



# **THE GUIDELINES FOR**

## Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development



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# Preface

This Guidelines manual for Sustainable Tourism Development Handbook was developed by the Tourism Working Group of BiH, with the support of EU funded “Technical Assistance to Support Tourism Industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina” project expertise.

The purpose of this guideline manual is to identify the main rules that apply when planning tourism in a sustainable way. The guideline manual presents the best practices in sustainable tourism development and it leads the reader through its various aspects, but in short and clear concepts. Its purpose is to assist all personnel from both, public and private sector, involved in the tourism sector in BiH, to understand the importance of sustainable tourism development, and to incorporate best practice guidelines into the preparation and development of a sustainable tourism sector for future generations. It also aims to raise awareness of a suite of sustainable tourism tools which have being tested globally, and which have demonstrated benefits to the development of tourism.

This manual describes in detail the specific planning, development, operational, architectural, and management criteria required to develop and operate a sustainable tourism business.

The guidelines outlined in this manual have being sourced from best practice guidelines in other European countries, as well as many references obtained from the library of UNWTO and other relevant documentation in relation to sustainable tourism development (see Annex 1 References).

### **A) The structure and layout of the Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development**

In order to achieve the purpose described above it is necessary to outline the background of best practice in sustainable tourism, that is applied around the World, and provide the tourism sector stakeholders with a clear understanding of the requirements in tourism planning, developing, operating and in management of tourism enterprises. These guidelines can be applied to any tourism operation or service and can extend to include hotels, lodges, resorts, natural parks, tour operators, visitor attractions and travel service in general.

Consequently this guidelines are presented in two distinct sections:

Section 1: An introduction to Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development – Definitions & interpretation

Section 2: Sustainable Tourism Guidelines and Criteria





# SECTION 1

An Introduction to Sustainable Tourism Development

## 1.1 Defining Tourism

As tourism is an exceptionally broad and diverse economic sector it can sometimes be overlooked as an important driver of economic growth. Simultaneously, as it influences a number of sectors, tourism is influenced by a range of interconnected and variable factors of supply and demand. When considering the scope of tourism it is important to take the following activities and businesses into account:

- Accommodation including hotels, motels, camping grounds, caravan parks, farm stays, bed and breakfasts and holiday homes
- All forms of visitor attractions, whether free-of-charge or paid for, including museums, art galleries, and the like
- All natural and built assets including rivers, lakes, beaches, forests, reserves,
- National parks, heritage buildings, sites and monuments including leisure, recreation and sporting facilities
- All systems used for the provision of visitor information, including the operation of visitor information centres, pedestrian way-finding systems and tourist signposting etc.
- All forms of water, air and land transport including local buses, taxis, tour coaches, rail, air access and harbours and sea ports
- All supporting infrastructure including horse trails, cycle ways and mountain biking trails, and walking trails
- All retail activities in general including shops, department stores, shopping centres, petrol stations, newsagents, and pharmacies
- All forms of destination marketing whether it be for encouraging people to relocate to the area, to invest or merely to visit
- All education institutions and related programs offering retail service skills, apprenticeships, marketing and business programs
- All other community programs and services which tourists may use or may benefit from.

It is evident from the above list that the number of activities that apply to tourism development is extensive and therefore, the considerations for its sustainable development are multiple.

## 1.2 Elements of Good Tourism Practice

A tourist destination is a complex of attractions, equipment, infrastructure, facilities, businesses, resources, and local communities, which combine to offer tourists products and experiences. The ideals of good tourism apply to all tourism destinations and to all forms of tourism. It is important to consider of what is meant by good tourism practice.

### Some of the key elements of good tourism practice are:

- To develop, manage and market tourism in ways that create competitive advantage
- To bring about positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts
- Ensuring that development plans are effective for the future development of tourism, and thereby providing a framework to make sound planning decisions on tourism proposals
- Assessing and monitoring the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism developments
- Open dialogue with key stakeholders
- Effective engagement with the tourism industry
- Ensuring the active involvement of communities that benefit from tourism, including their participation in planning and decision making and thus establishing meaningful economic linkages
- Maintaining and encouraging natural economic social and cultural diversity
- Avoiding waste and over-consumption and promoting the sustainable use of local resources
- Data collection prior to planning to ensure plans are based on the best information available



### 1.3 Principles of Sustainable Tourism

**Sustainable tourism is “tourism which meets the needs of present visitors and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future” (UNWTO).**

“Sustainable tourism is based on the principles of sustainable development. It is proposed as a way of minimising adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, water resources, habitats and species while supporting social and economic prosperity”

These definitions are supported by the following principles of sustainable tourism, as defined by the UNWTO.

#### **Sustainable tourism should:**

- Make optimal use of environmental resources
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities
- Provide socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders
- Involve informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership
- Be a continuous process which requires constant monitoring of impacts
- Maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction

**Three dimensions or ‘pillars’ of sustainable development are now recognized and underlined.**

These are:

- **Economic sustainability**, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term.
- **Social sustainability**, which means respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognising and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation.
- **Environmental sustainability**, which means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable or are precious in terms of life support. It requires action to minimize pollution of air, land and water, and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage. It is important to appreciate that these three pillars are in many ways interdependent and can be both mutually interlinked or act in a competition. Delivering sustainable development means striking a balance between all pillars.



1.4 Sustainable Tourism Economics and Local Communities

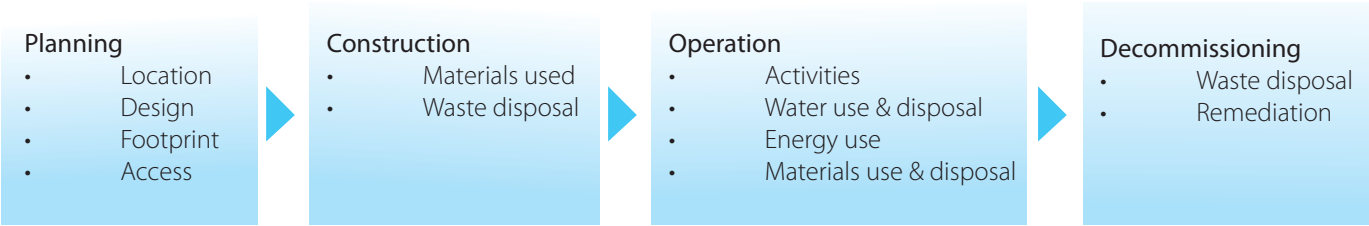
Local economic investment incentives for tourism development can increase visitor demand and increase property values thus improving the viability of the surrounding businesses and hinterland. The economic benefit can be wide ranging, and reach far beyond the tourism businesses. From an employment perspective, tourism is a particularly powerful sector because of its ability to find employment for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. It is not only the local hotels and cafes which benefit from tourism development. **The extent of tourism’s economic impact is often not fully appreciated by the local communities. Tourism can be felt widely, and seen in the bottom line benefits it creates for petrol stations, newsagents, cafés, retail stores, banks and other facilities which primarily serve the local community.**

1.5 Environment Impact on Sustainable Tourism Development

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is one of the most ecologically diverse countries in Europe, with habitats including forests, mountains, canyons, rivers, lakes and beautiful rolling countryside. This natural heritage, combined with a rich cultural heritage, is the foundation of the tourism sector. **It is vitally important that all the people of BiH take responsibility for maintaining the integrity of its natural resources and the rich biodiversity that they support.**

To determine how a particular tourism enterprise impacts on the natural world, it is necessary to examine all aspects of the operation over the life cycle of the enterprise. Tourism can have a variety of negative impacts on biodiversity, particularly when carried out without management standards designed to protect natural assets and as outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Life Cycle of environmental impact issues of tourism operations





## 1.6 Current Trends in Sustainable Tourism

There is an increasing awareness at the level of governments of the social, economic and environmental importance of the tourism sector, and of the impacts it causes on destinations. Tourism has been growing consistently and has shown a measure of resilience, despite the various crisis situations of the recent past (e.g. terrorism, spread of contagious diseases, and regional conflicts). Though most tourism still flows from developed to developed countries, the industry is more multi-polar today than it has ever been, i.e. the percentage of tourism revenues flowing from developed to developing countries is growing consistently. Globally, the responsibilities of governments in tourism development have tended to become more decentralized, with many mandates being gradually devolved to local levels of governance.

