



# Sustainable Tourism Development

# Overview

**“The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) declared in 1988 that Sustainable Tourism is ‘envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining culture, integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.’”**

Defining and achieving sustainable development has become one of the major policy debates of our generation. While concerns over the use of natural resources and their relationship to economic growth have been a significant issue for governments in Western countries since at least the late nineteenth century, at no time have such issues been so high on local, national and international policy agendas for so long

This publication is designed to give learners an insight into tourism and its effect on the local and global environment. Tourism is the world’s largest and fastest growing industry, however when unplanned it can cause many negative economic, social and cultural impacts. Readers will gain knowledge of the organisations who are actively involved and how they support sustainable tourism.

Readers will be able to research, through case studies, the impact of tourism on different destinations.



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# What is Sustainable Tourism?

‘Sustainable tourism’ is simply...

**“tourism that does not degrade the environment  
or local cultures”**

Sustainable tourism is about re-focusing and adapting. A balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning ensure that tourism can be managed. This requires thinking long-term (10, 20+ years) and realising that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible. Economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development must include the interests of all stakeholders including indigenous people, local communities, visitors, industry and government.

It therefore includes:

- Protecting and enhancing favourite destinations for the future enjoyment of visitors and the people who live there
- Respecting the natural environment and local cultures
- Recognising that resources such as water need to be used carefully
- Buying locally and giving fair economic returns to the local people
- Helping to protect the natural wildlife especially any endangered species
- Preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the places we visit
- Taking responsibility for all our actions.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines this as:

**“Tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while  
protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future.”**

Some countries, particularly in developing areas of the world, are taking a more active part in tourism either as a host community or as international tourists themselves. Tourism can be seen as a way of reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of the local people in the destination. However when tourism is unplanned, it can have negative economic, cultural, social and environmental impacts - hence the demand for sustainable development.

# Different Sustainable Tourism Terms

Sustainable tourism can be described differently and these include terms such as:

- Responsible Tourism
- Green Tourism
- Alternative tourism
- Community Tourism
- Pro-poor Tourism
- Fair Trade Tourism
- Ethical Tourism
- Ecotourism
- Agro-tourism
- Nature tourism
- Clean Tourism

These are explained in more detail on the next few pages.



# Exercise 1.1

Below are five different descriptions of responsible tourism. Pick the term from the previous list that best describes this type of tourism.

1. Provide holidays to tourists seeking new experiences, such as adventure, nature, wildlife and cultural holidays.

2. Emphasises the economic benefits that host communities should get from tourism.

3. Mostly concerned with the protection of the environments of tourist destinations.

4. Tourism that has a minimal or manageable effect on the natural and cultural environment of the areas visited.

5. Aims to protect the environment and local culture and to provide local people with economic benefits. It aims to last well into the future.

# Characteristics of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism has the following characteristics:

## **Economic prosperity:**

- Long term competitive and prosperous tourism businesses
- Quality employment opportunities, fair pay and conditions for all employees

## **Social equity and cohesion:**

- Tourism that improves the quality of life of local communities
- Community involvement in tourism planning and management
- Safe, satisfying and fulfilling visitor experiences

## **Environmental and cultural protection:**

- Reduced pollution and degradation of the global and local environment
- Tourism that maintains and strengthens biodiversity
- Tourism that maintains and enriches unique and diverse cultures





# Other Types of Sustainable Tourism

As people go on holiday to do a variety of activities there are a number of different types and forms of tourism. These are:

- Enclave tourism
- Mass tourism
- Adventure tourism
- Nature tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Sports/event tourism
- Recreational tourism
- Individual/independent tourism

These are described in more detail on the next few pages.



# Exercise 7.1

Read the lists of forms/types of tourism and tourism activities below. Match up the form/type of tourism to the relevant tourist activity.

