



# Tourism Supporting Biodiversity

*A Manual on applying the  
CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity  
and Tourism Development*



Convention on  
Biological Diversity







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For further information, please contact:

**Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

World Trade Centre

413 St. Jacques Street, Suite 800

Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Phone: 1 (514) 288 2220

Fax: 1 (514) 288 6588

E-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

Website: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)

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Lead authors: Richard and Jackie Denman (The Tourism Company).

Project management: Monica Kobayashi and Oliver Hillel (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity)

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## Foreword

Biodiversity and sustainable tourism are interlinked. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is a main tourism attraction and serves to heighten awareness of the intrinsic value of nature for us all. Many of the issues in the Convention on Biological Diversity tend to affect the tourism sector, and progress made in reducing the sector's environmental and social footprint has enhanced its overall contribution to the preservation of nature. In fact, tourism contributes to meeting at least 12 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and builds on early efforts taken towards more sustainable ecosystems and economies.



This was confirmed in September 2014 by the SAMOA Pathway, the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which recognized that sustainable tourism represents an important driver of sustainable economic growth and job creation for small island developing States. It was reiterated by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2014, when the Assembly recognized the importance of promoting sustainable tourism, including eco-tourism, for poverty eradication and protection of the environment.

Developing countries are the stewards of the vast majority of Earth's biodiversity, and this provides their tourism industry with a competitive advantage. Tourism has been identified as a priority sector for development of the vast majority of least developed countries and small island developing States, and has primarily been responsible for the development of such countries as Botswana, Cabo Verde and the Maldives. In terms of tourism volume, according to the World Tourism Organization, developing country destinations have grown twice as fast as destinations in developed countries, a trend that is expected to continue. Travel between developing countries, approximately 47 per cent of the total volume in 2011, is expected to grow to 60 per cent by 2030.

Without a doubt, however, the greatest contribution that tourism makes is in opening minds to the wonders of nature. Every year, millions of visitors and tourists make a point of seeing and experiencing the wonders that nature has to offer. Visitors can, among other things, marvel at the natural beauty of coral reefs and wetlands, enjoy the pleasure of birdwatching and viewing other wildlife, and experiencing first-hand the inherent beauty of rainforests. As the French philosopher Michel Serres once remarked, "There is no travel without learning, and no learning without travel."

Recently, several decisions emanating from the mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in the Republic of Korea, served to highlight the important role that tourism serves, and called for further application of the Convention's Guidelines. I would like to thank the Government of Germany for identifying the need for this timely publication, and I call upon all Parties, regional partners and organizations to use this and other tools to upscale the contributions of the tourism sector to the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Braulio Dias'.

Braulio Dias  
Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity





## Introduction





This Manual provides information for planners, developers, managers and decision makers involved with tourism development and resource management in areas of sensitive biodiversity. The purpose is to help them to mainstream biodiversity concerns and ecosystem services within sustainable tourism development. Its primary target is public authorities and other agencies in a position to influence tourism impacts, while also being relevant to potential developers of tourism projects.

The Manual has been prepared as a result of decisions taken by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2012 (COP 11) and further developed in 2014 (COP 12) to improve knowledge and materials to better inform the integration of biodiversity into sustainable tourism development.

The Manual is based on the **CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development**. However, it also reflects a wider perspective on approaches and experience in sustainable tourism development and management.<sup>1</sup>

This Manual, with an emphasis on management and governance, complements the more technical *User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development* published in 2007.<sup>2</sup>

This Manual is available as a PDF document at: **A Manual on applying the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development**.<sup>3</sup>





## Chapter 1

# The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development – Context, Purpose and Use



**Users of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development should be aware of their origin, purpose and content, and how they relate to the wider context of international policies, initiatives and materials on sustainable tourism.**

## 1.1 The CBD, tourism and the Guidelines

For many years, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has recognized tourism as an important issue for biodiversity, as a positive force for conservation but also as a source of various negative impacts if not effectively managed and routinely monitored.

In 1999, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD agreed to include tourism in an in-depth consideration of the sustainable use of biodiversity. In 2001, this was linked to an invitation from the Commission on Sustainable Development to prepare international guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable ecosystems. Following a lengthy period of drafting, workshops and consultation involving a wide range of stakeholders the final CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development were endorsed by CBD COP 7 in 2004.

The Guidelines have remained a central pillar of the CBD contribution to addressing the many impacts of tourism on biodiversity. Subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties have called for improved application of the Guidelines.

At COP 10, in Nagoya, Japan, in paragraph 20 of decision X/20 on Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to continue collaboration with the World

Tourism Organization, including on a review of the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.

At COP 11, in Hyderabad, India, in paragraph 48 of the decision XI/6 the Conference of the Parties decides to review the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development at its twelfth meeting, in order to improve, inter alia, the provision of updated and innovative tools and instruments on sustainable tourism management to Parties and interested stakeholders and enhance their contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

At COP 12, in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, decision XII/11 the Conference of the Parties recognized the ongoing relevance of the Guidelines. In addition to their general application, it called for their use in demonstration projects in tourism and conservation hotspots. It also requested the facilitation of voluntary reporting by Parties on the application of the Guidelines.

Beyond the Guidelines, the Secretariat of the CBD has engaged in a range of issues relating to tourism and biodiversity which they have drawn to the attention of the Parties and other stakeholders. Relevant information on tourism and biodiversity made available to COP 12 and previous meetings of the COP, together with decisions taken, can be found at <http://www.cbd.int/cop>.

## 1.2 Positioning within the wider sustainable tourism context

The CBD engagement with tourism and use of the Guidelines forms just one part of a wider international movement to promote and enhance the sustainability of the tourism sector. The impact of tourism on biodiversity should be seen as one element of a range of interrelated environmental, sociocultural and economic impacts. Many policy areas, programmes, initiatives and tools aimed at sustainable development and resource management can directly and indirectly affect the relationship between tourism and biodiversity.

Users of the Guidelines should be aware of relevant global initiatives, knowledge and materials relating to sustainable tourism, which are referred to throughout this Manual. While noting that the list below is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive,

attention is drawn to relevant work by various partners of CBD:

### *Sustainable consumption and production of tourism*

The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP) includes a specific Sustainable Tourism Programme, led by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), co-led by the Governments of France, Morocco and the Republic of Korea, and supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the 10-YFP Secretariat. The programme supports cooperation between stakeholders for the development and implementation of innovations and good practices in resource efficient and low-carbon tourism planning, reducing the loss of biodiversity,



conserving ecosystems, preserving cultural heritage, alleviating poverty, improving sustainable livelihoods and adapting to the reality of climate change.<sup>4</sup>

### *Sustainable tourism development*

UNWTO has prepared a range of policy and advisory publications on sustainable tourism which have a direct or indirect relevance to biodiversity. These include work on tourism as a sustainable development tool, indicators, tourism and poverty alleviation, tourism in small island developing States (SIDS), coastal tourism, and more specific tourism and biodiversity themes. UNEP has developed a series of publications on tourism development and operations in sensitive environments such as coastal, deserts, mountains, rainforest.<sup>5,6</sup>

In December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 69/233 on promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection, drawing attention to the opportunities presented by sustainable tourism, including for conservation, protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The resolution, significantly broader in scope than previous ones on the subject, builds on a 2012 General Assembly resolution on ecotourism and draws on a report prepared by UNWTO. In line with UNWTO recommendations, it underlines the importance of appropriate national policies, guidelines and regulations for promoting sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, and encourages United Nations Member States and regional and international financial institutions to support sustainable tourism projects, enabling the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting cooperatives and facilitating access to inclusive financial services, including microcredit initiatives for the poor, local communities and indigenous peoples.

### *Tourism in protected and designated areas*

Much work has been done in this field, including specific initiatives and programmes, sustainable tourism charters, research and advisory materials. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s World Commission on Protected Areas has established a Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS Group), which facilitates knowledge development and capacity-building.<sup>7,8</sup>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has a World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and has been pursuing implementation of the CBD Guidelines within its World Network of Biosphere

Reserves,<sup>9</sup> and has established a toolkit for sustainable tourism in World Heritage Sites.<sup>10,11</sup>

Tools guiding tourism concessions in protected areas have been produced by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for protected area managers<sup>12</sup> and by the World Bank Group for practitioners advising them.

### *Sustainability of tourism businesses*

A number of United Nations, international and sector bodies are promoting sustainability in the design and operation of individual tourism businesses. For example, the IUCN Business and Biodiversity Programme has produced guidelines on the sustainable use of biodiversity in hotel and resort operations.<sup>13</sup>

### *Sustainable tourism standards and certification*

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), supported by a range of international bodies, has established sustainable tourism standards for tourism businesses and for destinations. These include criteria on biodiversity. The Council is also accrediting certification schemes that embrace the standards.<sup>14</sup> For more details, see Section 6.

DestiNet, an independent portal supported by the European Commission and officially registered as a United Nations "Partnership for Sustainable Development", offers a comprehensive inventory of worldwide certification programmes. While it may not list all initiatives, it is regularly updated.<sup>15</sup>

### *Tourism and climate change*

Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and actions within tourism destinations and businesses have important direct and indirect implications for biodiversity. The UNWTO UNEP, OECD and other agencies have pursued various studies and initiatives in this field.<sup>16,17,18</sup>

### *Sustainable Tourism and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements*

In addition to UNESCO's contribution in the framework of the World Heritage Convention and the Man and Biosphere Programme as noted above, a number of other biodiversity-related conventions are also promoting sustainable tourism. In this regard, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) has published a reference book, "Wildlife Watching and Tourism – a study on the benefits and risks of a fast-growing touristic activity and its impacts on species".<sup>19</sup>

At their COP 14, a document on boat-based wildlife watching was distributed.<sup>20</sup>

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, building on the CBD Guidelines, adopted Resolution XI/7 on tourism, recreation and wetlands in 2012.<sup>21</sup>

At the regional level, the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians adopted in May 2011 the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism, followed by a Strategy and a collection of good practices.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3 The purpose and content of the Guidelines

The stated aim of the CBD Guidelines is to make *“tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive, engaging the private sector and local communities and indigenous peoples, and promoting infrastructure and land use planning based on the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.”*

The Guidelines are relevant to all tourism development anywhere. In order to be sustainable, tourism should always be concerned about any potential impact on biodiversity. However, as a priority, they should be applied in areas with significant terrestrial and marine habitats, whether or not these are within protected areas.

The Guidelines provide guidance on two key related activities:

- ❖ Developing and implementing related policies, strategies, master or local plans for tourism development in a way that takes full account of biodiversity and its needs.
- ❖ Assessing, controlling and influencing individual tourism development proposals and projects, and their technical and financial partners, with respect to their impact on biodiversity.



Boat-based wildlife watching – When wildlife watching is managed carefully, the revenues generated can benefit the conservation of the target species. However, excessive exposure to wildlife watching boats may lead to changes in the behaviour of wildlife, with negative consequences, such as emigration and reduced reproduction or even loss of the population. Credit: iStockphoto/Thinkstock

The Guidelines emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement. They set out a systematic approach to planning, project assessment and management. This includes gathering baseline information, setting goals and objectives, establishing relevant control and management tools, assessing impacts, engaging in management, monitoring results, and adaptation. This Manual provides practical guidance on pursuing this approach.