## 1.7 Environmental Protection

The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is an important part of the tourism product, but many activities relating to the industry can have adverse environmental effects.

**These impacts are often linked with the construction and management of tourism facilities, including hotels, restaurants, shops, ski centres, golf courses and leisure centres.** Other environmental impacts associated with the tourism sector relate to **increased resource and energy use, waste generation and potential water or air pollution.** The key environmental pressures usually associated with tourism have traditionally been **water & pollution, energy, transport, waste and physical impacts.**

## Water

The availability of water is vital for tourism not only for consumption and sanitary purposes but it is an important part of BiH's tourism product, and therefore can be put at risk from pollution. The tourism and hospitality sector can be a cause of pollution by:

- Disposal of water/waste through drains which are cracked or leaking
- Septic tanks, which, if not adequately maintained, may allow sewage to seep into water courses;
- Swimming pool discharges that are not appropriately treated
- Use of detergents on the premises which may wash into the drains and leak, or that may be stored inappropriately, spill and enter the water course
- Run-off from chemicals used on golf courses;
- Inadequate storage of fertilisers/pesticides may spill and enter the watercourse; and
- Drainage to local groundwater from impermeable surfaces e.g. car parks can contain oil etc. which may eventually enter the watercourse.

## Energy

The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement which committed the developed countries, to strategically reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions at National Level, as a non-competitive approach to combating the global effects of 'man-made' climate change. The Protocol sets targets for each of the developed countries and economy-in-transition countries, with a view to reducing overall emissions of the six main greenhouse gases by at least 5 per cent by the year 2012.

## Waste

Waste impacts on the environment in a number of ways for example loss of valuable resources (raw materials, such as card, plastic and glass), need for landfill space, release of methane gas and potential water pollution. Litter can also have a negative impact on visitor perception of a Country's clean, green image.

Litter can also be harmful to wildlife, choking up streams, and reducing animal-life access to hedgerows and other habitats.

### Greenhouse Gases and Traffic Congestion

The EEA estimates that the average EU citizen travels an average of 1,800 kilometres every year for holidays. 90% of the energy used in the tourism sector is in travelling to and from destinations. The private or hired car is the main mode of transport for tourism in the EU, and is expected to become even more popular in the future. As demand for tourism and recreation continues to increase, greenhouse gases, particulate matter, noise and traffic congestion can be expected to increase also.

### Physical Impacts

It is clear that tourism can have the potential for significant impacts on attractions of cultural and natural heritage.

Physical impacts of tourism development include:

- **Construction activities and infrastructure development:** The development of tourism facilities such as accommodation, water supplies, restaurants and recreation facilities can involve sand mining, beach, soil erosion and extensive paving. In addition, road and airport construction can lead to land degradation and loss of wildlife habitats and deterioration of scenery.
- **Deforestation and intensified or unsustainable use of land:** Construction of mountain resort accommodation and facilities frequently requires clearing forested land. Coastal wetlands are often drained and filled due to lack of more suitable sites for construction of tourism facilities and infrastructure. These activities can cause severe disturbance and erosion of the local ecosystem, even destruction in the long term. Worldwide, to achieve conservation protection from a planning perspective, there is usually a trade-off between the specification of

mitigation measures or ecosystem compensatory measures, e.g. habitat recreation and a general policy of complete avoidance of damage, such as banning development completely.

- **Marina development:** Overbuilding and extensive paving of the shorelines can result in destruction of habitats and disruption of land-sea connections. Evidence suggests a variety of negative impacts from shoreline development (including coastal protection works, which have positive infrastructural impacts), increased sediments in the water, trampling by tourists, pollution from sewage and over fishing.

Physical impacts from tourist activities can include:

- **Trampling:** Tourists using the same trail over and over again trample the vegetation and soil, eventually causing damage that can lead to loss of biodiversity and other impacts. Such damage can be even more extensive when visitors frequently stray off established trails.
- **Anchoring and other marine activities:** In marine areas many tourist activities occur in or around fragile ecosystems. Anchoring, snorkelling, sport fishing and scuba diving, yachting, and cruising are some of the activities that can cause direct degradation of marine ecosystems and subsequent impacts on coastal protection and fisheries.
- **Alteration of ecosystems by tourist activities:** Habitat can be degraded by tourism leisure activities. For example, wildlife viewing can bring about stress for the animals and alter their natural behaviour when tourists come too close. This puts high pressure on animal habits and behaviours and tends to bring about behavioural changes.

### 1.8 Environmental Legislation and Tourism

Increasingly, legislation focussed on improving environmental performance is impacting on all businesses, including those operating within the tourism and hospitality industry. Related taxes, and other fiscal/economic instruments, are rooted in the recognition that society must act in a way that is more sensitive to the environment. Future economic development should seek to enhance the environment, not only avoid commercially-related damage. This enhancement of the environment should greatly strengthen tourism potential everywhere, and thus, the development, acceptance and enforcement of environmental legislation should be strongly supported by the tourism industry, as the benefits (though some are intangible) are likely to strongly outweigh the costs. There is a clear link between legislation and the aims and targets agreed at world level through agreements such as the Rio Earth Summit and the Kyoto Protocol.

#### The Kyoto Protocol on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 1997

The protocol includes a range of policies and measures for countries to implement or further elaborate in order to achieve their targets and promote sustainable development. These include:

- Enhanced energy efficiency;
- Protection and enhancement of sinks i.e. forests;
- Promotion of sustainable agriculture;
- R&D in the areas of renewable and new forms of energy;
- Removal of subsidies, taxes and exemptions that run counter to the application of market instruments;
- Reform in all sectors including transport to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Methane reductions in the waste and energy sectors.

installations covered by the scheme. Each installation is allocated allowances for the particular commitment period in question. The number of allowances allocated to each installation for any given period is determined on the basis of the National Allocation Plan.

### The Water Framework Directive, 2000

WFD sets a framework for comprehensive management of water resources in the European Community, to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is adopted for the achievement of the objectives of the WFD and for the implementation of programmes of measures for this purpose. The objectives of the WFD are:

- to protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems (and terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly dependent on aquatic ecosystems)
- to promote sustainable water use based on long-term protection of available water resources
- to provide for sufficient supply of good quality surface water and groundwater as needed for sustainable, balanced and equitable water use
- to provide for enhanced protection and improvement of the aquatic environment by reducing / phasing out of discharges, emissions and losses of priority substances
- to contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts
- to protect territorial and marine waters
- to establish a register of 'protected areas' e.g. areas designated for protection of habitats or species





## SECTION 2

Planning for Tourism Development

## Structure of Section 2

### Part 1: Policy and Strategy Tools

**Tourism destination plans form the basis of sustainable tourism policies, and strategies are the enabling tool to achieve the goals and milestones for its sustainability.**

Policies often refer to institutional setups that allow the governance of tourism development. Policies are generally not site-specific and may apply across all of a country's area, while strategies are more action-oriented and often linked to a destination or region.

