Biodiversity is a key tourism asset for developing countries

What is biodiversity, and why is it important to poverty alleviation and development?

Biodiversity can be described as the variety/range of difference among all living things. It goes from the inhabitant, and the interaction between the two. Interactions between the various components of biodiversity make the Earth inhabitable for all organisms, including humans. Biodiversity is a diversity important for almost 60% of the world's economy, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and pharmaceuticals, and for societies such as ethnic arts, all biodiversity important for policy making. Tourism and biodiversity can lead to the imbalance of tourism and biodiversity of the Earth.

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Tourism plays a crucial and increasing role in developing countries. Tourism serves to develop tourism and biodiversity of the Earth.

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Tourism for development and nature conservation

Resources for tourism planners and practitioners

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Why does it matter to tourism professionals?

Most leisure tourists look for beaches and coastal environments, rural and natural landscapes, national parks and mountainous regions – all of which harbour significant biodiversity. Additionally, nature-based and recreational tourism are important to the economy of many small and isolated communities. In these areas, tourism is a major source of livelihood and employment, and nature-based tourism has emerged as a major driver of economic development.

Tourists want to explore natural landscapes, parks and protected areas, so levels of tourist interest in the conservation and sustainable use of resources. Tourism is, after all, a vital aspect of the tourism industry. Many tourists who travel to protected areas are interested in the environment, and tourism and its associated impacts are of increasing concern to nature conservationists.

Sustainable tourism can help preserve the biodiversity that attracts tourists, while providing economic benefits to the local and national economies.

Poverty reduction cannot be achieved if biodiversity is compromised by uncontrolled tourism development. The conservation community is working to integrate tourism development policies and strategies that bring social and natural benefits to local communities. The tools to facilitate and support these guidelines are available and have been tested in the tourism industry. Many tourists will not return to polluted or degraded destinations. Sustainable Travelers, tourism planners and operators, governments, investors, and professionals all have an inherent interest in the conservation and sustainable use of resources. Tourism is, after all, a vital aspect of the tourism industry. Many tourists who travel to protected areas are interested in the environment, and tourism and its associated impacts are of increasing concern to nature conservationists.

Proven tools for tourism policymakers in the public and private sectors are available

• Policy tools: the enabling environments, national and local development policies and strategies that confer poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation and management by local communities, key stakeholder groups and tourism operators.

• Legal and normative tools: national and local policies and planning instruments, environmental assessments, legislation and regulations to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

• Financial tools: financial resources, incentives, concessions for operations in parks and public land, credit lines, marketing support (trade fairs, websites, awards for leading businesses) and business incubators for critical infrastructure and activities.

• Capacity building: training for professional and technical training for local communities, training for national and local governments, training for tourism operators, hoteliers, tour guides, and tourism industry stakeholders.

• Monitoring and evaluation: development of indicators and measurement systems to determine levels of tourism and impact, and to manage changes to prevent crises.

• Financial and market control tools: for delivering development, promotion and marketing of tourism destinations, region and parks.

• Software, decision support, transportation infrastructure and professional and technical training for capacity building.

Tools

Guidelines, Manuals and Reference Material


This manual provides a framework addressing the areas of a hotel’s provision of support to local communities, and it has been adopted by a number of national and international tourism industry stakeholders.


The Guide provides a framework addressing the areas of partnerships and collaboration, and it has been adopted by a number of national and international tourism industry stakeholders.

Case Studies

A small rural town in a natural setting, Kaikoura receives a large volume of tourists. They are trained in raising seedlings and producing firewood, and are working together to foster increased understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the benefits of biodiversity conservation. They are redeveloping their tourist infrastructure, based on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe for the Tourism Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves, eco-certified by the International Ecotourism Society. The Project was implemented in collaboration with the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism, the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, the University of Auckland, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Government of New Zealand, and the Tourism Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves.

Sustainable Tourism organizations and websites

CBD’s Tourism and Biodiversity Website

UNWTO, 2003

www.unwto.org

www.unep.org

www.nature.org

www.earthwatch.org

www.tourismconcern.org.uk

Tourism Concern

http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/tourismconcern.htm

www.rainforest-alliance.org/

Touring the Rainforest Alliance

www.rainforest-alliance.org/touring

The Rainforest Alliance works with hotels and tourism businesses around the world, providing information and tools to help them engage in sustainable tourism practices.

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Some resources available at: http://tourism.cbd.int/additional_resources.shtml

http://www.earthwatch.org/

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