The tourism industry is a global industry that is highly dependent on the world’s natural and cultural resources. Whether you are climbing the Great Wall of China or visiting museums in Paris, your tourism experience involves natural and cultural resources of the destination. Such resources are fundamental building blocks for the tourism industry. Without them, tourism could not exist. The challenge for today’s tourism is to ensure that these resources will be available for future generations of tourists and local community stakeholders. To achieve this goal, tomorrow’s tourism professionals must understand the underlying concepts of sustainable development and how to apply these in tourism destinations. This chapter defines sustainable development and its role in tourism. The challenges of monitoring tourism impacts over time and current sustainable tourism practices are discussed. Major global initiatives focused on tourism are also presented. Through these topics, students gain an important perspective of the complex challenges facing today’s tourism industry and can begin to shape their vision for the future.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to
✦ Understand the concepts of sustainability and their application to tourism
✦ Describe the impacts of tourism over time
✦ Distinguish crucial international charters, guidelines, and organizations shaping sustainable tourism development
✦ Apply community-based tourism fundamentals to existing and proposed tourism projects
✦ Explain the relationship between conservation and tourism
✦ Express the challenges of defining and implementing sustainable tourism—today and tomorrow
Mini-Case: Namibia’s Community-Based Tourism Success Story

Community involvement with tourism development is an activity that is spreading around the world. As tourists become more interested in visiting local communities to experience traditional ways of life, governments and NGOs facilitate the organization of community-based tourism. Often this is also achieved through supporting conservation efforts. An excellent example is the growth of community-based tourism and natural resource management in Namibia.

Balancing the demands of wildlife with achieving a sustainable lifestyle challenged many rural Namibian communities for years. Roaming wildlife, such as lions, killed precious community livestock, including goats and sheep. Rather than continuing to suffer from this economic threat, local leaders, with the help of NGOs, assigned wildlife guards to protect communities and livestock. This strategy was further supported by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, which supported legislation enabling communities to benefit from wildlife and tourism through local management of communal lands. Using the organizational approach of carefully defined Communal Area Conservancies, communities have become involved with locally developed tourism that supports conservation.

Self-defined groups of community members, who are committed to equitably managing area lands, work collaboratively to make decisions and implement approaches for sustainable use. Although the government still has the final say on how land will be used, local conservancies provide the structure for fair distribution of economic benefits to all community members.

Tourism operations are one way that Namibia’s Communal Area Conservancies use their lands in a sustainable manner. Dedicated campgrounds and providing guides for animal viewing are just two tourism services from which funds are generated. Also, the creation of joint ventures with private-sector entities has enabled conservancies to develop ecologdes and controlled hunting tours. Revenues generated from these kinds of activities are reinvested in the conservancies ensuring ongoing financial stability and long-term protection of wildlife resources.

A key to successful community-based tourism is linkage with other tourism-related organizations. This enables not only the exchange of technical information. It also assists with attracting tourists from season to season. The Namibia Community-Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) supports the tourism activities of communal conservancies through information exchange and training. Financial management principles and negotiation techniques are two training topics valued by community groups and offered by NACOBTA. Also, establishing and fostering links between community destinations and culturally sensitive tour operators.

Two elephants near waterhole, Etosha National Park, Namibia.
encourages tourist visitation. Planning efforts contribute to effective delivery of tourism activities, which are market driven, environmentally sensitive and financially viable.

Namibia’s Communal Area Conservancies and NACOBTA, in conjunction with the government and NGOs, are working together to create and tell an ongoing community-based tourism success story.¹

### Sustainable Tourism

#### Background

*Sustainability* and *sustainable development* are wildly popular words used today in all sectors of development. While many view the issue of sustainability as a modern development, the concept was a concern of America’s founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson in 1789 stated, “Then I say the earth belongs to each . . . generation during its course, fully and in its own right, no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence.”² With each generation’s increasing awareness of the world’s resources being finite, a greater emphasis is placed on having adequate resources for the benefit of all in the future.