#### 2.1 Data Collection

It is important that strategies and plans for tourism are based upon the best information available. It is for those preparing plans to decide what information they need to gather, and the degree of detail that they will require. To plan effectively for tourism, the following type of information is required:

- **Demographic data** – drawn from census and other Government sources such as the Labour Force Survey and General Household Survey. This information will be used to establish how many people are employed in different sectors, earnings and qualifications, commuting patterns, skill levels and unemployment levels;
- **Visitor data** – drawn from surveys of tourism behaviour, statistics from individual tourism attractions, transport operators, area organisations (e.g. National Parks) and hotel occupancy surveys. The information is likely to have already been gathered, but will not always be free to the user. It is useful for establishing seasonal variations and longer term trends in tourism behaviour, which in turn will be important for planning future provision;
- **Economic studies** – these will be used to develop options for particular tourism strategies or to test the business case for a particular tourism development. They may be undertaken by the public or private sector, or a partnership of the two. Such studies are likely to examine how existing patterns of visiting

or spending might be influenced by particular initiatives such as the introduction of a new facility, increased bed spaces or new transport links.

- **Plans**, proposals and programmes are a further reason for consulting a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that planners have a comprehensive understanding of any relevant programme that may affect tourism in the area, and therefore will impinge on the strategy that is being developed. These initiatives will include the investment plans of tourism operators, statutory undertakers and public bodies, and documents that set out longer term aspirations.

#### 2.2 Stakeholder views

Tourism operators and developers will be able to provide information and views upon:

- tourism markets, levels of demand and planned **investment**: those making plans for or affecting tourism will need to know what the principal tourism activities in the area are, whether these are growing or declining and if there are any specific types of tourism that the industry is expecting to expand;
- **tourism revenues and broader economic impact**: plans should be based upon a detailed understanding of the economic value of key tourism sectors and the impacts of these in terms of the number of jobs provided and the services and facilities which are assisted by that tourism activity;
- **Tourism labour markets**: plans for tourism should be based upon information about the number of jobs currently in tourism, whether these are full-time, levels of skill and of pay. This information is important to ensure that where plans change the number or types of tourism jobs are realistic in terms of available labour



and that opportunities are taken to improve the quality and levels of pay for these jobs, wherever possible

- **Costs and timings of types of tourism development:** where plans propose new tourism development for an area, these should be based upon sound estimates of the cost and timing of this development. This is necessary in order to ensure that development proposals are realistic and optimal in terms of the expected benefits. Whilst the commercial decision is distinct from the planning process, those responsible for plan-making and implementation are responsible for ensuring that those plans have a good chance of being realised.

### 2.3 Analysing conditions, problems and opportunities for sustainable tourism development

This first stage involves taking a careful and objective look at the state of tourism in the destination (which may be a country or local area) as well as at the resources on which tourism depends or has impacts, both at present and in the future. Thought should be given at the outset to aspects and attributes that have a particular bearing on the sustainability of tourism, so that the data gathered and questions asked are appropriate. The situation should be analysed using surveys, consultation and technical studies.

### 2.4 General Principles

Where specific tourism policies are included in a plan, they should aim to:

- maximise the benefits of tourism, in particular ensuring that the development is able to reach its potential to contribute to tourism in the area and for local communities to enjoy those benefits;
- identify optimal locations, for example to maximise synergies with other tourist attractions and to promote opportunities for access by public transport;

- integrate development with its surroundings both in terms of design and layout and in the way that the service or facility is able to function; and
- avoid adverse impacts, for example disturbance to activities on adjacent lands

### 2.5 Planning Process

The planning system has a vital role to play in terms of facilitating the development and improvement of the tourism sector in all areas throughout BiH. Sustainable tourism development is a continuous process, and this needs to be reflected in the way that stakeholders are consulted and involved. Planners should develop constructive dialogues with key players in the tourism sector and build partnerships with those who have a say in the delivery of tourism schemes and programmes. Above all there should be constructive and effective engagement with the tourism sector. This will help to ensure that plans are developed with the benefit of a realistic and sustainable commercial perspective, and that the plans relate well to the aspirations of the tourism sector.

It is clearly in the interests of the tourism industry to ensure that their aspirations, and particularly their land use requirements, are known and understood by those responsible for drawing up plans. The particular advantages of early and active engagement by the industry and its representatives will be:

- to specify site requirements for inclusion in plans
- to propose elements of tourism to be included in large scale proposals, such as mixed use and regeneration schemes;
- to comment upon how well the visions and objectives proposed for plans and strategies reflect the aspirations and expectations of the industry; and
- to provide an industry perspective on proposed policies so as to influence their final form



## 2.6 Local Spatial Strategies (LSS)

At local level, regional planning bodies should decide how to deal with tourism in their LSS. Specifically they should consider whether:

- to treat tourism as an issue in itself;
- to subsume it within another issue such as economic development; or
- to deal with it as a consideration affecting a number of issues like the economy, the environment, regeneration and transport

They should do this on the basis of the overall approach that they are taking in their LSS and in the light of the information they have gathered. Whatever the chosen approach, the LSS should make clear:

- its vision and strategy for tourism in the region;
- how this contributes to broader regional objectives;
- what level of growth in tourism it is trying to achieve; and
- what the spatial characteristics of this will be

## 2.7 Visitor Economy Strategy (VES)

There should be an understanding of what the underlying trends are and how the strategy intends to respond to the opportunities which they present;

- What the implications of those trends are for land-use, traffic flows, and the transport system. It should explain the extent to which these trends are
  - (i) dependent upon improvements to the transport network and
  - (ii) where they are likely to increase the need for such improvements
- Identification of areas within the region where there are, or are likely to be, any problems associated with growth or decline in tourism. For example, it might be necessary to reconcile demand for tourist accommodation with the need for affordable housing within an area;

- How increased demand for tourism might be best accommodated. It might be that the provision of accommodation and attractions should be increased in towns adjoining existing resorts in order to spread the benefits and to diffuse pressures;
- environmental impacts of tourism and, where these have adverse effects, how they can be tackled;
- The need to protect key tourism assets. In addition to features that already have statutory protection (e.g. national parks), there will be other features such as the wider environment, the quality of beaches, choice of accommodation, availability of sports and leisure facilities and the presence of 'night life' that are important in sustaining the attractiveness of the area; and
- Ways in which tourism can contribute positively to other objectives e.g. economic development, regeneration, rural diversification, conservation, and environmental improvements.

## 2.8 Sustainability Indicators and Monitoring

### Why indicators are important

Indicators make it possible to monitor changes over time in a constant and consistent manner in relation to tourism development. They help to clarify goals and, most importantly, force them to be more precise. They can be very valuable in fostering greater accountability and in raising awareness of, and support for, actions.

Indicators can be used to show:

- The current state of the industry (e.g. occupancy rates, tourist satisfaction).
- Stresses on the system (e.g. water shortages, crime levels).
- The impact of tourism (e.g. changes in income levels in communities, rate of deforestation).
- Management effort (e.g. funding of clean-ups of inland and coastal contamination).
- The effect of management actions (e.g. changed pollution levels, number of returning tourists).

Indicators provide early warning of when a policy change or new action may be needed, as well as providing a basis for the long term planning and review of tourism.

