experience.
Sustainability

Defining carrying capacity and optimal use levels

A key quality concept with different dimensions:
- Environmental
- Cultural
- Social
- Psychological
- Infrastructural
- Management

Different types of users, forms, needs
Dynamic, depends on management
Visitor management models
How many tourists are too many?

Jiuzhaigou National Park, an illustrated example of park management in China

Visitor flow management: infrastructure
Camera-controlled shuttle bus service, Jiuzhaigou, China

Design for sustainability:
Visitor infrastructure in fragile ecological sites

Plitvice Lakes, Croatia
A different view on forests: canopy walkways

Bird watching on electric boat - Everglades NP, Florida USA
UNWTO observatories initiatives

- Huangshan, Anhui
- Yangshuo, Guangxi
Yangshuo

- Beautiful town located south of Guilin on the bank of the Li River

- Li River cruise from Guilin to Yangshuo is the main attraction of any trip to northeastern Guangxi Province.

- Thousands of visitors take the water route to witness the scenic beauty of the karst limestone landscape straddling the Li River.

- Scenery along the Li River is one of China’s top tourist destinations

Yangshuo Sustainable Tourism Observatory and Research Station
Survey, analysis and monitoring indicators

Focus on:

- Tourism and community.
- Degree of tourist satisfaction.
- Health and safety.
- Economic benefits from tourism.
- Tourism related to resources and environment protection.
- Tourism related to transport planning and management.

Major issues identified

- Need for more protective measures for natural resources and environmental protection.
- Need for more controlled measures for development regarding transport planning.
- Noise and air pollution.
- Water pollution.
- Land-use: demand on land for tourism increased but construction land is rigidly restricted; difficult to satisfy tourism development needs.
- Need for management of water environment and improvement of water quality.
- Population and traffic congestion.
Need to monitor and control tourism flows

Command Center, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), China

Tourism and Biodiversity
Tourism & Biodiversity

Sustainable Tourism:

- is a strong contributor to sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation.
- attempts to minimize its impact on the environment and local culture so that it will be available for future generations.
- is a source of economic income and employment for local communities. It offers an alternative for local and indigenous populations to receive income from natural resources by protecting them.
- generates income for ecosystem conservation.

Under the right conditions, economic development can be a partner for the environment.

Tourism can be a key vehicle in raising environmental awareness & fostering positive behaviour change for biodiversity conservation.
Tourism and Biodiversity Publications

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Guidelines on biodiversity and tourism Development. 2004
- UNWTO: Tourism and Biodiversity. Achieving common goals towards Sustainability. 2010
- UNWTO – Bonn Unit: Practical guide for the development of Biodiversity – based tourism products. 2010

World Tourism Day 2010

- World Tourism Day 2010 (WTD) will be celebrated around the theme “Tourism and Biodiversity” and will highlight the important linkages between tourism and biodiversity.
- Official celebrations will be hosted by China on 27 September, with many other events taking place around the world. Activities: think-tank, press conference, photo contest exhibition, ceremonies…
World Tourism Organization
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

WTD 2010 Website
www.unwto.org/worldtourismday

- UNWTO Secretary-General’s Message
- Photo competition
- Inspiring Stories
- Share your Event
- Papers on tourism and biodiversity
- Publications

Ecotourism and Poverty Alleviation
Ecotourism and poverty alleviation

- Tourism is the main source of foreign exchange earnings in many developing and least developed countries.
- Ecotourism is an important tool for poverty alleviation in rural areas.
- 75% of the 2 billion people living with less than a dollar a day live in rural and natural areas.
- Tourism contributes to social and economic development by creating direct and indirect jobs.
- Tourism arrests the rural-urban migration process that generates further poverty in large cities.

ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty) Projects world-wide

- ST-EP was created in 2002 to harness the developmental power of tourism in the fight against world poverty.
- >150 pilot projects identified.

ASIA
- Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Nepal, Viet Nam

AFRICA
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia

AMERICA
- Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru

EUROPE
- Albania
UNWTO ST-EP projects linking ecotourism and poverty alleviation

Promoting Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism for Livelihood Improvement and Biodiversity Conservation at the Tam Giang Lagoon. **Vietnam**

- Raising awareness on environmental protection and natural resource conservation.
- Clean water supply at two community tourism villages.
- Training course for villagers on community based ecotourism development.
- Partnership with provincial tourism authority and travel agencies.

**Sustainable development of tourism and bird watching tours within the Inca Trail. Peru**

- An alternative source of income and employment for local people.
- Creation of a community association.
- Hospitality and guides training.
- Reforestation activities.

UNWTO Support to Ecotourism projects

**Indonesia**

- **Interpretation of Biodiversity in tourism destination**
  - Installation of interpretation signs on selected locations in the Nature Recreation Park (NRP).
  - Giving information on “hazard zone” and evacuation maps.

- **Protecting Diversity of Medicinal Plants**
  - Villagers offer interpretative tours through the village explaining the process of cultivation of medicinal plants.
  - Natural products sold in the local markets and hotels.

- **A fishing tour with tourists**
  - Fishing tour packages.
  - An alternative income for fishermen and a sustainable tourism product.

- **Diversity Tour Package**
  - Revitalization of the local culture by including local art performances into a tour package.
UNWTO Support to Ecotourism projects

Thailand

- **Activity Centre in Koh Kho Khao**
  - Development of environmentally-friendly outdoor activities managed by local communities
  - Strengthen local economy by sustainable tourism products

- **Bike Trail in Tai Muang National Park**
  - Connect existing community-based tourism offers in the Park through different biking routes
  - Tourist and local people can explore the local flora and fauna.

- **Establishment of kayaking tours integrating mangrove learning in Koh Nok**
  - Show the importance of mangroves for tourism, the environment and as a buffer against tsunamis.

Conclusions
Conclusions

- Ecotourism has rapidly expanded in recent decades and is expected to further grow in the future.

- Dynamic segment of the tourism industry with a strong potential to generate positive and minimize negative impacts on:
  - the natural environment,
  - biodiversity and its conservation,
  - the social and cultural structures of the communities where it takes place.

- Imperative to introduce sustainability criteria, to ensure long term viability and quality of the tourism experience.

Thank you

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