## Form/type of Tourism

- Package tourism
- Adventure tourism
- Sport/event tourism
- Nature tourism
- Enclave tourism
- Recreational tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Mass tourism

## Tourism Activity

- A fortnight in Barbados
- Staying in an all-inclusive resort
- Watching the golf Ryder Cup
- Snowboarding in Canada
- Bird watching
- A beach holiday in Spain
- Rock climbing
- Visiting an art exhibition

# The Fragile Environment: Buildings/Monuments

The fragile environment explores the impact of the human species on its environment and deals with such topical and urgent questions as the death of forests, acid rain and pollution, desertification, the greenhouse effect and damage to buildings and monuments.

There are a number of World Heritage Sites that are at serious risk. Such is the paradox of modern tourism that sites have to be protected and promoted at the same time. From the Great Wall of China to the Temples of Angkor in Cambodia, drastic compromises are being made to accommodate swelling visitor numbers. Below are examples of famous sites:

## Angkor, Cambodia

Cambodia's Angkor Archaeological Park - the 12th-century complex that includes Angkor Wat - is experiencing pressure from increasing visitor numbers. The Cambodian authorities are examining ways to address visitor impact, particularly on Phnom Bakheng and create a 'conservation management plan'. It has a two-tier pricing system: Cambodians go free; foreign visitors pay for a day pass.

## Forbidden City, China

Most of the visitors that cross the ancient stone floors of the Imperial City are Chinese, so the government is reluctant to limit access, but there is a belief that limitations need to be imposed before irreversible damage occurs. A restoration plan is now in place and due to be completed in 2020. The aim of the plan is to 'restore the solemnity, sublimity and glory of the Imperial Palace' and use timed tickets only.

## Machu Picchu, Peru

The Inca citadel in Peru has long grappled with problems of tourist congestion and access and numbers are growing yearly. Visitors are already subject to restrictions



# The Growth of Tourism



Tourism is the world's largest industry with an annual revenue of almost \$500 billion. Travel and tourism has over 204 million people working in it making it the world's largest industry. These people cater for the tourist in many different areas of travel and tourism and the number is growing.

In 2010, international tourist arrivals reached a new record figure of nearly 900 million – an astonishing achievement given that the 800 million mark was only reached three years earlier.

International tourism will continue to grow with the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide increasing by an average 3.3% a year. As a result, an average 43 million additional international tourists will join the tourism marketplace every year. At the projected pace of growth, arrivals will pass the 1 billion mark by 2012, up from 940 million in 2010. By 2030, arrivals are expected to reach 1.8 billion, meaning that in two decades' time, 5 million people will be crossing international borders for leisure, business or other purposes such as visiting friends and family every day.

“The next 20 years will be of continued growth for the sector – a more moderate, responsible and inclusive growth,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “This growth offers immense possibilities as these can also be years of leadership, with tourism leading economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability, “ he said.

## International Tourism Arrival by Region

	2000	2006	2010 (Million)
World totals	682	856	898
Europe	391.0	460.8	480.1
Asia & the Pacific	110.6	167.8	184.9
Americas	128.2	135.7	142.1
Africa	27.9	40.9	44.2
Middle East	24.4	41.0	46.4

# Top Ethical Destinations

Every year Ethical Traveller ([www.ethicaltraveller.org](http://www.ethicaltraveller.org)) conducts a study of developing nations, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, to identify the best tourism destinations among them.

The top 10 most ethical destinations in the world are (in no particular order):

- Argentina
- Barbados
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Dominica
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Palau
- Poland
- Uruguay

To compile these results, Ethical Traveller focused on three general categories:

1. Environmental Protection
2. Social Welfare
3. Human Rights.

For each of these categories, they look at information past and present so that they understand not only the current state of a country, but how it has changed over time. This helps them select countries that are actively improving the state of their people, government, and environment.

For this recognition, important issues are taken into account, such as policies that the country enforces in order to safeguard the environment.



# Top Eco-Tourist Destinations

Ecotourism is becoming more popular with the worlds tourists who are looking for a new experience whilst on holiday. Listed below are ten of the most popular destinations with a description of each on the following pages.