### The use of indicators in policy making and planning

Indicators of sustainability should be defined at an early stage in the process of formulating a tourism strategy for a destination.

They can then be used for:

- Baseline assessment of conditions and needs.
- Setting of targets for policies and actions.
- Assessment of actions.
- Evaluation, review and modification of policies.

The selection of sustainability indicators can be built into the process of consultation and participation. This can be helpful for the stakeholders involved to focus their minds on tangible sustainability issues and priorities.







## Criteria for selecting and reviewing indicators

Five criteria have been identified for the selection of indicators:

1. Relevance of the indicator to the selected issue.
2. Feasibility of obtaining and analysing the information required.
3. Credibility of the information and reliability for users of the data.
4. Clarity and ease of understanding amongst users.
5. Comparability over time and across regions.

## Monitoring sustainability

Monitoring sustainability involves taking measurements of environmental, social and economic conditions using selected indicators. Monitoring against a baseline set of results enables trends to be identified; change to be detected and, if possible, anticipated; and progress to be tracked. To be effective, monitoring should be undertaken regularly and follow a well-defined set of guidelines.

One form of monitoring of the sustainability of tourism is to make specific, mainly quantified, measurement of:

- **Levels of tourism:** including both supply (e.g. by audits of the accommodation stock), and demand, (e.g. admission numbers to key sites or recorded bed nights)
- **The state of the environment and society:** this may either be an outcome of tourism or affects its performance—examples include employment levels, crime levels, air and water quality, and species counts in sensitive or heavily visited environments.

Another form of monitoring is keeping abreast of the activities, needs and opinions of key stakeholder groups, notably:

- **Visitors:** through site surveys, focus groups and feedback via hosts, etc., to check on profiles and levels of satisfaction.
- **Enterprises:** through surveys, meetings, etc., to check on their economic and environmental performance and their perceptions and needs.

- **The local community:** through household surveys, focus groups, etc., to check on attitudes to tourism and concerns about its impact.

## Benchmarking

A valuable use of indicators and associated monitoring is to enable a destination to check its sustainability performance against comparable destinations. This can help to show up points of relative weakness that may need to be given priority. Such a benchmarking exercise requires destinations to cooperate in the use of similar indicators and monitoring processes.

Governments are well placed to facilitate benchmarking at international or national level. International benchmarking can take place between countries or between comparable types of destination within different countries.

At Entity level, benchmarking exercises can be carried out between destinations within one country, perhaps coordinated by State government departments working with a group of local authorities.

## Identifying the limits of tourism

One of the principles of the sustainable development of tourism is preparedness to recognize and abide by limits on the development of tourism and visitor flows.

## Why it is important to identify limits

It has been widely demonstrated that where tourism is associated with negative impacts on the environment or society, this is frequently due to the volume of tourists or the extent of development exceeding the capacity of the recipient destination. It is important to identify limits to tourism development in order to assist planning and policy making, and to respect those limits through action to control what actually happens on the ground.

### The concept of carrying capacity

The concept of carrying capacity in tourism has been the subject of much academic debate and discussion over many years. It usually refers to the number of tourists that a place can accommodate without detriment to the environment or host population or any reduction in tourists' satisfaction. Different kinds of carrying capacity have been identified, including:

- **Ecological capacity:** based on biological and physical factors such as ability of certain species to withstand disturbance.
- **Socio-cultural capacity:** determined by unacceptable impacts on the local community or limitations due to the availability of human resources.
- **Psychological capacity:** the amount of crowding that tourists perceive as acceptable without affecting their quality of experience. This will vary according to types of tourist and types of activity or use.
- **Infrastructural capacity:** such as number of bedrooms or the capacity of transport systems or water supply. This is perhaps the element that can be most readily changed in the medium to long term.
- **Management capacity:** the number of tourists that can be realistically managed in an area without bringing economic and administrative problems.

### A realistic approach to carrying capacity assessment

There are many critics of the concept of carrying capacity as applied to tourism. It is felt that it can be meaningless and perhaps misleading to put a precise capacity limit on the number of tourists. The different factors affecting capacities and impacts are both numerous and complex, the concepts are quite subjective, conditions change over time, and there is no clear way of arriving at a figure.

### Limits of Acceptable Change

The problems associated with quantification of carrying capacity have led to the use of alternative approaches to recognizing limits to tourism. The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) concept recognizes that it is the level of undesirable impact (or change) that is the problem, rather than the quantity of activity per se, and limits should therefore be described in terms of impact. The process entails:

- Identification of impacts that should limit development or use.
- Identification of usable indicators related to these impacts
- Identification of a range of values associated with these indicators that are considered to be acceptable or unacceptable (based on expert evidence, consultation, etc.).
- Maintaining a monitoring process to check that performance remains within the acceptable range.
- Taking management steps to adjust levels of use if limits are exceeded.

The LAC approach has the advantage of being flexible and based on a real assessment of impacts of concern. However, it may sometimes be difficult to rectify problems by making adjustments only after they have occurred.

## 2.9 Legislation, Regulation and Licensing

Legislation and regulations should be applied when governments deem them to be necessary. However, success requires regulations that are relevant, clear, practicable in terms of compliance and capable of being enforced. A sensible approach is to:

- Have legislation in place that enables and supports the sustainability of tourism and gives authority to act.
- Have clear and enforceable regulations, supported by licensing as appropriate, where this is necessary to ensure important minimum standards.
- Seek to raise sustainability performance above such standards through other means, which also stimulate personal commitment towards continual improvement.

### When might obligatory controls be needed for sustainable tourism?

There are a number of aspects of the development, operation and management of tourism that should be controlled through legislation and regulations in order to protect the environment, communities, visitors and the functioning of business.

These include:

- The location and nature of development, covered under planning and development regulations.
- Rights and conditions for employees.
- Visitor health and safety, such as food hygiene and risk from fire and accident.
- Trading practices and ability to trade.
- Serious environmental damage (e.g. caused by discharges to air and water).
- Fundamental nuisance to local communities, such as excessive noise.
- Use of water and other scarce resources.
- Serious misconduct and exploitation by visitors of local people and vice versa (e.g. child prostitution).
- Right of access to services, land, etc.

### Enabling legislation' in support of tourism sustainability

Existing legislation should be reviewed, and where necessary strengthened, to ensure that it is adequate not only for purposes of control but also to promote sustainable tourism. Important areas to address are:

- The spectrum of legislation that relates to the areas of concern listed above. It is important to determine whether it can be fully applied to tourism and whether there are any gaps that need to be filled.
- The legal basis for positively encouraging sustainable tourism. This can include powers and authority to promote tourism as an activity per se. It also includes the ability to provide incentives and other support and, critically, the freedom and scope to utilize those incentives to favour enterprises and activities deemed more sustainable than others.
- The powers and responsibilities of particular bodies for example, the authority of protected area bodies to control or promote tourism.
- The ability of particular stakeholders to engage in sustainable tourism. A critical issue in many developing countries concerns land tenure. Legislation that clarifies or strengthens the land rights of individuals or communities can be very important. In appropriate circumstances, this may also allow conditions to be attached that encourage, or possibly require, the land and resources to be used in ways conducive to sustainable tourism.



## Reflecting Sustainability in Entity Tourism Law

Entity tourism laws set out the responsibilities of governments and their agencies towards tourism. They provide a constitutional basis for tourism development policy in the long term. Laws in the way that they describe tourism can provide a vehicle for underpinning sustainability. Principles of sustainable tourism could be included in the preamble to new tourism laws and reflected in the balance and wording of different articles.