What are sustainability and sustainable development? Are these concepts achievable or merely the focus of meandering theoretical discussions and politicized agendas? And, most importantly, how do these concepts apply to tourism? Examining sustainable development concepts and how these are shaping tourism—today and tomorrow—is the focus of this chapter. Far more than trendy buzzwords, sustainability and sustainable development are the concepts underpinning tourism’s role as a leading economic sector in the coming decades.

In its simplest form, *sustainable* means to nourish, keep up, or prolong. This meaning is also reflected in its Latin roots meaning “to hold up” or “to support from below.”³ When applied to development, a number of definitions have evolved to address both the concept as well as its implementation. The most widely used definition of sustainable development is credited to Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway in her work with the Brundtland Commission. In 1997, echoing Thomas Jefferson, she defined *sustainable development* as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴ This simple definition, although easy to comprehend, is challenging to achieve.

²Thomas Jefferson, September 6, 1789, as quoted at http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/overview/definitions.shtml.
Key Concepts of Sustainable Development

Two fundamental elements underlying sustainable development discussions are the concepts of common pool resources and carrying capacity. These provide the basis for discussions about the future of tourism at local, regional, and national levels.

The term common pool resources refers to resources that are available to all, but owned by no one. Nature-based examples include forests, oceans, and vistas, whereas common pool cultural resources can include a community’s song, dance, and traditions. Many tourism products and experiences rely on common pool resources. The extent and accessibility of these resources has led McKean to suggest that common pool resources, in addition to being available to anyone, are difficult to protect and easy to deplete. Hardin presented the initial illustration of this concept in his seminal article titled “The Tragedy of the Commons.” In this article, he described a community that thrives on the growth of its cattle, which grazes on communal pastureland. As demand grows, residents are inclined to maximize their benefits by ignoring the cumulative effect of each person grazing an additional head of cattle on the communal lands. Hardin asserted that the ignorance of individuals using common pool resources will lead to eventual depletion of the resource. The potential combined impact of individual use of common pool resources is an important element of sustainable development.

In tourism, this is easily illustrated with the example of beach access and development. Publicly held beaches are accessible to all with both residents and visitors using them on a regular basis. In response to beach visitors’ needs, a snack hut can be built. One snack hut may not have a detrimental effect on the environment over the immediate or long term. However, as additional locals decide to open their own snack huts, the development on the beach can lead to unsightly construction, congestion, and a loss of the beach’s pristine character. As demand increases, development of a permanent, free-standing restaurant may lead to additional disruption of the natural environment and scenic quality. This simple example highlights the negative impact of too much development and the concept of the “Tragedy of the Commons” as it applies to tourism.

A second important term, integral to sustainable development, is the concept of carrying capacity. This term originated in the biological sciences. Today, carrying capacity generally refers to the level of human activity and development that an area can absorb before compromising the environment and the quality of the human experience. The UN World Tourism Organization

(UNWTO) specifically defines tourism carrying capacity as “the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing the destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of the visitor’s satisfaction.”8 As destinations increase in their popularity, such as Cancun, Mexico, or Aspen, Colorado, determining carrying capacity becomes a priority. Yet, similar to the concept of sustainable development, carrying capacity is easy to understand and difficult to achieve. Tourism planners and developers, in particular, are challenged to define exactly what to measure and how to measure physical, psychological (or perceptual), social, and economic components of tourism carrying capacity.9 While some measurement approaches and techniques have been developed, the capability to apply this concept through consistent valid and reliable quantitative measurement of all components

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continues to elude academics and practitioners. Given the multiple variables involved in tourism’s development and impacts, determining a specific volume of sustainable tourism is a simplistic approach to a complex issue of measurement and monitoring.

Sustainable development of any kind involves trade-offs. Given the immediate and long-term focus of sustainable development, each generation is faced with making compromises today so future generations will have adequate resources. For destinations relying on tourism as an economic resource, understanding how tourism evolves over time is an important factor for success.

Venice, Italy, and Komodo, Indonesia: Similar or Different?