## Chapter 2

# Tourism and Biodiversity – Dimensions of the Relationship

**In applying the Guidelines, it is necessary to understand the different directions and dimensions of the impact of tourism on biodiversity.**

## 2.1 Tourism, biodiversity and sustainable development

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.<sup>23</sup> Tourism accounts for 9 per cent of the world's gross domestic product and 6 per cent of exports and contributes (directly or indirectly) to one in eleven jobs. It is growing rapidly. In 2013, 1,087 million international tourists travelled the world generating US\$ 1.4 trillion in exports. The UNWTO forecasts that international arrivals will grow at an average of 3.3 per cent per annum to 2030, with even faster growth in Africa, Asia/Pacific and Latin America which contain much of the world's natural heritage destinations. A trend observed in more mature source markets, especially in Europe and North America, has been towards soft adventure and authentic, transformative experiences, which often include an element of visits to natural areas and observing wildlife. Up to date information on tourism performance is available from UNWTO.<sup>24</sup>

Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. In simple terms, it can be described as the diversity of life on Earth. Key trends in biodiversity are described in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4)* released by the CBD Secretariat and UNEP at COP 12.<sup>25</sup> The report highlights good progress towards achieving targets on protected areas, access and benefit sharing, and national biodiversity strategy and action plans (NBSAPs). However, significant additional effort is required to meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,<sup>26</sup> and to achieve many of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.<sup>27</sup>

Data related to visitation and tourism to protected areas is a basic piece of information necessary to understand how stakeholder and community involvement, revenue flows and pay-back mechanisms can be effective. However, information regarding the global magnitude of visitation is insufficient, as noted also by Parties at COP 12 when they invited governments, with the support of relevant partners, to monitor and review recreation, visits and other tourism activities in protected areas, as well as impacts

and relevant management processes in ecologically sensitive areas, and to share results appropriately. Projecting on existing data, a study published on February 2015 compiled a globally-representative database of visits to PAs and built models to predict visits rates. The results suggests that together, PAs listed in IUCN's World Database of Protected Areas receive roughly 8 billion visits per year (8 times the number of global international arrivals according to UNWTO), which resulted in up to US\$ 600 billion in direct in-country expenditure and US\$ 250 billion in consumer surplus.<sup>28</sup>

While the above information relates to global trends, the tourism and biodiversity situation at a local level will vary significantly between destinations. The Guidelines stress the need to obtain good local data, as covered later in Section 4.

The Guidelines advocate an 'ecosystems approach' to planning for tourism and biodiversity.<sup>29</sup> This is an approach which involves the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and equitable use in a sustainable way. It recognizes that tourism is dependent on healthy, functioning ecosystems.

This approach is in line with the regularly used concept of sustainable tourism, which "takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the sector, the environment and host communities". Biological diversity has been recognized as one of 12 interrelated aims of sustainable tourism, with others covering a range of economic, social and environmental impacts.<sup>30</sup>

Providing an experience of nature to tourists can be seen as a key ecosystems service, benefitting not only the visitors themselves but also many others who can gain from this process, including tourism businesses, indigenous peoples and local communities and conservation interests. Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES) has gained wide recognition as a significant approach, with strong implications for tourism development, planning and management.<sup>31</sup> and underpins work on the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity.<sup>32</sup>





### Box 1: Georgia TEEB Scoping Study

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) is a global initiative focused on drawing attention to the economic benefits of biodiversity, including the growing cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. TEEB presents an approach that can help decision-makers recognize, demonstrate and capture the values of ecosystem services and biodiversity. Georgia was one of the pilot countries selected for implementation of the TEEB Initiative in 2011. A scoping study identified tourism as one of five core sectors of the Georgian economy applicable for the TEEB Initiative, the others being energy, agriculture, mining and forestry. The study highlighted the substantial dependence of these driving forces of Georgian economy on natural capital and the services it provides. While acknowledging the positive economic benefits of tourism, the study also identified various adverse impacts of tourism on ecosystems, including habitat loss due to land encroachment, waste generation, and water quality impacts. In addition, some of these adverse effects on biodiversity may also negatively impinge upon the tourist experience (e.g. untreated sewage affecting bathing water quality; unregulated waste disposal implying plastic litter in otherwise pristine nature spots). A TEEB study for sustainable tourism in Georgia has been proposed to better inform tourism planning and development (zoning, protected area management), and to identify opportunities and threats for long-term sustainable tourism.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2 The impact of tourism on biodiversity

Tourism and biodiversity have a symbiotic relationship. This can be mutually reinforcing and both negative and positive. For example, the importance of biodiversity to the appeal of certain destinations can bring additional visitor pressure but also more support for conservation.

The main dimensions of the relationship between tourism and biodiversity can be summed up as follows:<sup>34</sup>

Negative:

- ❖ Pressure on habitats, leading to biodiversity loss, from poorly sited, designed or managed tourism developments, operations and activities;
- ❖ Direct threats to individual species, for example from recreational activity, from use for food items, souvenirs or other trading, or from competition from invasive alien species introduced through tourism activity;
- ❖ Site clearing for development of tourism infrastructure;
- ❖ Tourism affecting other environmental conditions which may negatively impact on biodiversity, for example through waste disposal, water consumption and pollution or greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change.
- ❖ Decrease of tourism flows due to the degraded state or loss of biodiversity

Positive:

- ❖ Recognition of the great importance to tourism economies of attractive landscapes and a rich biodiversity, underpinning the political and economic case for conservation and resourcing;
- ❖ The development and operation of nature-based tourism products providing revenue and other support for biodiversity conservation;
- ❖ Provide direct incentives to communities to reduce threats to and maintain or increase key wildlife populations and biodiversity values through tourism revenue.
- ❖ Tourism providing education of visitors and fostering awareness of conservation and biodiversity issues
- ❖ Support for the livelihoods and cultural diversity of local communities and indigenous peoples from tourism providing an alternative to unsustainable activities and raising and strengthening their awareness of conservation issues.

An understanding of these relationships should lie behind the data collection, analysis and management processes employed in pursuing the Guidelines.

## 2.3 Contribution to achieving the Aichi targets

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020<sup>35</sup> referred to earlier, provides further context for the Guidelines. It has been shown<sup>36</sup> that effective tourism planning and actions can contribute to achieving at least 12 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets<sup>37</sup> contained in the plan. For some Targets (5, 8, 9, 10 and 12) this is primarily about greater control and management to reduce damage to biodiversity from

tourism. For others (1, 11, 15, 18, and 20) this is about pursuing the positive contribution of tourism to biodiversity awareness, protected areas, habitat restoration, community engagement, and resource mobilization. A further dimension is the better integration of biodiversity and sustainability into development policies and business models that include tourism, thereby supporting Aichi Targets 2 and 4.



## Chapter 3

# Tourism and Biodiversity Policy and Governance – an Integrated Approach



**The Guidelines stress the need for a multi-stakeholder and participatory approach, with coordination of the different policies and interests that can influence the relationship between tourism and biodiversity<sup>38</sup>**

### 3.1 National government policies and legislation

Tourism policies at the national level should endorse and adopt the principles and aims of sustainable tourism. Specifically within this they should recognize the importance of biodiversity as an attraction for visitors, the need to address the negative impacts of tourism on biodiversity, and the opportunity to support conservation through tourism. Tourism master plans, which may consider the nature and location of tourism development, should take particular note of areas where biodiversity may be vulnerable and support a careful, well planned approach to tourism in such areas, which closely follows the Guidelines.

Policies for the environment and natural resources should equally recognize the negative and positive impacts of tourism on biodiversity. In particular, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans should make explicit reference to tourism as an activity that requires sound planning and management, and as an opportunity for generating support for conservation.

Other policy areas that need to reflect biodiversity issues in the context of sustainable tourism planning may include economic development, finance,

poverty eradication, transport, urban development, culture, agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

In addition to the alignment of policies, the existence of effective and relevant enabling legislation for sustainable tourism should be addressed. Legislation should also provide a robust basis for effective land use planning and development control and the use of other instruments as identified later in Section 6.

The above requirements will be greatly facilitated through strengthening dialogue and coordination between the various government departments, ministries and agencies responsible for the policy areas mentioned.<sup>39</sup> Regular meetings between them to address sustainable tourism, including biodiversity, should be held. This should also link to wider stakeholder structures as referred to below.

It is important that the coordination of policies should be integrated vertically between all levels of government. This includes the consolidation or further development of policies at a subnational level (e.g. in regions, states and provinces) and on the ground at a local level.

### 3.2 Engaging key stakeholders

The importance of engaging various elements of government in actions that relate tourism and biodiversity is clear from the above discussion about policy coordination. However there is also a very significant need to involve all stakeholders.

#### **Tourism private sector**

Essentially the tourism sector is made up of private businesses which supply services to visitors. Their developments and operations and the decisions that they make will have the greatest influence on biodiversity. They are the drivers of change. They also provide the main way of reaching markets and influencing consumers. They have a strong impact on local communities, which can be either positive or negative, through the provision of employment, involvement with local supply chains, use of local resources, and investment and engagement in local infrastructure and support services.

A wide range of size and type of business are stakeholders in the biodiversity-tourism relationship.

These include providers of accommodation, catering, transportation, attractions, activities, cultural experiences, guiding and various related services. International and local tour operators are particularly important in influencing the actions of visitors and other businesses.

There are examples of tourism businesses that have a strong commitment to the environment and biodiversity and have supported conservation through their own land and resource management, funding, and engagement with visitors and communities. Others may be less proactive but still take account of biodiversity in the management of their businesses or in the suppliers that they use. On the other hand, many businesses could be doing more to reduce negative impacts and provide positive support. Tourism businesses can be reached individually. However, it is also important to work with national and local tourism trade associations where these exist to encourage sector-wide cooperation and collective impact.

It is important to bring to attention to the different scales of impact and forms of management for the formal and informal parts of the tourism sector. Generally, activities of formal businesses, particularly the larger ones, have a far greater impact on the environment and biodiversity, including resources and infrastructure to make either positive or negative impacts on the environment. Usually, informal or small-scale businesses have lesser impacts. However, their cumulative effect may be significant, and

they also need to be engaged and represented in the tourism sector to have their interests represented in sustainable tourism policies. Moreover, whenever financial investments are needed to make tourism more sustainable, larger-scale formal business may be advantaged and special incentives and subsidies may be required in order to help the informal sector and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to engage, and be environmentally sustainable in their practices.



### Box 2: Inkaterra – a tourism business pioneering biodiversity conservation

Inkaterra is a Peruvian eco-tourism company with almost forty years of experience in sustainable tourism initiatives. The company owns and operates five hotels, including at Machu Picchu Natural Reserve and the south-eastern rain forest of the Amazon in Puerto Maldonado, Tambopata. Each year Inkaterra provides authentic nature experiences to more than 65,000 travellers in Peru. Inkaterra has a holistic approach that produces scientific research for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of local communities in the Amazon rainforest (e.g. the Madre de Dios region in south eastern Peru), the cloud forests of Machu Picchu, and the tropical sea of Cabo Blanco. Through its associated NGO, Inkaterra Association (ITA), many sustainable development projects have been carried out, which include:

- Peru's first ecological reserve for tourism purposes, a 15,000 ha area of primary forest at Tambopata
- Checklists of birds within properties in Tambopata and Machu Picchu (747 species)
- World Birding Rally, the only non-stop international birding championship
- The world's largest native orchid collection, with 372 species
- Establishment of the Andean Bear Rescue Centre, for the conservation of the only bear species in the Southern Hemisphere
- A technical proposal to justify the creation of Peru's first marine reserve in Cabo Blanco<sup>40</sup>

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Guidelines require direct engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in the preparation, agreement and implementation of plans, assessment of impacts and decision-making about tourism developments. This includes obtaining their prior informed consent, but goes beyond this in establishing credible and functional participatory processes for full and ongoing involvement. It is critical that the prior informed consent of affected indigenous peoples and local communities is obtained as part of any process linked to the application of the CBD Guidelines. However, merely creating structures and spaces for this would be inadequate. Information about these processes needs to reach all affected communities. They would also need to be empowered to be able to effectively participate in the processes.