## Harmonizing and synchronizing legislation

In principle, the legislation needed to control many aspects of the impacts of tourism will be contained in laws relevant to specific fields (e.g. environmental management or employment legislation) rather than in tourism law. However, links should be identified between tourism law and these other areas. A process of harmonization and synchronization can be valuable and it should:

- Cover the ways in which relevant legislative requirements do, or should, relate to laws specific to tourism.
- Identify other laws that contain legislation relevant to the sustainability of tourism.
- Seek to minimize any conflict between different areas of legislation.
- Ensure that there is no confusing duplication between the powers and responsibilities of different agencies in this matter.
- Assemble information on all relevant legislation so that this can be clearly disseminated to the industry and other affected stakeholders.

## The application of specific regulations

In addition to the fundamental aspects of sustainability of tourism listed earlier— which require legislation and regulations applied to all forms of tourism within a country—it may be necessary to apply specific regulations to certain forms of tourism or in particular circumstances. These may relate to:

- Particularly sensitive environments (e.g. protected areas or particular types of ecosystem such as coral reefs).

- Especially vulnerable communities (e.g. certain indigenous communities).
- Particular types of activity. This could include certain outdoor sports, such as rafting, skiing, diving, that may be potentially dangerous to participants and/or damaging to the environment.

## Licensing

Licensing of tourism enterprises can be used to:

- Signal compliance with basic legislation on issues such as employment and environmental protection.
- Signal compliance with other more specific regulations
- Enforce standards above minimum legal requirements.
- Control the number of operators in any one place.

## Strengthening compliance

A major problem with using legislation and regulations as a way of improving sustainability is the difficulty of enforcement and of overcoming non-compliance. This is a fundamental issue both in developed and developing countries. Ways in which it can be addressed include:

- Linking regulations to licensing, and issuing the licence in the form of a badge that tourists are asked to look out for.
- Stimulating peer pressure amongst operators.
- Setting targets for implementation and getting operators to report against them.
- Streamlining inspection schemes, so that one inspector can cover various legislative requirements.
- Providing simple information to operators about the regulations they have to meet, and what compliance means in practice.

## 2.10 Economic Instruments

### Taxes and charges

Taxes and charges are important instruments in the process of internalising the total costs, including environmental and social costs, of activities like tourism. Depending on the way they are directed, they can support adherence to the 'polluter pays' principle.

The main ways in which governments can use these measures are by:

- Setting charges for the use of resources or services which they control, such as public utilities and amenities.
- Introducing general or more specific taxes on activities that affect the operation of tourism enterprises and the behaviour of tourists.

Different types of taxes and charges that have a particular bearing on tourism are described below.

### General business taxes

One way in which taxation is likely to affect the sustainability of tourism is through the general impact of the fiscal system on the performance of tourism businesses. Governments should ensure that corporate taxation does not discriminate unfairly against small service sector businesses. They should also take account of how taxation policy may affect the full range of economic, social and environmental issues relating to the particular circumstances of the sector, such as impacts on seasonal jobs and opportunities for micro enterprises and employees to engage in a variety of activities.

### General tourist taxes

A number of countries have introduced taxes on tourism in the form of a tax paid per visitor, often raised per overnight stay as a 'bed tax'. This is most usually collected from tourism enterprises, and may or may not be passed on by them to tourists. Normally it is not seen as a way of influencing visitor numbers but rather as a process for raising revenue.

Significant sums can be raised in this way, but it can lead to industry concerns about the negative effect on demand and on enterprise profitability. A key issue for sustainability is the extent to which the proceeds are retained locally and used to support destination management, environmental conservation and social causes.

### Taxes and charges on specific inputs and outputs

A range of taxes and charges can be used to influence the use of resources by the tourism industry and tourists. Examples include:

- Effluent charges to encourage the reduction of emissions through end-of-pipe measures.
- Waste taxes to make final waste disposal more expensive, promoting reduction and recycling.
- Product taxes on items such as energy and packaging that have an environmental impact in production, consumption or disposal (e.g. carbon taxes on the use of certain fuels).
- User charges for use of precious resources such as water. In most countries taxes and charges of this kind are applied generally in order to influence the activities of all businesses. It is unlikely that the tourism industry will be singled out for special treatment.

### Charges on the use of amenities and infrastructure

Generating revenue for use in conservation and management, or to support local communities, can be an important objective in the setting of charges of this kind. In some circumstances charges may be specifically augmented in order to increase revenue available for local causes. Where possible a structured and transparent approach should be used for the distribution of financial resources raised, involving local communities and informing those paying the charge about how their expenditure is being used.





## Exerting influence through other financial agreements

Governments may also have an opportunity to influence the behaviour of enterprises by agreeing other kinds of financial agreement with them. This may entail conveying some form of property or trading right on the enterprise. Conditions can be attached to these processes that require compliance with a sustainability agenda.

Examples include:

- The granting by governments of concessions or contracts to enterprises. This has proved to be an effective vehicle for imposing conditions on selected enterprises—for example those providing services in national parks.
- Developing public-private partnerships with selected enterprises for the provision of certain facilities, such as transport infrastructure, public amenities or information services.
- Government procurement policies—for example, only accommodation certified as meeting sustainability criteria could be used for government business.

### 2.11 Local Development Frameworks (LDFS)

LDFs should comprise a number of development plan documents including the core strategy, site specific allocations of land and area action plans. Any need for further development plan documents, or supplementary planning documents should be identified in the local development scheme, the purpose of which is to inform the public of the planning authority's programme for the production of local development documents.

In order to keep policies to a manageable number, authorities should aim to support the policies affecting tourism in the core strategy in the following ways:

- putting detail on matters such as mitigating the effects of development (e.g. by landscaping) into supplementary planning documents;

- putting good practice messages in other documents or in supporting text; and
- Not repeating national or regional policies in LDFs, although LDFs should indicate how the objectives and any targets for tourism contribute to those set out in the RSS.

### 2.12 Tourism in Urban Areas

Tourism can bring benefits to urban areas and help to deliver development that is sustainable. Amongst the particular advantages that tourism can bring to towns and cities is to:

- be the focus of regeneration, or help to underpin growth
- help to increase urban vitality and support linked journeys and tours
- be a key ingredient of mixed-use schemes
- support important services and facilities
- Facilitate improved access by sustainable models of transport

There are many types of tourist and leisure activities that particularly lend themselves to urban locations and which exhibit these advantages. These include:

- hotel, guest house and bed & breakfast accommodation
- cinemas, theatres and concert and social clubs
- museums, galleries and conference facilities
- restaurants, bars, pubs, casinos and night clubs
- Indoor ten-pin bowling and health & fitness centres

Planning authorities need to ensure that they have assessed the need for these facilities and have allocated an appropriate range of sites which allow genuine choices to meet those needs. Similarly, it is for developers and operators to ensure that they have anticipated what their need for such sites is likely to be, and that they undertake active discussions with local planning authorities about these requirements.

### 2.13 Tourism in Rural Areas

The provision of essential facilities for visitors is vital for the development of the tourism in rural areas. Tourism can:

- be a key element in rural and farm diversification;
- help to revitalise market towns and villages;

### 2.14 Master Planning -Physical and land use planning

Land use planning and development control are critically important for the sustainability of tourism, influencing not only tourism development itself but also controlling other forms of development that might be detrimental to the economic sustainability of tourism in the short or long term. At the time when local land use plans are being agreed, or more specifically when decisions are being made to approve or refuse controversial developments (such as industrial plant, mining or timber extraction), economic arguments relating to tourism can be used to advocate environmental conservation. The outreach of land use planning is also very important. In some countries planning control is applied to all areas. In other countries, this may, essentially, be restricted to urban settlements or designated protected areas. In general, the greater the coverage of a sound land use planning system and effective development control, the stronger the chances of achieving more sustainable tourism.