- Alaska
- The Amazon
- Antarctica
- Blue Mountains, Australia
- Borneo
- Botswana
- Costa Rica
- Dominica
- The Galápagos Islands
- The Himalayas

A further description of these destinations are shown on the next few pages.

Source: National Geographic



# Positive Impacts

- **Increased employment:** The creation of jobs is the most obvious benefit that tourism can bring to an area. There is inevitably a demand for staff to work in such areas as airports, hotels, shops and restaurants
- **Increased income:** Tourism jobs often pay better than traditional work, especially in developing countries.
- **Improved standard of living:** As a result of the above two points, many locals will have an increase in their disposable income with more choice of goods and services to spend their money on
- **Improved infrastructure:** Tourism can often result in the improvement in transport networks in air, rail and road. In addition, they are likely to improve areas such as sewage and electricity
- **Improved community facilities and services:** The locals can benefit from the improvement and development of all facilities such as better restaurants, the increase in leisure facilities, such as cinemas and recreational activities, such as golf courses.
- **Multiplier effect:** This is when the community as a whole will generally benefit from tourism development. For example, a hotel worker in a tourist area will have more income and most likely spend it in the area
- **Regeneration and restoration:** Many historic buildings and areas are restored to their former glory in order to encourage tourism to the area.



# Exercise 1.4

Indicate whether the following positive and negative impacts are either economic, environmental, social or cultural.

1. Increased employment

2. Crime

3. Use of renewal resources

4. Displacement

5. Pollution

6. Regeneration and restoration

7. Decline of traditional employment

8. The reinforcement of cultural identify



# Stakeholders

A stakeholder is...

**“any organisation, governmental entity, or individual that has a stake in or may be impacted by a given approach to environmental regulation, pollution prevention, energy conservation, etc.”**

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.

Travel and tourism stakeholders have particular interests in tourism being developed as all have something to gain or lose from tourism activities or developments. Some stakeholders may also share the same interests; for example, the economic impact.

Stakeholders include the following people/organisations:

- National/regional/local governments
- Tourist boards
- Tourism investors
- Airlines
- Travel agents
- Tourists
- Host businesses
- Local communities
- Pressure groups (NGOs)
- Transport companies
- Accommodation providers



## Green Initiative 2: Alaskan Cruises

Ever since Alaska became America's 49th state, interest in the USA's "last frontier" has attracted inquisitive travellers, drawn by its dramatic wilderness. And there are few better ways of seeing some of its 40,000 miles of coastal scenery, ice fields, glaciers – and an occasional brown bear or eagle – than on an Alaska cruise holiday.

Cruise tourism to the area – started in 1957 by ex-bush pilot Chuck West – was greatly expanded in the 1970s when Cunard Cruises, Holland America Line, Norwegian America Line, and Princess Cruises started Alaska cruises.

These days it is a very popular cruising area. When several large ships are docked together in the ports of Juneau or Ketchikan, note that you will experience congestion on shore excursions and in the streets and restaurants.

However, Alaskans have become angered by the rapidly increasing number of cruise ships visiting the state, fearing contamination of their waters. Also, the large number of vessels being routed to the area to engage in whale-watching is having the effect of driving these mammals away from the Alaskan shores.

The state's Department of Environmental Conservation now levies a charge on all cruise vessels to pay for the clean up of pollution.



# Agenda 21

As it became apparent that the resources of the world were not unlimited, representatives of world governments got together in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The object of the gathering was to discuss what actions could be taken to develop the world whilst maintaining our lifestyles and protecting the environment, wildlife and resources available.

Agenda 21 was one of the outcomes of this gathering and is run by the United Nations (UN) related to sustainable development. It is a comprehensive blueprint of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organisations of the UN, governments, and major groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment. The number 21 refers to the 21st century.