There is a wealth of experience and material available about community engagement practices in natural resource management. These include issues of land rights, recognition of traditional structures and knowledge, ensuring gender and minority balance, effective and objective consultation, use of effective communication and feedback procedures, and recording agreements on outcomes and responsibilities. The Guidelines draw special attention to the



Inkaterra - Tambopata Province, Madre de Dios, Peru - Special equipment, such as canopy walkways, can make colourful fruit, small birds and insects stand out as treetop attractions, previously unavailable to tourists.  
Credit: Filipe Fortes ([www.flickr.com/photos/fortes](http://www.flickr.com/photos/fortes))

Akwé: Kon guidelines<sup>41</sup> for the conduct of assessment of developments that may affect indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>42</sup>



### Box 3: Indigenous peoples engagement in tourism planning – Kakadu, Australia

A key feature of Kakadu National Park is its location on Aboriginal lands, leased from, and jointly managed with, the Aboriginal groups to which the land belongs. In 2004, the Park and Aboriginal groups together created the following shared tourism vision for Kakadu which formed the foundation of the Park's Tourism Master Plan:

"Kakadu National Park is one of the great World Heritage Parks, recognized universally as a place with:

- a living Aboriginal culture—home to Bininj/Mungguy
- extraordinary natural landscapes and a rich variety of plants and animals
- enriching and memorable experiences for visitors
- a strong and successful partnership between Traditional Owners, governments
- and the tourism sector, providing world's best practice in caring for country
- and sustainable tourism."<sup>43</sup>



Kakadu National Park, Australia – Indigenous ranger at Gunwarddehwardde Lookout.

Credit: Parks Australia (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/parksaustralia>)

#### Subnational and local authorities

As well as their engagement in policy development and coordination, subnational (state, province) and local (municipal) authorities often have a critical role to play in planning and influencing development and natural resource use in their areas and can sometimes be the final decision makers. They may also be involved in tourism management and promotion.

#### Protected area managers

Authorities and managers responsible for parks, reserves and other protected areas will often be the

bodies most directly involved in managing the relationship between visitation, tourism and biodiversity on the ground. The Guidelines are extremely relevant to their operations.

Protected area bodies are frequently public bodies, governed and administered at a national, subnational or local level. Understanding the degree of centralisation as against local autonomy is important here. Protected areas also include private reserves or areas owned or managed through public-private partnerships and agreements, or by NGOs or other structures.<sup>44</sup>

Whatever the nature of their ownership or management, the availability of financial and human resources and skills at a local level is critical for these bodies to perform effective visitor and tourism management as well as biodiversity conservation functions. One of the challenges in managing impacts is equating investments on visitor management services and infrastructure, maintenance and ecosystem restoration in affected areas with the general or destination-level revenue flows from tourism—reinvesting wealth generated by tourism into maintenance of a park's natural capital to attract visitors and tourists.

#### Other bodies

A number of other bodies can represent additional interests or provide important technical support. These include: international, national or local environmental and conservation bodies; tourism associations and chambers of trade, NGOs engaged with local sustainable development and work with local communities; and institutions involved with relevant research, education and capacity-building.

## 3.3 Multi-stakeholder structures and participatory processes

While the individual position and contribution of the above stakeholders should be recognized, the Guidelines require collaborative planning and action

and point to the establishment of multi-stakeholder structures and participatory procedures. As well as ensuring an equitable and inclusive approach and

agreement on aims and actions, this can strengthen the spread of awareness, sharing of knowledge, access to skills and resources, and outreach of influence.

Structures that bring together tourism and biodiversity stakeholders should be established at a national and local level and may be part of wider sustainable tourism or area and resource management structures. They are likely to require ongoing support and capacity-building. UNWTO has prepared information on multi-stakeholder processes in tourism.<sup>45</sup>

National level structures enable the relevant ministries and agencies, as identified earlier, to meet with representative bodies of the private sector, resource management, conservation and local community interests. While it may be impracticable for such bodies to be established simply to address tourism and biodiversity, the key requirement is for this relationship to be regularly placed on their agenda and addressed by them.

Multi-stakeholder structures and participatory processes are especially important in addressing

tourism and biodiversity issues at a local level. Critically, they should involve local authorities, protected area bodies, tourism businesses, local communities and other relevant stakeholders. They should serve as planning and management bodies in a defined local area. In recent years the concept of “local destinations” has proved valuable, as areas which make sense in terms of tourism identity and branding as well as for the effective management and engagement of stakeholders on the ground. Local destinations may be defined, variously, by heritage and tradition, ecosystems, protected areas, administrative boundaries or in other ways according to local circumstances. Multi-stakeholder bodies providing the above functions in such defined areas are sometimes referred to as Destination Management Organizations.

A key role for these local structures is to engage in the planning and management processes that are set out in the Guidelines and covered in the remainder of this Manual.



#### **Box 4: Multi-stakeholder engagement in tourism in protected areas**

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas aims to encourage good practice by recognising protected areas which are meeting agreed requirements for the sustainable development and management of tourism. By the end of 2014 over 130 protected areas had been awarded the Charter spanning 16 countries. A key requirement of the Charter is for all those connected through tourism in and around the protected area to be involved in its development and management. This is usually met through a permanent forum, or equivalent arrangement, established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organizations and representatives of the tourism sector.<sup>46</sup>





## Chapter 4

# Baseline Information on Tourism and Biodiversity

The Guidelines require that baseline information is available to enable informed decisions to be taken. The scope and source of relevant information is outlined in the Guidelines. Further clarification on what is needed, why and where from is provided below.

## 4.1 The need for baseline information and the process involved

Baseline information, which is then kept up to date, is needed for a number of purposes:

- ❖ To inform the preparation of local plans for tourism that take full account of biodiversity.
- ❖ To enable realistic goals to be set, including aspirational targets and limits of acceptable change.
- ❖ To guide the implementation of plans and all aspects of management.
- ❖ To provide a source of information for potential developers and for dialogue with them in advance of any project proposal.
- ❖ To provide a basis for impact assessment of individual tourism projects. These may also require a range of additional evidence relating to the project in question.
- ❖ To establish a framework, baseline and indicators for monitoring.

Gathering and analysing information can be time-consuming and the complexity, scale, spatial and temporal realities of impacts make it quite difficult to determine a valid baseline. It is important to be clear about what is needed and the process involved. The various steps include:

- ❖ Agreeing within the stakeholder group about the information desired and prioritising this.
- ❖ Building capacity and skills on data collection and analysis
- ❖ Auditing what information is already available, checking its reliability and identifying any gaps that need to be filled
- ❖ Agreeing and sharing out responsibilities for the data collection process
- ❖ Collating, synthesising and analysing data and presenting it in a digestible summarized form.

In setting up multi-stakeholder systems for baseline monitoring and reporting, tourism observatories usually articulate a number of key indicators and combine the capacities of the private sector, educational, scientific and technical institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities. Data can also be collected by tourists or tour guides to reduce collection costs and ensure that monitoring is conducted. The UNWTO has helped establish observatories in over 150 countries, including six Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism in China and Greece.<sup>47</sup>

## 4.2 The range of information required

Based on the Guidelines and subsequent consideration and experience, it is suggested that baseline and management information relating to the potential impact of tourism on biodiversity is required in

four areas as shown in the table below. This needs to be considered alongside wider information that may be required for overall sustainable tourism planning and management.

Biodiversity situation in the local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of any protected areas and areas of significant biodiversity</li> <li>• Specifications of ecosystems, habitats and species, including key features and their protection status.</li> <li>• Trends in extent and quality of key habitats, wildlife populations targeted by tourism and other indicator species, including causes of identified change</li> <li>• Current and potential future threats to biodiversity, identifying areas with particular sensitivity and vulnerability and any challenges relating to local communities</li> <li>• Level of local community and business awareness of biodiversity value and impact on conservation</li> </ul>
Tourism supply and demand, performance and outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number, origin and length of stay of visitors (preferably by month/quarter)</li> <li>• Visitor flows – routes used, main areas/sites visited, activities undertaken</li> <li>• Trends in visitation</li> <li>• Visitor opinion of the area – assets, needs, level of satisfaction</li> <li>• Visitor spend overall, entrance/user fees, and other biodiversity-related services</li> <li>• Supply of accommodation and other visitor products and services, including their level of environmental accreditation</li> <li>• Recent and proposed tourism related developments</li> <li>• Tourism product occupancy or other performance data</li> <li>• Perceptions of current and future markets and outlook</li> </ul>



Other relevant sociocultural and economic data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnological and demographic profile of local community</li> <li>• Level of local community engagement with tourism, directly and indirectly (e.g. equity, employment, sales of products and services)</li> <li>• Other sources of local income/livelihood and effect on biodiversity</li> <li>• Type, significance, location and sensitivity of cultural assets</li> <li>• Pattern of land ownership, including traditional and community land rights</li> </ul>
Administrative and management data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past and current area plans, including tourism, environment, development and land use plans</li> <li>• Recent Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Strategic Environmental Assessments and their outcome</li> <li>• Application and enforcement of relevant legislation and regulations</li> <li>• Available human and financial resources for conservation and management</li> </ul>

In collecting and assembling this information, particular attention should be paid to:

- ❖ Any known direct impacts of tourism on biodiversity
- ❖ Past and current cumulative impacts

- ❖ Spatial distribution of biodiversity, tourism and other issues, which will require map-based data
- ❖ Relationship to neighbouring and wider areas which may affect the local tourism/ biodiversity situation
- ❖ Ability to replicate data over time in order to monitor and measure change.

### 4.3 Sources of information

The following main sources are seen as possible providers of existing information or as participants in the collection of future information.

**International bodies.** UNWTO and other bodies can provide tourism and other data, which is often assembled from local sources. Some bodies may have relevant data on certain sites which have an international designation. Technical assistance agencies that have been supporting local projects may have good local knowledge.

An Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool for research and conservation planning (IBAT R&CP) provides access for not-for-profit organizations to a range of global and national data layers, such as protected area boundaries, biological information about habitat and species diversity indices, and key areas for biodiversity. Wider circulation of this data to all stakeholders may be important.<sup>48</sup>

**National government/agencies.** They may have tourism, biodiversity and socio-economic data on the local area or national data that could be disaggregated, but caution is needed to ensure that such data is sufficiently robust and relevant to the local situation.

**Subnational government, local authorities and protected area bodies.** They should have at least some local data on the main topics, but there may be many gaps and possible issues of reliability. Protected area

management plans and tourism plans may contain valuable information. In some cases, Destination Management or Marketing Organizations can help determine effective monitoring systems.

**NGOs.** International conservation and community NGOs may have relevant data. They are also likely to be an important source of knowledge on biodiversity and local community/livelihood issues.

**Tourism businesses.** A highly important source of information on tourism flows, activities, performance and outlook. A systematic survey of tourism businesses (formally established as well as informal) could be undertaken, as well as more informal contact. Tourism businesses could participate in data collection.

**Local community.** Engaging the local community in providing knowledge and opinion and in collecting new data is important in raising awareness of the issues and generating support.

**Visitors.** Obtaining information through well designed and simple visitor surveys can add greatly to the availability of local knowledge on tourism and biodiversity. Visitors can also be engaged in collecting data and reporting on issues such as environmental conditions.

**Site surveys and observation.** Information on biodiversity conditions may need to be obtained directly from site surveys and observations repeated over time.



## Chapter 5

# Plan Formulation for Tourism and Biodiversity



The Guidelines refer to various processes in planning for tourism and biodiversity. This needs some simplification and clarification and the main requirements are set out below.

## 5.1 National framework for local planning

The main need is for the preparation and implementation of local plans to provide the basis for controlling, developing, managing and promoting sustainable tourism at a local level, especially in vulnerable areas or in biodiversity 'hotspots'. However, it is important that these should be set and supported within a national planning framework. Section 3 of this Manual underlines the need for alignment of tourism and environmental policies. This should lead to:<sup>49</sup>

- ❖ Clarity about the overall approach to sustainable tourism and biodiversity
- ❖ Promotion of the concept of local plans for tourism that embrace biodiversity conservation principles
- ❖ Identification of key priority areas for such plans. This should take account of the location of all areas where biodiversity is significant or vulnerable, including Key Biodiversity Areas<sup>50</sup>

- ❖ A focus on protected areas, including further terrestrial and marine designations where appropriate, in which tourism and conservation are especially carefully planned in harmony
- ❖ The provision of sufficient resources and capacity-building to support planning and management at a local level.