#### Relating tourism strategies to spatial and land use plans

Sustainability principles point to a more strategic, flexible, bottom-up approach, taking account of a wide range of economic, social and environmental factors and based on local consultation and participation. The approach advocated for tourism is in line with the advent of integrated 'spatial planning' at a regional level and community-based planning at a local level, which is being pursued in many countries, and tourism planning should align with this.

Tourism strategies built on participatory structures and inclusive processes should provide the basis for tourism planning. Planning should also mirror the preparation of tourism

strategies at the national, regional and local destination levels. This can be achieved by two interrelated processes:

**National or regional spatial planning:** in many countries and regions, it is appropriate for national or regional tourism strategies to be interpreted spatially. These might take into account broad factors of natural resources, economic need, market potential, etc. In some cases they could lead to the indication of broad priority areas for tourism development. Spatial planning at this level should also make links between tourism and important related issues that have a spatial dimension such as transport planning.

**Community-based land use planning:** decisions on the level, pace, nature and location of tourism development at the local level should be based on local strategies and plans, involving thorough assessment of economic, social and environmental opportunities and constraints, together with full community engagement.

These processes should then determine the land use planning policy.

#### Making land use planning for tourism more sustainable

The location of tourism development should be based on strategic choices reflecting the agenda for sustainable tourism and these choices should be taken into account when considering wider spatial planning and local land use planning for tourism. Some important points to bear in mind when developing such plans include:

- Positive planning for sustainability. Land use planning should not simply be a controlling process. It can be used creatively to identify space and location for new development that will contribute to sustainable tourism. For example, it can encourage clustering between tourism enterprises and related businesses, and strengthening of the local supply chain, by facilitating co-location.

- The potential to use other tools in association with planning. For example, the national or regional spatial planning process may lead to the identification of priority areas for the development of tourism that meet sustainability criteria. Such areas may then be used to concentrate economic incentives for the development of appropriate sustainable tourism products. The use of regulations or looser development guidelines can also be closely associated with planning.
- Future proofing. Planning should take account of already predictable changes in conditions, and in doing so should apply the precautionary principle. A particular example is taking account of the effects of climate change, for instance with respect to coastal planning, and responding with the appropriate adaptation measures.
- Flexibility and adaptive approaches. Plans should also be open to less predictable change, such as world events that may alter demand patterns or unforeseeable natural phenomena. Adaptive planning can be assisted through the identification of reviewable limits and the use of indicators, regular monitoring and feedback.
- Checking the sustainability of the process. Some of the systematic approaches used within industry, such as environmental management systems, could be applied to the land use planning process.

### **Integrated area management**

Land use planning for tourism placed within the context of more strategic spatial planning and with parallel processes at a local level are in line with certain other directions in the planning and management of resources. There are some types of location that, because of their special circumstances, require an even more closely integrated approach—coastal areas being the most notable example.

### **Zoning for tourism development**

Zoning may be more or less appropriate as a tool according to the nature of the area, the landownership and planning circumstances and whether tourism is an established or newly developing activity. Community engagement should remain an integral part of any process to define zones, and community related issues may determine whether rigid zoning is an appropriate approach. The identification of zones should be based on very careful assessment of resources as well as being related to strategic spatial issues. The zones can then form the spatial focus for quite precise planning policies and for the issuing of regulations to control use. This zoning and regulatory approach usually implies some application of concepts of carrying capacity in order to indicate appropriate amounts of development.

### **Development regulations and planning briefs**

Development regulations, issued by governments or local authorities, can be used to inform potential developers as to what will be acceptable or unacceptable before they prepare schemes or projects for approval. They can also be used to ensure compliance with certain standards during the construction phase. In order to improve sustainability, regulations could cover such aspects as the density of buildings, location of buildings (e.g. set-back distances from the coastline), building heights, linkage to services and sewage disposal systems, materials used (e.g. efficiency standards), and aspects of design (e.g. with respect to the local vernacular).



## Development control processes

If land use planning is to be effective, it is necessary to have a development control process that ensures compliance with land use planning regulations and prevents illegal development. There are many reasons why development control may be dysfunctional, some of which may be deep seated and require significant political change. However, functionality in terms of tourism planning may be facilitated by:

- Greater availability of human resources to handle applications.
- Capacity building with local administrations to increase knowledge of sustainable tourism issues.
- Clear notification requirements for potential developers, including both procedures to adopt and information to deliver.
- Enforcement of penalties for non-compliance, including financial penalties, criminal prosecution and removal of illegal structures.

Development control depends on potential developers being required to apply for planning approval. The notification procedure and the degree of detail required from developers prior to approval are determined by governments or local authorities, who may choose to include a wide range of information relating to the sustainability of the development. It is important that the level and nature of information required are relevant and realistic and not so onerous as to discourage compliance with the system.

## Part 2: Physical Design and Equipment

### 2.15 Environmental Management Systems

Environmental management system (EMS) is part of an overall management system that includes the organizational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes, and resources for determining and implementing the environmental policy. An environmental management system includes tools such as environmental impact assessment, environmental auditing, and strategic environmental assessment.

### 2.16 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

There is a lack of consistency in the selection of developments for which specific EIA studies are required. Whether or not an EIA is required is likely to depend on the size and nature of the project, the sensitivity of the location in which it is proposed, and the perceived risk to the environment. Small scale projects are not included in most EIA systems although their cumulative impacts may be significant over time.

EIA provides an internationally recognized and structured approach to obtaining and evaluating environmental information about the potential impacts of a physical development, the EIA is then used in decision-making in the development process. It is particularly useful as an adjunct to the process of granting planning permission for a new development, and may be required from a potential developer in order to aid decision making.

A particular strength of EIAs is the requirement to account for all stages and processes of a proposed development, including upstream and downstream impacts. There is also a requirement to consider alternative proposals that may lead to less harmful impact or provide greater opportunity for benefit. In many countries, use of EIA is required by law in situations where proposed development-related actions are expected to be environmentally damaging, but its application to tourism varies around the world.

## Recommendations for improving EIA processes include:

- Clarifying the screening process that determines whether EIAs are required. The provision for EIA should be based on legislation which is clear and explicit as to the nature and scope of application and the type of approach to be taken.
- Reviewing how EIAs are applied to tourism development and whether coverage should be extended. At present it is unlikely that an EIA will be required generally for all tourism projects, but the kinds of project and location for which they are required should be clear to developers.
- Providing helpful guidelines, relevant to tourism, on what is required in the EIA.
- Avoiding duplication or uncertainty between the agencies involved, and providing a swift response, in order to prevent projects that do not comply from proceeding without a decision.
- Establishing a process to track compliance with any management and mitigation measures proposed in the EIA and, where necessary, providing enforcement action.

## 2.17 Sustainable infrastructure

### Infrastructure provision and management

Whereas most of the tools available to governments relate to influencing the actions of the private sector, the direct provision by government (or its agents, partners or contractors) of a range of infrastructure and public utilities and services should also be seen as an instrument for making tourism more sustainable. Where investment is required in new infrastructure, it may be appropriate for costs to be shared between the public and private sectors, based on an assessment of the relative importance of public good and private gain.