Sustainable tourism development is a challenge faced by both urban and rural destinations. Venice, Italy, is a “must-see” urban tourism destination for people from all over the world due to the destination’s history, culture, architecture, and picturesque canals. The city’s consistent tourism popularity has fostered growing numbers of day visitors as well as overnight guests. Particularly in the peak summer season, Venice’s overly crowded sidewalks, bridges, and canals now contribute to inconsistent visitor satisfaction. Environmental challenges, such as water pollution and the widely publicized threat of the city actually sinking, also contribute to both visitors and residents questioning the sustainability of Venice’s tourism. How much tourism is too much tourism?

In contrast to the urban tourism destination of Venice, Komodo National Park in a rural area of Indonesia is home to unusual animals and plants, including the “Komodo Dragon” believed to be a rare descendent of dinosaurs. The park’s popularity with domestic and international visitors supports local residents through the development of tourist-related activities.
What happens to a tourism area over time? Can a tourism area achieve a sustainable level of activity or, as an area becomes increasingly popular, is it doomed to decline? Answering this question has puzzled tourism stakeholders—from academics to planners to community members—for decades. In 1980, a Canadian geographer suggested that the concept of a product life cycle, as illustrated by the asymptotic life cycle of manufactured goods, could be applied to tourism areas. What Butler proposed as an exploratory and descriptive discussion (of a tourism area life cycle) became a key reference, which still serves as a starting point for discussions about tourism development.\(^\text{10}\)

Tourism Area Life Cycles

What happens to a tourism area over time? Can a tourism area achieve a sustainable level of activity or, as an area becomes increasingly popular, is it doomed to decline? Answering this question has puzzled tourism stakeholders—from academics to planners to community members—for decades. In 1980, a Canadian geographer suggested that the concept of a product life cycle, as illustrated by the asymptotic life cycle of manufactured goods, could be applied to tourism areas. What Butler proposed as an exploratory and descriptive discussion (of a tourism area life cycle) became a key reference, which still serves as a starting point for discussions about tourism development.\(^\text{10}\)


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Tourism Area Life Cycle

In “The Concept of a Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution,” Butler suggested that the development of a tourism area could be understood through comparing two variables: time and number of visitors. When graphed, he suggested that a tourism area could progress through six different stages of development as described following.

**Exploration:** In this initial stage of a tourism area life cycle, visitors to an area are few in number and are attracted by an area’s local character. There are no visitor-specific facilities. This can foster a high level of interaction with locals. Irregular visitor arrival patterns suggest that at this stage, the presence of visitors does not greatly affect the area’s day-to-day pace or activities.

**Involvement:** With an increase in visitation and increasing regularity of tourist arrivals, a tourism area may enter the involvement stage. During this stage, locals may begin operating facilities that cater specifically to visitors, and advertising of the area may occur. As more locals become involved with tourism, government agencies may begin to be pressured to develop transport or other infrastructure to support visitors.

**Development:** As an area becomes more and more engaged with tourism, area development shifts from being locally controlled to being driven by external groups. Clearly defined promotion and the development of man-made attractions, including larger accommodation facilities, all contribute to the area’s establishment as a desirable tourism destination. During this stage, peak period visitation can reach levels that exceed the local population, and nonlocal staff are employed to fill the workforce.

**Consolidation:** As an area’s economy is strongly tied to tourism, the rate of increase of the number of visitors slows. Efforts to broadly market the destination can focus on extending peak seasons and developing new markets. The presence of international hotel operators and service franchises reaches a critical mass with few additions. The pervasive presence of visitors and dedication of facilities to their needs can contribute to resident resentment by those not directly involved with the industry.

**Stagnation:** Capacity levels are reached as peak visitor numbers are recorded. With this, economic, environmental, and social problems become more apparent. The destination, previously considered fashionable, becomes focused on attracting mass-market segments such as conventions and repeat visitors.

**Decline/Rejuvenation:** The aging of a destination area contributes to increasing challenges to stay competitive. Instead of being attractive to visitors traveling extended distances and staying for longer periods, the area may become primarily attractive for weekend visits or day trips. Tourist facilities may be transformed for nontourist functions, such as hotels becoming condominiums or second-home properties. Alternatively, a destination may experience a transformation if new attractions are added and competitive facilities are built. To attract a new wave of tourists in significant numbers, an area may develop previously unexploited natural resources through the combined efforts of the public and private sectors. Rejuvenation is also fueled through invigorated promotion and advertising.