In areas where no relevant local plan has been prepared, there should nevertheless be agreed procedures for considering and addressing biodiversity impacts of tourism, including the determination of proposed tourism developments, through the application of relevant tools, screening and impact assessment processes and other management activity as outlined in the Guidelines and later sections of this Manual.

## 5.2 Preparing an effective local plan

Plans should be prepared for sustainable visitation and tourism in local areas that clearly address biodiversity issues. These plans need to relate to, or where appropriate be incorporated within, other local plans and their planning processes such as: overall area development plans; land use plans; protected area management plans; integrated development plans, environment plans, including biodiversity action plans; and coastal zone management plans and other governance processes.

Local plans for sustainable tourism should be prepared through a participatory process. Multi-stakeholder structures, as described in Section 3, should be given a mandate for preparing and implementing the plans. Ideally, the process should be supported by a technical team that includes people with knowledge of tourism, biodiversity, planning and community development.

The plan should be informed by evidence summarized from relevant baseline information, as covered

in Section 4. A first stage is to agree on what conclusions can be drawn from this evidence on the issues affecting tourism and biodiversity.

In the past various models have been advocated for area planning for tourism and recreation. Most are based on the need to be clear about how different future levels and types of tourism will impact on the environment (including biodiversity), local communities and existing users (including visitors themselves) leading to an agreement on limits of acceptable change. This should form an important part of the planning process.

Planning for tourism with biodiversity at its core should take full account of the precautionary principle which requires that lack of certainty regarding a threat to biodiversity should not be taken as a reason for not acting to avert or minimize that threat.

### Box 5: Tourism planning in Phong-Nha Ke Bang National Park, Viet Nam

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is a designated World Heritage Site receiving over 400,000 visitors. Rapid tourism development increased pressures on the ecosystem in the region and on the local communities who rely heavily on local natural resources. Working with support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, a Sustainable Tourism Development Plan was prepared for 2010-20 through a participatory process spanning three years. Interviews were conducted with local stakeholders on various issues ranging from working partnerships, product development and marketing. The plan includes development, management and implementation guidelines. Further work was undertaken in the surrounding villages which included an assessment of local livelihoods and their impacts on park ecosystems and wildlife, leading to the creation of local village development plans.

Source: Leung Y-F et al., *Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas*, 2015.

## 5.3 Setting vision, goals and objectives

The Guidelines require the plan to contain a vision, which is a broad statement of long term intent, and associated goals that provide a set of priorities to address and targets to achieve. The vision and goals should be agreed jointly by stakeholders through a participatory process. They form a point of reference throughout the preparation and implementation of the plan.

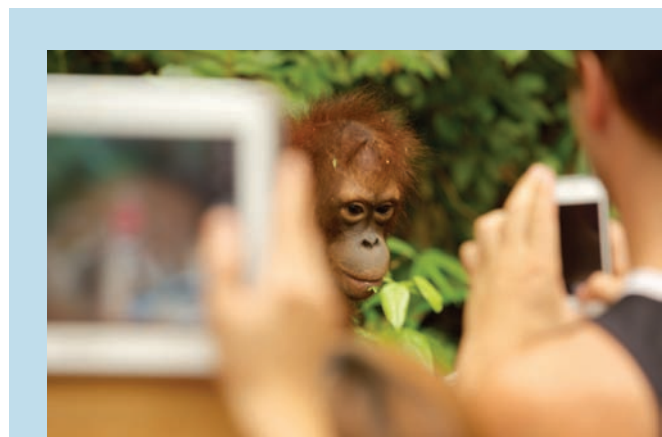
The Guidelines suggest that the goals can cover priorities and targets relating to a range of beneficial outcomes that may be interrelated.<sup>51</sup> For example, these may include poverty reduction, the protection of indigenous culture and livelihoods, diversification of economic activities, and equitable sharing of benefits, as well as prevention of damage to ecosystems, restoration of habitats, and development of tourism that supports conservation.

Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, results-orientated and time-bound. They should provide the basis for agreed actions related to attaining the identified goals.

## 5.4 Key outcomes from a local plan

The implication of the provisions in the Guidelines is that a resulting local plan should provide a well-considered, detailed, practical and agreed roadmap and guide for sustainable tourism that supports biodiversity. Its content should be sufficient to guide future activity and inform decisions on future development projects. Therefore it might be expected to identify:

- ❖ Primary constraints and opportunities for tourism in the area.
- ❖ Types of tourism with clear market potential (reflecting the area's assets, location, current tourism performance and global and local market trends) and which are compatible with the local environmental, social and economic circumstances.



Tourists visiting Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, Sabah, Malaysia – The Rehabilitation Centre is located in the Kabili Forest Reserve, created to minimize the impact of deforestation on orang-utans. The Centre provides education for both local people and visitors.

Credit: CIFOR ([www.flickr.com/photos/cifor/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/cifor/))

- ❖ Zones, and maybe specific sites, most suited to different types and intensities of tourism development and activity. This may include some zones where no development or access should be permitted. Plans should therefore contain some map-based output and be closely related to land use planning.
- ❖ Actions to minimize existing and future negative impacts on biodiversity and to strengthen positive support for biodiversity from tourism, using tools and management processes as identified in Sections 6 to 8 of this Manual.

Draft plans should be the subject of careful consultation with national and local stakeholders, seeking consensus where possible and with any



necessary amendments and additions made to the final plan. Some countries may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken on the proposed plan as an independent systematic assessment of its environmental consequences. This is good practice, can help to streamline the

incorporation of environmental concerns (including biodiversity) into the decision-making process, and should be considered irrespective of whether it is a formal requirement. The plan should be well communicated to all national and local stakeholders.



#### **Box 6: Land use planning in Seychelles**

Seychelles has seen considerable growth in pressure for tourism development especially on the coast, which has led to the need for more detailed and robust land use planning. A land use planning initiative was established as part of the Mainstreaming Biodiversity project, supported by the Global Environment Facility. In addition to an assessment of the development context, including tourism, detailed information was gathered on biodiversity, land ownership and community interests through a series of local workshops and individual consultation. The output was a series of map-based plans, identifying zones and sites for different uses, including different types and intensities of tourism activity.<sup>52</sup>



## Chapter 6

### Tools for Controlling and Influencing Tourism Impacts on Biodiversity



The Guidelines require that there should be a review of legislation and control measures, and their effectiveness, to identify any need to strengthen their use, including the introduction of new instruments where necessary.

## 6.1 The range of instruments to use

A range of instruments can be used to address all aspects of the impact of tourism on biodiversity. Instruments can be used to influence biodiversity impacts that may be direct, such as destruction of habitat resulting from development, or indirect, such as inefficient energy or water use leading to resource depletion and climate change.

Reference to legislation at this point in the Guidelines is essentially about the existence and use of enforceable regulations backed by legislation. The main additional types of instrument are commonly grouped under the headings of voluntary or economic instruments, while others may relate to

measurement and monitoring processes and supportive management activity.<sup>53</sup>

The application of regulatory, voluntary and economic instruments is considered further below. Ongoing management and mitigation activity, which may involve practical application of some of these instruments, is covered further in Section 8. Monitoring and supportive processes are mainly addressed in Section 9 and Section 10 respectively.<sup>54</sup>

While any of the instruments may be used on their own, they can often be more effective if used in combination. An example is the use of economic instruments to encourage the take up of voluntary processes.

## 6.2 Regulations and their enforcement

A primary use of regulations to influence tourism impact is in the process for land use planning and control that requires prior approval to be granted before any new development or change of use can take place. All areas of vulnerable biodiversity should be covered by such a process. Requirements for notification of development, impact assessment and decisions on granting approval are looked at further in Section 7.

The detail of individual developments may be addressed through a local planning process, often including minimum standards for siting and design yet most often not including biodiversity concerns. For biodiversity, additional requirements may be needed, particularly in restricted land-use categories. These should include particular requirements for minimising environmental impact during the construction process and for the decommissioning of buildings. Such regulations should apply to all uses not only tourism.

Regulations based on minimum standards should also be applied to certain aspects of the operation of tourism businesses. Waste management and effluent control, for example, is particularly important for reducing damage to habitats, in all locations but especially in coastal and wetland environments.


In some situations it may be appropriate to control visitor movements and activities through regulation. They may be used, for example, to restrict the amount or timing of access to certain sites, or to control visitor activities or behaviour through the establishment of enforceable bylaws, such as procedures for diving on sensitive reefs.

A major challenge for the use of regulatory instruments has proved to be their enforcement, which is often weak and in some countries is severely hampered by lack of commitment, external influences or insufficient capacity for inspection. This underlines the need for a full and transparent review, as required by the Guidelines.



Abandoned ruins of a resort, French Polynesia, 2011 – Regulations for the decommissioning of buildings should cover restoration of sites.

Credit: Michael R Perry ([www.flickr.com/photos/michaelrperry](http://www.flickr.com/photos/michaelrperry)).



### Box 7: Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) for Coastal Development in Mauritius

The Ministry of Tourism and Leisure has reviewed and strengthened the Hotel Development Strategy for Mauritius in 2009, in order to reinforce the country's competitive edge as an attractive tourism destination. Strict adherence was to be required to Planning Policy Guidance for coastal development in order to preserve the natural, pristine characteristics of the island's seascapes. Hotel developments must observe setback, height and plot coverage regulations, with no derogations allowed. Development is to take place in clusters, with natural vegetation in between and beach recharging or re-engineering should as far as possible leave untouched the natural features of the site such as rock outcrops, mature trees and natural habitat.<sup>55</sup>



### Box 8: Zoning and regulation of marine tourism activities in Saint Lucia

In the 1990s, rapid growth of the tourism sector in Saint Lucia brought significant pressure from marine-based recreation, including yachting, snorkelling and diving, resulting in conflict with fishermen and damage to the reef environment. In the village of Soufrière, the Soufrière Marine Management Association, Incorporated, is a local Fisheries Management Authority responsible for managing over 22 km of coastline, including two parks. This non-profit body links various government agencies and local interests and was established to develop and administer a management initiative, resulting in the identification of five types of zone for different activities, regulated through a permit system. In 2011, the system was completely reviewed, with extensive stakeholder participation, leading to greater commitment and more effective monitoring and enforcement.<sup>56</sup>

## 6.3 Voluntary instruments

These are instruments designed to influence stakeholders through inviting voluntary compliance with a standard. They are often used to supplement regulations, identifying performance and actions that go beyond a minimum legal requirement.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has established global standards for sustainable tourism for tourism businesses and for destinations.<sup>57</sup> The Criteria are the minimum, not the maximum, which businesses and destinations should implement to achieve social, environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability. Both include various requirements to consider implications for biodiversity. Businesses are required to conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes. Destinations are required to have regulations to protect natural resources in place and enforced, together with a requirement to monitor impacts and protect sensitive environments.<sup>58</sup>

Voluntary standards, codes and guidelines may be produced for more specific tourism activities aimed at minimising their biodiversity impact. Examples include IUCN's work on the siting and design of hotels, or various local and global codes for wildlife watching. Their success is entirely dependent on sector commitment.<sup>59</sup>

Standards and codes can be used on their own to benchmark and promote good practice. They may also be backed by certification schemes that verify compliance, leading to the award of a label. The

GSTC has established an accreditation programme for certification schemes that work to their standard. A study of the coverage of biodiversity issues within criteria for sustainable tourism certification and award schemes has concluded that while most schemes focus on the degradation of ecosystems and the overexploitation of natural resources as the main causes of the loss of biodiversity, much less attention is given, for example, to invasive alien species and to newer concepts such as the No-Net Loss approach or the mitigation hierarchy. One specific recommendation is that a sustainable tourism standard should have an explicit goal of making a significant contribution towards halting the loss of biological diversity, and in creating the conditions to help achieve an increase in biodiversity.<sup>60</sup>

In 2014 the number of tourism businesses and destinations that are recognized through some form of sustainability certification remains limited. A range of actions should be taken to promote the pursuit of standards, certification and good practice in general. These include:

- ❖ Encouragement of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and other reporting by tourism businesses that embraces biodiversity
- ❖ Business to business influences in the supply chain
- ❖ Making financial and other support conditional on compliance.
- ❖ Promotion to consumers, including encouragement of sharing and feedback via social media.