## General sustainability issues relating to infrastructure and services

The availability of transportation, water, energy, sewerage and waste disposal, telecommunications, and basic health and security services is of fundamental importance for the successful functioning of the tourism sector. Provision is crucial to the economic sustainability of tourism. The level and quality of provision is also crucial to issues of social and environmental sustainability. The provision of these services also forms a key part of the enabling environment, created by government, for a more sustainable tourism industry. Infrastructure and public services should be supplied in such a way that:

- They benefit the local community, tourism enterprises and tourists, with adequate provision to meet everyone's needs.
- Their provision is cost effective and sustainable.
- Best practices and technologies are used, minimizing consumption of resources and ensuring efficient and effective treatment of waste.

A fundamental principle and priority is to seek to minimize wasteful consumption by the tourism sector. In addition to provision of infrastructure and services, emphasis must therefore be placed on working with the industry on its environmental management, using the relevant instrument.





## Transport provision

A general policy line is to improve accessibility to and within destinations using less-polluting transport modes, and to manage tourist traffic in ways that will minimize congestion and adverse impacts on local communities and environments.

Examples of physical infrastructure measures include:

- Improving access to communities where this is needed to ensure the viability of tourism activity.
- Careful assessment of the environmental, social and economic impact of any new transport infrastructure proposal, especially new roads, or port and airport provision/extension.
- Being prepared to limit the capacity of roads and car parks as a control measure to discourage excessive car use.
- Developing park and ride schemes in popular tourist areas.
- Developing dedicated walking and cycling trails for use by tourists.
- Extending pedestrian areas in towns and cities.
- Introducing traffic calming measures and lane systems that favour public transport.
- Measures to reduce noise pollution from roads, airports, etc.
- Careful planning of signposting as an effective tool in traffic and visitor management, while avoiding unsightly and confusing clutter.

Public transport can be made more appealing for use by tourists in a number of ways, including:

- Integrated timetabling and ticketing between different transport modes.
- Adjusting timetables to reflect visitor movement patterns.
- Route planning to take account of the location of accommodation and visitor attractions.
- Provision of luggage handling services.
- Efficient car and taxi sharing schemes.
- Extension of, and support for, public transport services on certain routes relevant to tourists.

- Improved and widespread availability of information and ticketing.
- Improved quality, security and safety against crime on transport services.

## Public utilities and services

The provision of public utilities requires careful planning in tourist destinations, especially where particular natural resources are in short supply.

- **Water:** the supply and management of water is a key issue in many tourist destinations, in terms of both its quality and quantity. Increasing supply or introducing new sources (e.g. from desalination plants) can often be costly and have environmental consequences. Equitable water management is critical—if water is rationed, the interests of tourism enterprises should not be favoured over local communities.
- **Energy:** in some destinations energy (for electricity and heat) may be supplied from local sources. Renewable energy sources should be favoured, while paying attention to the impact of related infrastructure on the landscape (e.g. siting of wind turbines, pylons and hydro schemes).
- **Solid waste:** infrastructure, collection and management systems should enable waste to be separated and recycled. In some countries, tourism businesses are prepared to recycle waste but the municipality does not provide trade access to collection and treatment systems to back this up. Attention should also be paid to litter collection and the cleanliness and maintenance of public open spaces such as parks and beaches.

- **Sewerage:** wherever possible, tourism enterprises will connect to effective sewage treatment systems that have sufficient capacity to handle the flows arising in the peak tourist season. Discharge points should be carefully sited with respect to beaches and other sensitive areas. Governments should also propose solutions for sewage treatment for tourism facilities that cannot be connected to the public sewerage system.
- **Telecommunications:** effective telecommunications, including information technology linkages, are very important for market access and economic viability. Associated infrastructure should be carefully located to minimize impact on sensitive landscapes.

### Security and emergency services

Safety and security are increasingly important issues for destination image and performance. Attention should be paid to levels of policing and provision of other emergency services, such as health and fire services. The suppliers of these services should be in regular contact with tourism managers and sector bodies. A key issue is their ability to respond to visitors' needs. Some destinations have dedicated tourist assistance schemes and help lines. Specific tourist police units have been established in some countries. Systems for dealing with emergency situations such as health scares, terrorism and natural and industrial disasters, including response to early warnings, should be well rehearsed.

## 2.18 Architecture, Engineering and Landscape

### Accommodation Design

Tourism accommodation takes many different forms, including hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast premises, self-catering, touring and static caravans and camping, and caters for a variety of tastes and budgets. But all are capable of bringing economic benefits to the areas in which they are located. These benefits will need to be assessed alongside other issues such as suitability of the location in terms of its sustainability.

### General Location Principles

The process of identifying suitable locations for hotel and serviced accommodation, whatever its nature, should be an integral part of the plan making process. Local planning authorities and the tourist industry should therefore engage constructively to identify suitable locations in plans for hotel accommodation to meet identified current and future needs. This is particularly important for major hotels – for example those with business, conference and banqueting facilities, or large hotels catering for tourists – where the preference should be to identify town centre sites wherever possible. Such sites are the most sustainable in planning terms, since they allow greater access by public transport, contribute to urban vitality and regeneration, and allow visitors to easily access other town centre facilities and attractions.

### Hotel Accommodation in Rural Areas

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty attract visitors who wish to enjoy the special qualities of the landscapes and the countryside of these areas. It is important that sufficient accommodation of a suitable range of types is provided for these visitors. However, particular care needs to be taken over the number, scale and location of accommodation facilities in these designated areas to ensure that the particular qualities that justified the designation are conserved. These considerations are best addressed through the plan process wherever possible.

## Historic Towns and Cities

Historic towns and cities are an attraction to tourists from home and overseas and there is pressure to increase hotel accommodation in them. Great importance is attached to the preservation of buildings of architectural or historic interest both for their intrinsic qualities and for the contribution they make to our towns and villages, and to tourism. It is therefore important that any proposals for new hotel accommodation in such towns and cities are sensitive to their surroundings.

Conversion into hotels is often a realistic proposition for ensuring the retention and maintenance of historic buildings provided it is sensitively handled, does not materially alter the character or historic features of the building, and provided the new use does not generate traffic movements which cannot be accommodated.

Many historic buildings in town and country are already in use as hotels. If carefully designed, additions can be achieved without adversely affecting the historic fabric or character and maintain the historic building in viable use. But large-scale buildings in a small-scale setting, buildings which adversely affect the existing skyline and those which by their design, materials, illumination or building line are out of sympathy with neighbouring historic buildings will normally be unacceptable.

## Modernisation and Extensions

Aside from historic buildings, there are many redundant or semi-obsolete buildings – such as closed mills, distilleries, warehouses, or railway stations – that can lend themselves well to adaptation and modernisation as hotels, other forms of serviced accommodation or restaurants. To convert such buildings to compatible use can bring life back to an otherwise wasted asset – thus conserving a useful and often attractive building, improving a neglected site and helping the local economy.

Similarly, moderate-sized extensions to an existing hotel or public house, including the addition of bedroom accommodation, can help to ensure the future viability of such businesses. This may satisfy a local need as well as a tourism

one, by fully utilising the potential of the site but without any disproportionate increase in scale. In all cases, careful consideration should be given to ensure that the size of the extension proposed is not disproportionate for the location concerned.

## Budget Hotels, Motels, and Travel Lodges

Where budget hotels are designed to cater for longer stays at a destination (for example, those catering for visitors to historic towns and cities), their location should be considered in light of policies in development plans and national policies? Location of such hotels in town centres maximises the opportunities for visitors to easily access other town centre facilities and attractions.