Some of the important aims from Agenda 21 for sustainable tourism are to:

- ensure the local community benefit from tourism
- respect the local culture and environment
- avoid the overcrowding of resorts
- ensure all new hotels and resorts being constructed suit the local environment
- protect all heritage sites and ancient monuments
- reduce waste and encourage recycling and conservation of energy
- dispose of waste carefully and to look after water supplies
- prevent illegal trade in historic artefacts and wildlife souvenirs



# Green Aircraft: The 787 Dreamliner

In October 2011, the new airliner from Boeing - the 787 Dreamliner - made its first passenger flight, promising to revolutionise the way we choose our long-haul trips. The first flight was with All Nippon Airways (ANA).

- The Dreamliner is made of carbon fibre and other composite materials making it far lighter than traditional aluminium planes.
- It is one of the least polluting of all commercial aircraft. Along with fuel consumption, CO2 emissions have been cut by 20 per cent.
- The humidity is higher and, crucially, the air is cleaner. The Dreamliner doesn't use the old "bleed air" system, whereby cabin air, drawn through the engines, is vulnerable to contamination from any leak of toxic fumes. Instead, the 787 filters fresh cabin air direct from the atmosphere
- It is pressurised to the equivalent of 6,000ft rather than the usual 8,000ft. As a result, it is claimed that eight per cent more oxygen will be absorbed into the blood
- The new materials don't fatigue or corrode so the Dreamliner costs 30 per cent less to maintain than a comparable conventional aircraft. It doesn't require a really major service for 12 years.

Unusually, the 787 will fly from our regional airports from the word go. Boeing thinks that this fuel-efficient plane with its gigantic flying range - up to 9,400 miles - will allow airlines to make money by flying less busy routes, slipping away from quieter regional airports.

Inside the 787 Dreamliner



## Exercise 8.5

Selecting one destination of your own choosing, find examples for each of the following sectors and describe the role they play in sustainable tourism development:

1. The public sector.

2. The voluntary sector.

3. The private sector.

# Other Organisations Involved in Sustainable Tourism

There are a number of other organisations that are involved in sustainable tourism initiatives. These include:

- United Nations Economics and Social Council
- United Nations Environmental Programme
- International Centre for Responsible Tourism
- Sustainable Tourism Partnership
- United Nations World Tourism Organisation
- World Economic Forum
- World Tourism Forum
- World Wildlife Fund

Let's look at each in more detail.



# A Positive Impact: The Growth of Voluntours

With more and more travellers looking to come back from their vacation with more than a tan and an expanding waistline, the market for breaks that allow them to 'give something back' by doing something worthy has ballooned in recent years. and has created a number of 'voluntours'. The focus of today's trade-friendly voluntours is about raising awareness, promoting empathy and understanding and helping clients give something n=back whilst still having a great holiday. More and more international tour operators are offering these with a wide variety of conservation work and community projects.

However, it's not just tour operators who are getting in on the act. Below are three hotels and resorts offering voluntours:

- **The King Pacific Lodge in British Columbia** has a family-friendly Patrons of the Rainforest programme, run in conjunction with the Gitga' at First Nation, which enables guests to help preserve the Great Bear Rainforest.
- **The Fairmont Kea Lani in Maui** has an Eco-learning Package where guests can choose one of five activities that helps to preserve Haleakala National Park, from building trails to trying organic farming in a rainforest.
- **Sandals Resorts** has recently launched its first voluntourism programme that enables guests at all properties to participate in its Reading Road Trip programme. Guests spend two hours helping local children improve their listening, reading and comprehension skills. Volunteers are also encouraged to bring books to donate to the school's library.



## Sustainable tourism...

- is relevant to every holiday
- provides resources and incentives for destinations to conserve culture and traditions, the environment and wildlife
- allows local people to make a decent living
- means sourcing local products and services and treating staff fairly
- offers customers richer holiday experiences
- allows travel companies to respond to customer concerns over travel
- keeps destinations special and ensure they have a future

Whether or not we move in the right direction toward sustainable tourism is up to us. We are **all** tourists who need to change our behaviour. If everyone simply undertakes to improve their knowledge of sustainable tourism and our own behaviour, tourism would become sustainable.