### Box 9: Effectiveness of standards and certification

The objective contribution of sustainable tourism standards and certification systems for the private sector in terms of biodiversity benefits and risk reduction has been measured in a study published by the Rainforest Alliance, who has defined, with the GSTC, 78 criteria for sustainable environmental, social, and business practices, adopted by over 600 tourism businesses in 12 countries. A survey of 106 businesses being trained and assisted in their certification process in Latin America between 2006 and 2011 compared performance along 29 of the criteria most directly related to biodiversity conservation. Over a timeframe of two years, results show that the conformance to those criteria had a 31% overall increase. Substantial increases were observed in key practices and outcomes including wildlife protection, support for nearby protected areas, improved waste management, reduced water pollution, and improved environmental awareness on the part of visitors and employees. Improvements were greatest for businesses in the lowest third of performance at baseline and smaller but still significant for those in the middle third.<sup>61</sup>



### Box 10: Certification for Sustainable Tourism, Costa Rica

The Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) Programme was developed by the Costa Rica Tourism Institute to differentiate businesses of the tourism sector, based on the degree to which they comply with a sustainable model of natural, cultural and social resource management. CST certified business benefit from the marketing activity of the Costa Rica Tourism Institute:

- CST certified businesses enjoy complete or partial exemption from registration fees to international fairs.
- CST certified businesses are listed on the web site<sup>62</sup> available in Spanish, English, and French.
- The CST label can also be used by a business in its own marketing promotions to identify them as sustainable.

A further way of recognising good practice in sustainability amongst tourism businesses or initiatives is through award schemes. The possibility of winning an award can act as an incentive but the greatest benefit from the schemes probably comes from raising awareness of sustainability issues, such as biodiversity impacts, and promoting good

practice as an encouragement and guide to others. Sustainable tourism award schemes are run at a global level by various agencies and international tourism companies and a number of individual countries have their own schemes. The majority of them are associated with relevant international tourism fairs.



### Box 11: Examples of award schemes

The Secretariat of the CBD has collaborated with many of tourism-related award schemes in setting criteria and playing jury roles. Some examples of awards include the TODO! Award - International Contest Socially Responsible Tourism<sup>63</sup>, the WTTC Tourism For Tomorrow Awards<sup>64</sup>, the World Responsible Tourism Awards<sup>65</sup>. In 2009 and 2010, the SCBD has organized the Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website Awards in partnership with Planeta.com to showcase best practices in web-based technologies to support indigenous people to manage tourism in a biodiversity-friendly manner<sup>66</sup>. The award aimed to motivate candidates to improve their online communication on biological and cultural diversity, and to raise tourism operators and public's awareness on biodiversity.

## 6.4 Economic instruments

Economic instruments bring about change through their impact on market signals. They can be used:

- ❖ As an incentive to take certain actions, through imposing a penalty or a gain
- ❖ To gain revenue for a particular activity, such as conservation.

Economic and financial instruments can be used in different directions, to enhance better practices and avoid harmful ones. Tourism businesses can be discouraged from environmentally harmful investments and activities through impact fees, for instance on pollution and consumption of natural resources such as water, or the phasing out or

reforming environmentally harmful subsidies. Conversely, direct incentives may be applied in the form of grants or credit for beneficial technologies, such as installation of low energy systems or visitor impact management infrastructure. Improving the resilience of infrastructure through ecosystem-based adaptation and reducing risks of environmental disasters (e.g. by keeping/restoring protective mangroves or forests) can be encouraged through insurance discounts or the offer of reinsurance funds. Visitors can be bound to contribute to charge systems (entrance or user fees). More complex forms of instrument, such as insurance bonds and deposit refund schemes, can be used as mitigation against possible future environmental damage. Trust funds for conservation can be established through user rights instruments such as tourism concessions, public-private partnerships and lease agreements. Limits for boat visitation to marine parks by tradable permit schemes, for instance, can ensure distribution of benefits while keeping visitor volumes

within acceptable limits. Incentives can be applied effectively at a community level.<sup>67</sup>

Less directly, environmental management and other conditions may be placed on tourism businesses seeking funding through financial subsidies such as loans, grants and micro-credit schemes which make working capital available to SMEs. Several multi- and bilateral agencies already utilize biodiversity-related investment guidelines and safeguards. The Inter-American Development Bank has developed an Environment and Safeguards Compliance Policy<sup>68</sup>. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has a set of guidelines for environmental and social considerations for investments since 2010<sup>69</sup>. Another example is IFC's Performance Standard 6 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources, see box below.

More economic instruments are covered in Section 8 on management activity.



### **Box 12: International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standard 6**

#### Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Leading development banks and financial institutions recognize that the conservation of biodiversity, including the services and products that natural habitats provide to human society, is fundamental to their vision of long-term sustainable development. IFC's Environmental and Social Performance Standards define their clients' responsibilities for managing environmental and social risks and apply to all investment and advisory clients whose projects will go through IFC's initial credit review process. The objectives of Performance Standard 6 are

- To protect and conserve biodiversity.
- To maintain the benefits from ecosystem services.
- To promote the sustainable management of living natural resources through the adoption of practices which integrate conservation needs and development priorities.

Conditions attached to finance for implementing or operating a project require that those responsible should seek to avoid impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. When avoidance of impacts is not possible, measures are to be implemented to minimize impacts and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services. Differing conditions are placed on projects depending on the nature of the habitat in which they are to be located. For example, more stringent requirements apply to projects in 'Critical Habitats' than to those in 'Natural Habitats'.<sup>70</sup>

An area of very particular relevance to biodiversity that has been increasingly recognized for its importance in the tourism sector is the process of granting a licence or concession to a business to operate in a particular area, such as a national park, thereby conveying an economic advantage. The time when concessions are advertised and negotiated presents a very important window of opportunity for placing requirements on the development and operation of businesses, including

their environmental management and support for biodiversity. Guidance on the letting of concessions for tourism in protected areas has been the subject of a number of studies, including a recent publication from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>71</sup>

More comprehensive discussion of the use of economic instruments for tourism and biodiversity may be found elsewhere.<sup>72</sup>





## Chapter 7

# Notification and Impact Assessment of Tourism Projects

**A critical determinant of the impact of tourism on biodiversity is the way that individual development proposals are handled. The Guidelines set out requirements for the notification of potential projects, undertaking an impact assessment and making decisions about them.**

## 7.1 Prior communication and notification of tourism projects

The Guidelines contain a separate section at the end on Notification that stipulates that “proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations are to be submitted through a notification process”. Proposers of projects are required to provide full and timely advance notice of proposed developments to all stakeholders who may be affected. Information that is required from them is set out in paragraph 84 of the Guidelines. In summary, this covers: details of the project; the market, location and legal context; inputs required; anticipated socio-economic and environmental impacts; measures to avoid and mitigate adverse impacts and maximize local benefits; and other relevant information.

Although not specified in the Guidelines, potential developers should be encouraged to take full account of national and local policies and plans, including biodiversity conditions and constraints, before any formal notification. They should also have

an appropriate level of dialogue and consultation with local planning authorities and stakeholders. This will reduce the likelihood of unsuitable proposals coming forward and save time for the proposers, local authorities and other stakeholders. It should occur when the proposals are still flexible and enable an exchange of ideas. The existence of good baseline information and a local plan will greatly assist these early discussions as well as the impact assessment and decision-making process that will follow. In some situations, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) may be proposed by developers. Hence while Government is approached to approve an EIA or a building permit, there may be no obligation to notify the public. Application of the Guidelines, however, would still require public announcements of any tourism project that Parties have been asked to approve. BirdLife International, Conservation International, UNEP-WCMC and IUCN offer a support tool in assessing development and investment options, as below.



### Box 13: IBAT for Business

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) helps businesses incorporate biodiversity considerations into key project planning and management decisions at various stages of a project's life cycle. The scoping process can help companies identify areas of high ecological value to avoid during development and narrow in on specific locations for any infrastructure developed as part of the project. IBAT can help to identify information gaps that will need to be followed by on-the-ground surveys and consultation in order to understand the current status of the site and the magnitude of the potential impacts of a project on species, communities and ecological processes.

IBAT for business facilitates access to the following datasets in one central integrated platform:

- Nationally designated and international recognized protected areas (World Database on Protected Areas);
- National sites of global conservation importance (Key Biodiversity Areas, including Important Bird Areas and Alliance for Zero Extinction sites), and;
- Globally threatened species (The IUCN Red List).<sup>73</sup>

## 7.2 Environmental Impact Assessment requirements, content and procedures

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) seeks to ensure that the environmental effects of major projects and development proposals are fully investigated, understood and taken into account before decisions are made on whether they should proceed. The Guidelines require that proposers should assess

the impacts of developments and provide information on this through the notification process. Governments are then required to undertake evaluations of the adequacy of these impact assessments. They may require a further assessment study which may need to be funded by the proposer and undertaken



by appropriately qualified personnel. The Guidelines also place strong emphasis on the need for a comprehensible and transparent process, with sufficient time allowed for consultation, engagement and input from all stakeholders. On occasion, when new policies, economic instruments and legal frameworks are put into place, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) may be indicated and can follow the same guidelines. Special attention should be paid to indigenous peoples and local communities. Attention is drawn to CBD guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into EIA<sup>74</sup> and the Akwe: Kon guidelines relating to indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>75</sup>

The Convention also prepared, as noted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in its decision XI/18, voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments annotated specifically for biodiversity in marine and coastal areas, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with Article 4 of the Convention. COP 11 recognized that these annotated voluntary guidelines for marine and coastal areas would be most useful for activities that are currently unregulated, with no procedures for assessing impacts, and noted that the annotations are intended to cover the diverse range of marine and coastal ecosystems, including issues related to areas beyond national jurisdiction. These annotated voluntary guidelines are available as UNEP/CBD/COP/11/23.<sup>76</sup>

The conduct of EIAs should follow broadly established procedures even if they differ across the Parties to the CBD. The requirement for an EIA for any proposed development is usually established by a legal framework or regulation, and may be mandatory (for example in protected areas) or discretionary. It is customary to undertake an initial screening of proposals to determine whether there are possible impacts of sufficient concern to require a full-scale or detailed assessment. In most countries, only certain components of the tourism sector (such as large hotels, resorts or marina developments), and particularly types of tourism development (such as those with large-scale infrastructure components, or those in restricted land-use categories), are subject to project-scale environmental impact assessment based on the ecosystem approach.<sup>77</sup> This will depend on the scale and type of project and the vulnerability or sensitivity of local ecosystems which may be in the vicinity of the project. There should also be a scoping exercise to determine key issues that need to be investigated, and public consultations and notification of outcomes should be assured.

The Guidelines include a long list of topics that may be included in an EIA for a proposed tourism project (paras. 41-43). These are grouped according to impacts on the environment and biodiversity (e.g. use of land and resources, pollution and waste management, biodiversity risks); socio economic and cultural impacts (e.g. on traditional activities, social structures, and cultural sites); and the potential benefits of tourism (e.g. maintenance of natural resources, provision of jobs and alternative livelihoods).