Other types of budget hotels and similar types of development such as motels and travel lodges cater more for car-born travellers, often for a single overnight stay – e.g. business traveller's en-route to a destination. In such cases, the preference of developers will be for sites on major traffic routes outside of the centre of large towns or tourist centres.

## Car Parking

Maximum car parking standards for hotel and serviced accommodation may be included in development plans. Where such standards are not included in plans, planning authorities will need to consider what are appropriate levels of parking based on the market which the hotel serves, its location and availability of public transport facilities?

## Holiday, touring caravans and chalet parks

Planners should carefully weigh the objective of providing adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites. They should examine the scope for relocating any existing visually or environmentally-intrusive parks away from sensitive areas, or for re-location away from sites prone to flooding or coastal erosion. However, the high land values associated with holiday parks, the cost of infrastructure and possible planning issues relating to a proposed site may make such proposals impractical and unviable.





New sites that are close to existing settlements and other services will generally be more sustainable as some local services may be accessed by means other than by car. Similarly caravan storage facilities that are close to existing settlements may have less adverse impact and be more sustainable. However, there may be valid reasons for extending or improving existing holiday parks that are not located close to existing settlements by virtue of their support for successful local businesses and the provision of employment.

### **Staff Accommodation**

For many types of holiday parks and hotel in rural areas a residential managerial presence is often essential, to achieve quality service to the customer, security for the property, and to meet the obligations of health and safety regulations. Accommodation may sometimes also be needed for key members of staff. As far as possible, suitably located existing dwellings should be used to meet these accommodation needs. But where this is not a feasible option, and particularly in locations where suitable housing is not available, or is unaffordable, it may be necessary to provide new, on-site accommodation for managerial and/or other staff. In such cases the conversion of any suitable available existing buildings should be considered first in preference to the construction of new and potentially intrusive housing development in the countryside.

### **Other forms of self-catering accommodation**

Two important issues in determining the appropriate level of tourism activity and the need and potential to accommodate growth are:

- The spatial distribution of tourism. Different locations and communities will be more or less suited to different levels of tourism.
- Varying levels of demand across the year. Seasonality is a major issue for the sustainability of tourism.

## **2.19 Eco Green certification**

The last 15 years has seen a number of major environmental initiatives undertaken by tourism and hospitality enterprises, as well as government authorities. These initiatives have been at the level of the individual enterprise at national and international level. This part of the report will set out an overview of the most significant of these initiatives. In particular, we will focus on the recent development of voluntary environmental certification and award initiatives.

### **The E.U. Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)**

This scheme serves as a management tool for companies and other organisations to evaluate report and improve their environmental performance. EMAS, since 2001 has been open to all economic sectors including public and private services. In addition, EMAS was strengthened by the integration of EN/ISO 14000 as the environmental management system.

Participation is voluntary and extends to public or private organisations operating in the European Union and the European Economic Area. Though not specifically designed for tourism activities, this initiative can and has been applied to a number of tourist facilities and activities across the EU. (Web ref: [www.emas.org.eu](http://www.emas.org.eu)).

### **The E.U. 'Flower' Eco label**

Over the past ten years, the "Flower" has become a European-wide symbol for products, providing simple and accurate guidance to consumers. All products bearing the "Flower" have been checked by independent bodies for compliance with strict ecological and performance criteria. There are currently (September 2006) twenty-three different product groups, and already more than 250 licences have been awarded for several hundred products.

In order to apply for the European Eco-label, the tourism operator must meet strict minimum standards with regard to environmental performance and health standards. This includes the use of renewable energy sources, an overall reduction in energy and water consumption, measures to reduce waste, environmental policy setting and the provision of details/features appropriate to 'eco-tourism'.  
(Web ref: [www.eco-label.com](http://www.eco-label.com))

### **UNEP Tourism Programme, (International)**

UNEP, as an intergovernmental organization, assists governments to produce effective policies and implementation programmes. From multilateral environmental agreements to national governments, through local authorities and regional organizations, UNEP's Tourism Programme provides support by developing principles and offering technical assistance to destination management organizations interested in using the Local Agenda 21 frameworks and by producing environmental standards. (Web ref: [www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism))

The objectives for developing the UNEP Principles for Implementation of Sustainable Tourism are:

- To help governments and intergovernmental, private sector and other organizations apply the general concept of sustainable tourism in practice, and minimize environmental impacts from tourism.
- To facilitate the development of more specific guidelines at the regional level or in relation to specific issues, such as coral reefs and biodiversity.

- To provide a framework for the work programmes of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Regional Seas Action Plans, and other international agreements that address tourism issues.

### **Green Globe, (International)**

Green Globe is a worldwide benchmarking and certification program which facilitates sustainable travel and tourism for consumers, companies and communities. It is based on Agenda 21 and principles for Sustainable Development endorsed by 182 governments at the United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. (Web ref: [www.greenglobe.org](http://www.greenglobe.org))

The functions of GREEN GLOBE are to:

- Assist companies to develop and operate in an environmentally, culturally and socially sustainable way, helping to save money and promote better business;
- Review of Good Environmental Policy and Practice in the Tourism Sector
- Assist consumers through brand recognition to identify companies and destinations committed to better environments;
- Assist communities and protected area destinations to develop and operate in an environmentally, culturally and socially sustainable way; and
- Benefit the environment through reduction in solid wastes, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, less water pollution, improved habitat conservation and other environmental improvements.



### **The Green Tourism Business Scheme, (UK)**

This is the largest and most successful environmental accreditation body of tourism related businesses in Europe and has over 500 members in the UK, including amongst others, accommodation providers, visitor attractions, tour operators and conference facilities. (Web ref: [www.green-business.co.uk](http://www.green-business.co.uk)). Issues such as business efficiency, environmental management, waste, transport, as well as topics like social responsibility and biodiversity are covered under this scheme.

By agreeing to the GTBS code of conduct and through independent assessment of their activities the members have made a commitment towards reducing the impact of their business on the environment.

### **The Cleaner Greener Production Programme & The Greening Irish Hotels Programme, (Ireland)**

The objective of the CGPP is to encourage companies in Ireland, particularly SME's, to adopt a high standard of environmental performance by adapting or improving processes and services in order to minimise negative impact on the environment. The programme seeks to promote environmentally friendly activities through the application of increased resource productivity, waste reduction, reuse of materials, energy management and a change of culture within organisations.

The programme's main objective is to encourage hotels throughout Ireland to strive towards a higher standard of environmental performance by adapting processes and services in order to minimise negative impacts on the environment whilst maintaining quality, productivity and competitiveness. (Web ref: [www.greeningirishhotels.ie](http://www.greeningirishhotels.ie)).



## Conclusion

The facts outlined in these guidelines indicate that sustainable tourism development is more than incorporation of the environmental protection measures at the final stages of the tourism product development. It is rather an integrated planning system which combines the measures of the public sector, private sector careful planning and implementation and monitoring carried out by public sector, private sector and citizens. Since tourism involves a vast number of activities, it impacts people and nature in many different ways; while it increases employment, boosts up the local economic development, promotes the country, and affects a number of other sectors of the economy (i.e. food and construction sector to mention only a few), it also produces side effects to the environment and resources.

On the other hand, tourism can not flourish if the resources are not properly maintained since the effects will be negative mid to long term.

Sustainable Tourism Development requires systematic planning, and consideration at every step of the planning process beginning with the planners and continuing to the legislators, builders and ground level industry and citizens.

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