



Press Brief

Biodiversity and Tourism Development

Why is this important?

Travel and tourism activities employ (directly and indirectly) one in every 11 people on earth and is responsible for 9 per cent of the world's gross domestic product. While unsustainable tourism can lead to environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, the right kind of partnership can generate financial resources for conservation (in fact, visitation and tourism are the largest market-based source of financing for park operations worldwide), sustainable tourism can create green business opportunities and jobs for indigenous and local communities as stewards of rich natural areas, and travel creates awareness and commitment to environmental issues in guests and hosts.

Policies and actions to reduce carbon emissions and pollution from tourism activities and to minimize the use of scarce and precious resources are highly important to global and local biodiversity, both directly and indirectly. Social aims, requiring engagement of local and indigenous communities, a focus on poverty alleviation, and social equity in relation to tourism income and benefits, also have a bearing on the provision of sustainable livelihoods and decent work opportunities which are key to reducing negative impacts on biodiversity in some areas. Tourism development and management can contribute to at least 13 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

In 1994, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, developed through a consultative process. Ten years later, the Guidelines still provide a basis for area planning and for assessing tourism projects in vulnerable ecosystems, and at COP 12, their application is under review by the Parties.



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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What news to expect in Pyeongchang?

At COP 12, specialists and delegates will discuss ways to:

- Develop and support demonstration projects in areas where there is both significant biodiversity and significant pressure or potential pressure from tourism ('tourism and conservation hotspots')
- Enhance reporting on recreation, visitation and other tourism activities as part of their regular reporting on protected areas
- Promote partnerships with the tourism industry to contribute financially and technically to the establishment, operations and maintenance of protected areas through appropriate tools such as concessions, public-private partnerships and other payback mechanisms.

An ongoing reporting process will be suggested to monitor biodiversity impacts from tourism and associated management processes on an annual basis.

To support deliberations, the CBD Secretariat, supported by the Government of Germany and in conjunction with the Government of the Republic of Korea and other partners, is planning a three-day series of business engagement events parallel to COP 12 under the overall theme of, "Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Innovative Opportunities for Business". On Sunday, 12 October, a full-day side event will be dedicated to helping protected areas to gain more from tourism, and to examine synergies in the work of the UN and international agencies such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and IUCN. Discussions at COP 12 will bring new examples and techniques in planning and assessing tourism projects in vulnerable ecosystems. The events will also validate a new version of the User's Manual of the Guidelines. In addition, representatives of GIZ, Fair Trade Tourism, G Adventures, and indigenous tour operators will showcase their experiences.

It is noteworthy that COP 12 takes place after the UN's Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS); the participation of SIDS Parties such as Samoa and Jamaica will contribute to confirm the importance of improving knowledge on the symbiotic relationship of tourism and biodiversity.

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