The particular nature of tourism points to the need for pay special attention to a number of factors that may not always be apparent in planning EIAs. These include:

- ❖ **Market volatility.** Tourism can suffer from unpredictable downturns, requiring carefully business planning. If its revenues are linked to conservation payback mechanisms or community concessions, the consequences for the environment and local community of fluctuating income levels on what are usually fixed costs need to be considered.
- ❖ **Marginality, indirect or cumulative impacts and lack of clarity.** Many tourism projects and activities may appear as small-scale yet have a clear catalytic role and expand beyond their original plan or have impacts outside the immediate area of operation (e.g., noise, air or water pollution) and thus affect remote biodiversity. Additionally costs and benefits of a single project on ecosystems services may be cumulative impact of multiples previous projects. Thus, there is frequently a lack of clarity about whether an impact assessment is necessary and what scale of impacts it should consider. This should be made as clear as possible in planning guidelines.

In some countries, it has been found that although EIAs are conducted for tourism projects in sensitive areas they have not been fully effective.<sup>78</sup> This may be because proposers, interested in maximizing profits, may have underestimated risks and the body vested with the responsibility of regulating tourism / biodiversity may not have reviewed the EIA for objectivity and unbiased assessments, or the EIAs may have been undertaken too late and have not been able to influence the shape of the project and sometimes even the final decision. There are also more general issues of insufficient consultation, lack of compliance with the results and recommendations and, in some cases, licensing requirements that are not auditable, feasible, or enforceable.<sup>79</sup> There is a need to guard against these failings.

### Box 14: EIA Guidelines for the Tourism Sector in Kenya

Following a review of all tourism-related legislation, policies and best practices, Kenya's Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife developed Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines specifically for the tourism sector. These were aimed at ensuring that decisions on proposed tourism projects and activities are environmentally sustainable. A working committee was set up, comprising the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, National Environment Management Authority, Kenya Wildlife Service, Ministry of Local Government, Kenya Tourist Board, Kenya Tourism Federation and Ecotourism Society of Kenya. A draft document was subject to final review by tourism stakeholders prior to an official launch in November 2007.<sup>80</sup>

## 7.3 Decision-making on tourism projects

A separate step in the Guidelines refers to decision-making. A decision about a tourism project should be informed by any existing relevant policies and local plans and by the result of the environmental impact assessment. This may result in:

- ❖ Approval of the proposal
- ❖ Approval subject to certain specified conditions, which may include quite detailed monitoring, mitigation, or other management measures
- ❖ A request for further information
- ❖ Deferral of the decision, maybe pending further investigation to be undertaken
- ❖ Refusal to grant permission, with reasons given.

The Guidelines require that decision-making should be transparent, accountable and apply the precautionary principle. While a decision on approval for development may rest with the national or local government, it should be informed by participation of all relevant stakeholders. This should include meaningful consultation with indigenous peoples and local communities affected by projects, taking into account all matters of land rights, customs and traditional knowledge. The principle of prior informed consent should be respected and may be a legal requirement in some countries.



Mangrove ecotourism, Kenya - Local women in the village built a boardwalk through a mangrove forest to give educational tours that increase awareness of the importance of mangroves  
Credits: 25kim (www.flickr.com/photos/equilibrate)

### Box 15: Q Station, North Head, Sydney – Conditional planning approval

North Head is one of several fragmented areas that make up the Sydney Harbour National Park, an IUCN Category V protected area. In 2001, the Mawland Group, a private developer, proposed to lease the former quarantine station site from the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and to convert the buildings into a high-end hotel, thereby helping to secure and conserve the structures, which are an important part of Australia's heritage. Following a very thorough EIA, which identified a large number of potential biodiversity impacts, the development plan was significantly amended and a conditional planning approval granted. The approval conditions included, amongst others:

- a comprehensive environmental audit to be undertaken during the construction phase of the project
- the maintenance of an agreed monitoring regime, with adaptive management measures to be applied should certain indicators be exceeded (for example, the monitoring of road kill of long-nosed bandicoots, an important endemic species)
- further comprehensive environmental audits to be undertaken at five yearly intervals.<sup>81</sup>





## Chapter 8

# Management Initiatives to Support Biodiversity through Tourism

In addition to planning and development control tools and processes, a range of practical management activity can be undertaken on the ground to reduce negative impacts on, and gain positive benefits for, conservation from tourism. This relates to the step in the Guidelines on Management and Mitigation and can draw on wider experience notably in the field of protected area management.

## 8.1 Dimensions and purpose of the management process

The Guidelines list a wide range of potential impacts and issues that can be addressed through management (Paragraph 49). Many of these relate to practical action to reduce negative impacts but they also include a range of actions that the Guidelines refer to as “supporting sustainable tourism activities that have a direct commercial interest in maintaining vulnerable ecosystems in good condition”.

Some management actions will be concerned with mitigating existing and potential future impacts from tourism. These should follow the mitigation hierarchy, a set of prioritized steps to alleviate environmental harm as far as possible through avoidance, minimization (or reduction) and restoration of detrimental impacts to biodiversity. Biodiversity offsetting should be considered to address residual impacts only after appropriate avoidance, minimization and restoration measures have been applied.

A key opportunity is to use management activity to raise support, both financial and political, for conservation directly and indirectly from visitors and the tourism sector.<sup>82</sup>

The Guidelines are not explicit about which bodies can or should be leading and implementing management on the ground. These could be local government or protected area authorities, land owners and managers, private sector bodies, conservation NGOs or community bodies, amongst others. A considerable challenge in many countries is the lack of human and financial resources for management. Irrespective of the management agency, actions can be broadly divided between those aimed respectively at tourism businesses, visitors and local communities.

## 8.2 Working with tourism businesses to support conservation

Engagement with tourism business to promote and undertake management actions and support conservation can take various forms. Examples of the most common activities include:

- ❖ Checking on management and mitigation actions required of businesses as a condition of development approval
- ❖ Encouraging and supporting businesses in their own individual management and conservation initiatives
- ❖ Encouraging employees of tourism business to act as champions for biodiversity conservation in their communities
- ❖ Collecting rental and user fees from concessionaires and other businesses, with revenues used for conservation
- ❖ Imposing wider local management charges and taxes on businesses, where appropriate
- ❖ Creating and promoting specific opportunities for tourism businesses to sponsor local conservation projects or provide voluntary stewardship of areas
- ❖ Encouraging or requiring businesses to collect a fee from their visitors, for example on behalf of local communities to support their management and conservation activities or general welfare
- ❖ Encouraging well-designed tourism offers that enable voluntary participation by visitors in practical conservation work (“voluntourism”)
- ❖ Establishing active partnerships between local concessionaires or other businesses and local government or protected area authorities, to plan and undertake joint initiatives. Partnerships may also include NGOs and local community bodies.



### Box 16: Nurture Lakeland, Lake District National Park, United Kingdom

Nurture Lakeland has developed a Visitor Payback Scheme (VPS) within the Lake District National Park, United Kingdom, which allows visitors to contribute to landscape management through a small donation, often through a participating tourism business. This practical example of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) has enabled direct beneficiaries (tourists) and indirect beneficiaries (businesses) of the natural environment to provide support for its restoration and management. Businesses are given the opportunity to support one of three projects, including the Osprey Project, which supports the re-colonization of the area by this IUCN Red List (Least Concern) species *Pandion haliaetus*. Nurture Lakeland has raised almost £2 million in donations over an 18-year period through their overall scheme.<sup>83</sup>

## 8.3 Visitor management and conservation benefit

A wide range of management actions can influence the impact of visitors on the local environment. Locations with high volumes of visitation should have separate visitor management plans; elsewhere relevant actions should be identified in overall tourism plans. Action areas include:

- ❖ Keeping abreast of visitor volumes and flows, against targets and possible capacity limits and quotas in sensitive sites
- ❖ Provision of visitor infrastructure, such as trails and car parking, that is well planned and designed to minimize biodiversity impact
- ❖ Influencing behaviour through general and focused visitor information, before and during visits
- ❖ Strengthening understanding and support for conservation causes through effective interpretation
- ❖ Setting appropriate charges for admission or specific activities in certain sites
- ❖ Setting visitor fees or seeking voluntary donations to support local conservation causes, possibly collected via businesses as referred to above
- ❖ Establishing opportunities for visitors to engage in voluntary conservation activity.

Direct and indirect income that is obtained from visitors and tourism business in the above ways should be allocated preferentially to support local management and conservation initiatives and causes. Feedback should be provided to businesses and visitors on its use.



### Box 17: Visitor management plans for South Georgia

The principle objective of the tourism management policy for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands is to enable visitor access, whilst ensuring the continued protection of the island's unique environment, including its flora, fauna and cultural heritage. Vessels intending to visit any of the islands require a permit, to which conditions are attached. Visitor management plans are in place for individual locations, which specify the size and number of ships that can land each day, and detail landing arrangements and routes to be followed to visit wildlife sites such as King Penguin colonies.<sup>84</sup>

While individual passengers do not need to apply to visit, the Government has prepared a document with information about many aspects of the visit, including conduct while ashore, wildlife protection guidelines and biosecurity protocols in place to protect the fragile ecology of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.<sup>85</sup>



## 8.4 Working with local communities to support conservation

There are many ways in which local communities can benefit from tourism, requiring supportive management activities. In developing countries a range of mechanisms that link tourism spending to poverty alleviation has been identified by UNWTO.<sup>86</sup> The extent to which this can bring net benefits for biodiversity will depend partly on the impact of the current sources of community livelihood and whether possible tourism-related opportunities will have less negative impact. This should be looked at in planning relevant actions. Engagement with tourism activities that are based on experience of wildlife, nature and/or biodiversity may be more likely to raise community

awareness of the link between their livelihoods and conservation.

Established private sector tourism businesses are highly important in bringing benefit to local communities, through providing employment and a market outlet for their goods and services. However, in some locations there is potential for local individuals or community bodies to establish their own tourism enterprises selling directly to incoming visitors. To be successful such enterprises must meet visitor expectations and have sufficient access to markets, including links with established businesses. This requires significant capacity-building.<sup>87</sup>



### Box 18: Kabu Tours

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in partnership with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and Nicaragua's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) helped to establish Kabu Tours in the Nicaragua Caribbean. Kabu Tours is a small local tour operator that offers guided ecotours to the Pearl Cays Wildlife Refuge (PCWR) and the Miskitu community, Kahkabila. This community-owned tourism initiative seeks to reduce sea turtle fishing pressure on the PCWR by providing sustainable livelihoods to turtle fishermen. To reduce impact on the refuge, the fisherman have been trained by WCS to lead overnight trips to the Pearl Keys Wildlife Refuge where visitors are provided with an educational experience incorporating sea turtle knowledge gathered through years of research conducted by WCS marine biologists.<sup>88</sup>



## Chapter 9

# Monitoring, Reporting and Adaptive Management of Tourism Impacts on Biodiversity



**Any process that involves the planning and implementation of actions to achieve desired goals and objectives must include an element of monitoring of outcomes and impacts, which can then guide any needed changes to the plan and its execution.**

## 9.1 What needs to be monitored?

The Guidelines point to a broad range of topics (biodiversity, social and economic conditions, tourism performance) that should or could be the subject of monitoring. However, they do not provide any specificity or prioritization. Baseline information obtained at the outset should inform the monitoring process and be used to measure change, see Section 4 of this manual.

It is important to distinguish between the monitoring of outputs, outcomes and impacts. Outputs are actions taken as part of the management process. Monitoring outputs may be seen as monitoring progress towards effective planning and management in line with the Guidelines. Actions taken should be recorded and reported. Priority topics include, for example:

- ❖ Establishment of stakeholder structures and levels of engagement
- ❖ Progress with investigation, completion and dissemination of plans
- ❖ Number of tourism development projects assessed and decisions taken
- ❖ Management actions taken

Outcomes are responses to the actions and relate to meeting overall goals and objectives. Monitoring outputs requires a process of obtaining feedback from stakeholders directly or indirectly involved. Priority topics include, for example:

- ❖ Conditions placed on projects, monitoring for levels of compliance
- ❖ Levels of participation in actions and any results obtained
- ❖ Percentage of tourism businesses undertaking environmental management
- ❖ Revenue raised from business and visitors to support conservation
- ❖ Level of engagement of local community in tourism and awareness of value of biodiversity
- ❖ Increase in designated protected area

Impacts are consequential environmental or socio-economic changes, which relate to overarching goals and may be long term. Monitoring impacts can be more difficult, especially in terms of establishing causality by linking back to actions, but the priority task is to keep abreast of any changes in the state of biodiversity and other matters of environmental or socio-economic concern. Priority topics include, for example:

- ❖ Biodiversity condition – population trend of key species, area of habitat lost or restored
- ❖ Change in threat levels to biodiversity
- ❖ Visitor numbers, length of stay and spend
- ❖ Tourism business occupancy and performance
- ❖ Local income and employment from sustainable tourism activities

## 9.2 The monitoring and reporting process

Monitoring should be designed and implemented as a participatory process, coordinated by the multi-stakeholder group responsible for sustainable tourism planning. Government bodies, tourism businesses, NGOs, community groups and visitors should be engaged in monitoring and reporting. Recent developers should report on their compliance with conditions specified in the approval process and on the related state of biodiversity of the site, natural feature or ecosystem.

A set of indicators should be identified that reflect the topics listed above. In principle it is better to have a small number of indicators that work well than a larger number that are difficult to monitor. Indicators should be relevant to the topic, feasible to monitor cost-effectively with credible data, clear

and understandable, and comparable over time. A considerable amount of thinking has gone into the development of indicators for tourism,<sup>89</sup> and indicators for biodiversity.<sup>90</sup> Ideally, indicators should be agreed at an early stage in the planning, assessment and management process of any tourism development or project.

Monitoring should be a continuous process, with minimum annual reporting on the main indicators. It is often also a challenge to determine effective and efficient means of verification to collect data for the different indicators identified. Existing data sources, dedicated surveys (of visitors, businesses and the local community) and systematic observation should be used.<sup>91</sup> The results should be publically available and actively disseminated through a reporting process.





### **Box 19: Yosemite Visitor Use and Impact Monitoring**

Yosemite National Park has established a Visitor Use and Impact Monitoring Program to collect information about the extent of human-induced impacts on natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience. A transparent and rigorous process involving a variety of stakeholders was used to select and implement indicators and establish monitoring standards. For example, the indicator selection process for the Merced River Plan involved consulting with a wide-ranging group of park planners, resource managers, contractors and a cross-section of park employees throughout divisions within the park. All aspects of field sampling methods and analytical protocols associated with the Program are guided by an updatable Field Monitoring Guide. Indicators and standards help guide management decisions, and field monitoring guide updates and annual reports are made publicly available online.<sup>92</sup>



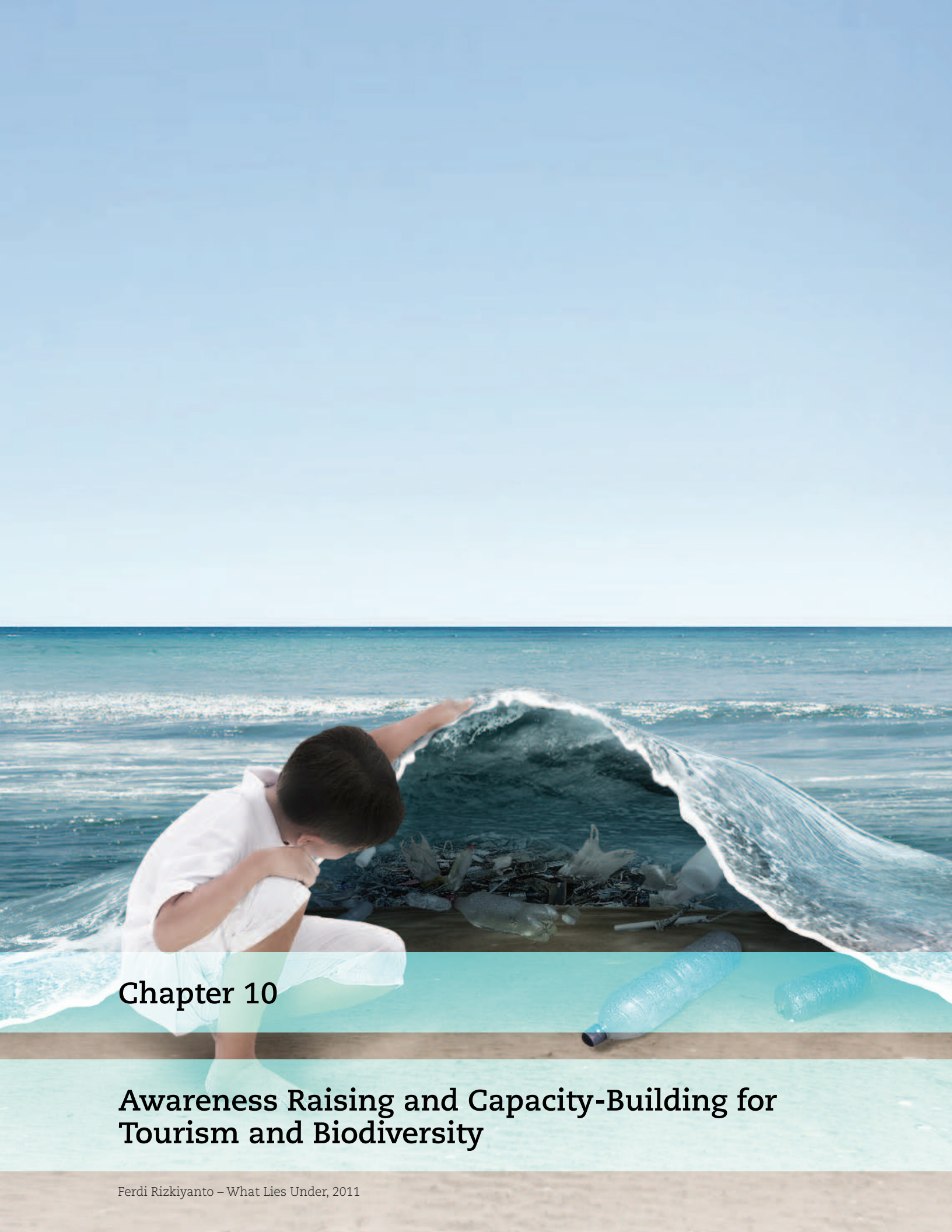
### **Box 20: Engaging tourists in monitoring**

The involvement of tourists in monitoring can provide a useful additional source of data as well as helping to secure their commitment and support for conservation. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Nam Nern Night Safari, supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society, is a 24-hour, boat-based tour into the core of the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area. The trip involves wildlife-spotlighting, when long-tail boats drift down the Nam Nern River looking for wild and endangered animals. Tourists are asked to fill out a wildlife monitoring form to record what they have seen. Much of the income from the trip supports a village development fund that is shared equally between the 14 villages that surround the area. In addition to being paid for the services they provide, villagers also receive a bonus based on the numbers of wildlife seen by the tourists.<sup>93</sup>

## **9.3 The requirement for flexibility and adaptation**

The Guidelines advocate adaptive management. This requires a flexible approach, with an ability to rapidly review and alter management actions in the face of change. This may be stimulated by results from the monitoring process or by unpredictable events, such as natural disasters or security threats affecting tourism.

The Guidelines underline the need for ongoing dialogue between tourism and biodiversity managers in responding to results and events. Where biodiversity may be threatened, the precautionary principle should be followed. Adaptive management also requires cooperation amongst all stakeholders, and notably tourism businesses, who must be prepared to discuss and agree any necessary changes and to respond rapidly if required.



## Chapter 10

# Awareness Raising and Capacity-Building for Tourism and Biodiversity

These two topics, which are critically important for the take-up and maintenance of good practice, are covered in a final section of the Guidelines.

## 10.1 Raising awareness of biodiversity issues in tourism

The Guidelines call for education and awareness-raising campaigns on the impacts of tourism on biodiversity, good practices in this area, and the link with cultural heritage and the use of traditional lands and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities. Specific attention should be paid to communication processes that are executed professionally and make use of the most relevant media. The Guidelines point to a number of target audiences, identified below.

**Indigenous peoples and local communities** should be made aware of the value of conserving and protecting their biodiversity and natural attractions to sustain a viable tourism revenue source. Initial awareness raising should be conducted before developing tourism in an area with communities and before benefits are distributed. Regular meetings, perhaps annually or more frequently should be held to build awareness about the key link between conservation and tourism.

**Tourists.** International and domestic visitors should be made more aware of the biodiversity impacts of their activities and the facilities and services that they choose to use. Campaigns can be targeted to those user groups with highest volumes or highest rates of impacts on specific resources. This can be achieved through working with a number of different communication channels, including:

- ❖ Travel writers and general news media, including publishers of guidebooks and online information.
- ❖ International and local tour operators, including specialist companies and brands relating to nature and adventure travel as well as those operating in the more general market. Increasing numbers of tour operators and networks are

embracing sustainability in their operations and market positioning, including engagement in certification schemes. They need to be made more aware of the biodiversity dimensions of this and relevant messages to use.

- ❖ Social and Internet-based media, including use of travel blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and interaction with consumer-generated evaluation processes.

**Key government ministries.** This is partly about intra-government structures and dialogue as covered in Section 3. However more support could be given to global, regional and national initiatives to further raise the profile of tourism as a tool for sustainable development, including its contribution to rural livelihoods and biodiversity, especially with high level ministries responsible for development and finance as well as environment and tourism ministries.

**Tourism businesses.** Individual businesses (formal and informal) and trade bodies will be engaged in multi-stakeholder structures and processes, and reached through various approaches, as outlined in Sections 3, 5 and 6. More could be done to raise the profile of biodiversity issues through campaigns in global and regional trade media and in collaboration with relevant trade bodies.

**Educational bodies.** Academic, research and training institutions should cover biodiversity and tourism relationships in their activities and teaching. This is particularly important in reaching the current and future personnel who make relevant decisions at all levels and interface with visitors.



### Box 21: Communication and training events on tourism and biodiversity

In 2013-14 the UNWTO organized or supported a number of events specifically on tourism and biodiversity which have served both an awareness raising and capacity-building purpose. These included:

- Collaboration with the Ramsar Convention on sustainable tourism in wetlands, with the launching of a publication *Destination Wetlands: Supporting Sustainable Tourism*. This shows which through fourteen case studies how sustainable tourism practices in and around wetlands can contribute to conservation, economic growth, poverty reduction and local community support. It is aimed at managers, planners and businesses and a communications event during World Wetland Day to inform tourists of the value of wetlands.<sup>94, 95</sup>
- Training courses (12 days) on *Understanding Tourism Trends and Biodiversity Conservation for Innovative Products and Marketing*.<sup>96</sup>
- Seminars on *Turning Tourism Employees into Champions for Biodiversity and Environmental Protection*. Based on very simple messages and communication techniques, these seminars were held in coastal communities in three African countries and aimed at tourism staff who have the potential to encourage colleagues and other community members to help protect the environment.<sup>97</sup>
- Seminars organized in Ghana and Tanzania.<sup>98</sup>



## 10.2 Capacity-building and resource mobilization

A fundamental requirement is the availability of sufficient capacity (technical, institutional and financial) to undertake the planning and management processes outlined in the Guidelines and set out in this Manual.

An early action item should be to undertake an audit and review of the existing levels of capacity amongst relevant stakeholder bodies, especially those that should be leading the planning and management process but also others that will need a degree of capacity in order to contribute as active and effective participants.

Limited availability of capacity (such as skills in stakeholder engagement, data collection and quantitative analysis, strategic planning, impact assessments and projections of impacts using scientific data and computer models) within government can be a critical barrier to success. This applies to the national level but most especially to local government,

including protected area authorities. Insufficient human and financial resources are often the greatest challenge, requiring effective resource mobilization. The creation of regional data banks on key indices of tourism impacts on biodiversity contributes to monitor long-term change.

Local knowledge exchange can increasingly be facilitated through on-line systems for learning, shared platforms for data, and the development of global systems for highlighting where biodiversity vulnerability is highest, and where capacity may be lowest. Such concerns should be under constant review to enable global institutions to work to reinforce the institutional capacity of local organizations to manage tourism impacts on biodiversity. This should include the implementation and dissemination of demonstration projects, following the Guidelines, in areas of significant biodiversity vulnerability and tourism interest.



### Box 22: Examples of business skills transfer programme for ecotourism development

Tourism is considered by many conservation organizations to be one of the sectors with the greatest potential for linking conservation to economic development. However, with limited experience of business, tourism products and services that they introduce can fail to gain market which can have a negative effect on conservation efforts. This situation can be addressed through transfer of the wealth of knowledge and experience which exists in the tourism sector to conservation organizations, supporting them in their efforts to design economically viable ecotourism products that also contribute to conservation of nature. Since 2011, IUCN's Business and Biodiversity Programme has been organising training in partnership with leading European tour operator, Kuoni. Kuoni has provided input to the design of the training sections but, more importantly, has brought real life examples and a professional outlook to those sections by involving in house experts in technical areas, such as health and safety, marketing and product development. Kuoni aims to include in their packages as many products developed by the conservation organizations as possible, so long as they meet their standards.<sup>99</sup> Tools have been published to support the training sections, such as Integrating Business Skills into Ecotourism Operations.<sup>100</sup>

Another successful example is the Best Practices in Ecotourism programme executed by the Brazilian Ecotourism Society with the support of the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO), a non-profit innovative financial mechanism for the development of strategies that contribute to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Brazil.<sup>101</sup>



### **Box 23: Examples of strengthening the sustainable tourism governance development**

Within the framework of the Coastal Tourism Project in Africa, UNWTO has developed a methodology for strengthening the sustainable tourism governance and management in coastal areas, which includes an assessment, capacity-building and an action planning component. The methodology focuses on five key aspects:

- (a) Planning the coastal zone for sustainable tourism;
- (b) Influencing tourism development, including strengthening environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and the use of guidelines and incentives;
- (c) Influencing the operation of tourism enterprises, including strengthening environmental management systems (EMS) for tourism enterprises, and the use of inspection processes and certification;
- (d) Managing the environment for tourism, including actions on waste management and biodiversity conservation;
- (e) Supporting community livelihoods, including strengthening local employment, local supply chains and local enterprise development.

The methodology started with assessments at country and destination level to identify gaps, needs and options for sustainable tourism governance and management. Based on the outcome of these assessments, tailor made action plans for each country and destination were prepared, presenting different interventions required to strengthen sustainable tourism governance and management processes. Subsequently, regional seminars were organized to raise awareness and build the capacity on the topic. The sustainable tourism governance and management methodology developed for coastal destinations can equally be used to strengthen, with minor adaptations, other tourism destinations with a high level of biodiversity.<sup>102</sup>



## **Chapter 11**

# **Reporting on Tourism and Biodiversity and the Application of the Guidelines**



**In order to evaluate tourism impacts on biodiversity and the extent to which they are being addressed, it is important that relevant information is gathered and shared through a systematic reporting process.**

The Secretariat of the CBD encourages all Parties to voluntarily report on their experiences and engagement with tourism and biodiversity issues. This reporting should be integrated within the National Reports submitted by the Parties. Additional guidance on the structure of National Reports can be found elsewhere.<sup>103, 104</sup>

The reporting should indicate any known and specific use of the Guidelines. Where the Guidelines may not be used as such, information should be provided on the extent of compliance with the approach that they advocate. This will require national government agencies, who may undertake the reporting, to be themselves fully aware of processes undertaken at a local level, which may involve systematic gathering of evidence.

Reporting can be structured around the following key topics:

- ❖ Recognition of the importance of biodiversity in tourism policies, and vice versa
- ❖ Level of effective coordination between government ministries and agencies responsible for tourism, environment and sustainable development planning and finance
- ❖ Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities and business interests in local tourism planning and decision-making on tourism development
- ❖ Existence of local plans for tourism that reflect biodiversity issues
- ❖ Requirements for impact assessment of tourism projects, which includes specification for determining biodiversity impacts
- ❖ Existence and enforcement of relevant legislation and regulations
- ❖ Use of other control/management measures, including voluntary and economic instruments
- ❖ Tourism sector strategy to support sustainable local livelihoods and conservation of biodiversity
- ❖ Regular monitoring of tourism impacts on biodiversity, and relevant response
- ❖ Availability of sufficient management skills and capacity to undertake relevant impact assessments, plus other resources to address tourism and biodiversity issues and opportunities.

## Notes

- 1 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2004b), Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/tou-gdl-en.pdf>
- 2 For guidance on the application of the Guidelines, Parties can also consult:
  - *Tourism For Nature and Development – a good practice guide*, a short and practical guide for decision-makers focused on sustainable development. <http://www.cbd.int/development/doc/cbd-good-practice-guide-tourism-booklet-web-en.pdf>
  - *The Biodiversity and Tourism Network*, a web-based platform established to foster dialogue between tourism practitioners and disseminate support for the implementation of the Guidelines, allowing public and private sector players to evaluate to what degree their strategy or project follows the CBD Guidelines in a self-assessment survey. <http://tourism.cbd.int/>
  - *Managing Tourism & Biodiversity - User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf>
- 3 Manual on applying the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/doc/tourism-manual-2015-en.pdf>
- 4 UNEP 10YFP Programme on Sustainable Tourism <http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Programmes/ProgrammeConsultationandCurrentStatus/Sustainabletourism/tabid/106269/Default.aspx>
- 5 UNWTO Sustainable Development of Tourism: Publications <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/publications-22>
- 6 UNEP Publications <http://www.unep.org/publications>
- 7 The IUCN/TAPAS Group publication *Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Sustainability* Leung Y-F et al., 2015 contains extensive material on tourism and biodiversity.
- 8 IUCN WCPA Tourism Specialist Group [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap\\_home/gpap\\_capacity2/gpap\\_wcpacap/gpap\\_tourism](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_capacity2/gpap_wcpacap/gpap_tourism)
- 9 UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves>
- 10 UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit <http://unescost.cc.demo.faelix.net>
- 11 UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism>
- 12 UNDP Tourism Concessions in Protected Natural Areas: Guidelines for Managers [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/ecosystems\\_and\\_biodiversity/tourism-concessions-in-protected-natural-areas](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/ecosystems_and_biodiversity/tourism-concessions-in-protected-natural-areas)
- 13 IUCN Siting and design of hotels and resorts: principles and case studies for biodiversity conservation [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/key\\_res/tourism\\_.cfm?uPubsID=4617](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/key_res/tourism_.cfm?uPubsID=4617)
- 14 Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria <http://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria.html>
- 15 DestiNet Knowledge Networking Portal for Sustainable & Responsible Tourism <http://destinet.eu/who/who/market-solutions/certificates/fol442810/quickfinder-gstc-certification/certification-programmes-worldwide>
- 16 UNEP Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector: Frameworks, Tools and Practices <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/DTIx1047xPA-ClimateChange.pdf>
- 17 Climate Change and Tourism Responding to Global Challenges <http://sdt.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/climate2008.pdf>
- 18 Climate Change and Tourism Policy in OECD Countries <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/48681944.pdf>
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- 24 World Tourism Organization, Facts and figures <http://www.unwto.org/facts/menu.html>
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- 29 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ecosystem Approach <http://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/>
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- 31 for Ecosystem Services: Getting Started [http://www.unep.org/pdf/PaymentsForEcosystemServices\\_en.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/PaymentsForEcosystemServices_en.pdf)
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- 37 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets>
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- 39 A more detailed coverage of policy coordination and intra-government engagement is contained in *Sustainable Tourism for Development*, UNWTO, 2013 <http://dtxqtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/docpdf/devcoengfinal.pdf>
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- 47 UNWTO Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism (GOST). <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/unwto-global-observatories-sustainable-tourism-gost>
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- 55 <http://www.mauritiustourism.org/en/investirdans-le-tourisme/development-policy.html>
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- 65 World Responsible Tourism Awards <http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/>
- 66 <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/doc/2rd-indigenous-tourism-biodiversity-website-award-en.pdf>
- 67 The Wildlife Conservation Society's Tmat Boey model in Cambodia. <http://www.samveasna.org/userfiles/file/WCSCaseStudy-Cambodia-ecotourism-Final.pdf> and the Mesomagor Bamboo Orchestra in Ghana <http://www.mesomagor.org/bamboo/bamboo.html>, supported by Denmark, Conservation International, CILTAD/Agoro and ICOMOS, are some examples of successful community-based incentive systems towards biodiversity-friendly tourism.
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- 75 CBD COP 7 Decision VII/16 Part F
- 76 Marine and coastal biodiversity: revised voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in marine and coastal areas,

- UNEP/CBD/COP/11/23. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-11/official/cop-11-23-en.pdf>
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## KEY MESSAGES AND CONCLUSIONS

The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, adopted in 2004, continue to provide a basis for area planning and assessing tourism projects in vulnerable ecosystems.

This User's manual aims to support decision makers in applying the guidelines by mainstreaming biodiversity concerns and ecosystem services within sustainable tourism development. Its key messages and conclusions are:

### 1

A **multi-stakeholder** approach in planning and managing sustainable tourism is fundamental to achieve good results. This may involve an inter-ministerial/inter-agency body for coordination, at various levels of government (national, subnational, local). Engaging the private sector is extremely important. Local authorities have a particularly important role to play in providing leadership in conjunction with other local stakeholder interests (for instance through a destination management organization).

### 2

Gathering **baseline information** is a key element for planning, providing a basis for impact assessment, setting realistic goals, guiding implementation and determining indicators for monitoring.

### 3

Tourism planning requires **coordinating strategies among local, subnational and national authorities**. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound. Key outcomes of the planning process include articulating a vision and goals, determining types of tourism to be supported, ways and means to address impacts on biodiversity from planned developments, and identifying key constraints and opportunities.

### 4

A range of **tools** can be used to control and influence tourism impacts on biodiversity. **Regulations** may be adopted, such as minimum standards for construction/decommissioning, operational standards, and measures to control visitor movement and activities. **Voluntary tools** can be implemented, such as product and destination standards, certification systems, codes of conduct and recognition of best practices such as through awards. **Economic instruments** might include penalties to discourage environmentally harmful investments and activities, incentives such as concessions to operate in protected areas, and indirect incentives such as larger grants, loans and micro-credit schemes for sustainable tourism through multi- and bilateral funding entities.

### 5

Project proposers should be required to provide full and timely advance **notification** of developments to all affected stakeholders.



6

**Impact assessments** should pay special attention to indigenous peoples and local communities, to market volatility which can impact local revenues, and to cumulative impacts of multiple successive projects on-site and applying the ecosystems approach on the wider landscape.

7

There are a wide-ranging set of **management approaches and initiatives** that have been extensively tested for improving benefits to biodiversity through tourism. Parties and partners are encouraged to identify those most suited to their needs and adapt them to their realities.

8

Management should be **adaptive**, in order to be able to respond to uncertainties. **Monitoring and reporting** should be done through a continuous participatory process, incorporating the indicator framework for baseline information collection, and focusing on outcomes, outputs and impact measurements.

9

Certification agents, NGOs, educational bodies and other entities can provide **capacity-building**, and together with media can **promote awareness** on sustainable tourism, for consumers, indigenous peoples and local communities, government, business and educational bodies. Training and resource mobilization can help to build capacity within governments, protected areas authorities and other stakeholders.

10

Regular **voluntary reporting to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity** on best practices and lessons learned through the Clearinghouse Mechanism is important to support cooperation and facilitate matching technical and scientific offers and needs.

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

World Trade Centre  
413 St. Jacques Street, Suite 800  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Phone: +1 514 288 2220  
Fax: +1 514 288 6588  
E-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)  
Website: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)