FIGURE 4.1 Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area. As destinations move from inception (as suggested by low visitor numbers) to maturity (stagnation) over time, they have decisions to make that may lead to rejuvenation or decline.

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11Ibid., 6.
12Ibid., 6–8.
Despite its obvious simplicity, Butler’s application of the product life cycle to tourism areas provides a useful starting point for discussions by stakeholders in their effort to understand tourism development over time. However, his approach also has a number of widely discussed limitations.

Graphing the evolution of a tourism area, using the two simple variables of time and number of visitors, ignores many factors that affect an area’s tourism evolution. Identifying when each stage starts and stops for a location is problematic, as destinations can be affected by significant external factors. Also, some destinations may not go through all stages. When comparing the two variables of time and visitor numbers, the area of analysis, whether national, state, or local, can have an impact on the shape of the curve. Butler’s model has never been proven predictive. Yet, it is valued as a descriptive tool useful in tourism development discussions. It has been applied to diverse domestic and international destinations to illustrate development paths.13

Two other models describing tourism development in destination areas provide a contrast to Butler’s approach. Lundberg developed a six-phase model describing tourism growth. More general in his approach, Lundberg’s model is widely viewed as being more pessimistic, suggesting that a destination’s tourism is most likely to decline over time. He emphasizes, as does Butler, that during the later stages of development where decline is widely experienced, tourism planners and area stakeholders are forced to reevaluate options and determine future development choices.14

Building on Butler’s approach, de Albuquerque and McElroy analyzed tourism area development across the Caribbean.15 Consideration of a wide number of variables (such as tourist characteristics, seasonality, types of accommodation, patterns of growth, and amount of local control) for 23 microstates showed three distinct development stages as noted in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism Stage</th>
<th>Style Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I: Emerging</td>
<td>Low-density, long-staying, West Indian, winter residence, retirement, nature tourism, small hotels, and local control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II: Intermediate</td>
<td>Rapid growth, Europeans, high seasonality, substyless of fishing, sailing, and diving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage III: Mature</td>
<td>High density, mass market, short-staying, North Americans, slow growth, shopping, gambling, conventions, and large hotels16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although it can be argued that each Caribbean microstate has unique characteristics and development issues, de Albuquerque and McElroy’s model aided destinations throughout the region to gauge the stage of their tourism development and, for those in the emerging or intermediate stages, to make policy decisions in pursuit of sustainability.

**Challenges in Defining Tourism Impacts over Time**

Defining the impacts of tourism on a destination is an important area in tourism development and the quest for sustainable tourism. Researchers and academics face a plethora of challenges as they attempt to measure, monitor, and manage tourism impacts as suggested by the three basic tourism area life cycle models discussed earlier. Economic impacts, with their quantitative basis, are often viewed as the easiest to measure and analyze. These impacts typically include the number of jobs created by tourism as well as tax revenues generated by tourism businesses.

Most simply, economic impacts are considered to be the direct expenditures made by tourists at a destination. International organizations, such as the WTO, have established standardized definitions for tourists, average length of stay, and daily expenditures, which enable local destination, regional, and national comparisons of economic variables. Although far from a science, defining economic impact has progressed and supports tourism development decision making.

As the world’s scientific community has become increasingly focused on protecting nonrenewable resources, the technical measurement and monitoring of tourism environmental impacts has expanded. However, the interconnected nature of tourism makes measuring specific or discrete tourism impacts challenging. Sociocultural impacts, which include positive and negative impacts on a host culture’s traditions and way of life, are also challenging to measure and monitor. The *demonstration effect* refers to the impact that visitors may have on a local community through their actions such as displaying alternate fashion styles or new technologies. For example, when a tourist carries a digital camera into a developing village and shows curious children its capabilities to capture pictures, this may lead to their desire to have such an object while minimizing their interest in learning to draw.

Such impacts are difficult to measure and monitor over time. The many variables and impacts, which figure into an area’s tourism development, are highly dynamic. While Butler’s simple approach of graphing the volume of visitors over time is useful for discussions, there is no easy formula or set level for how many visitors are “just right” for an area. Destinations, aiming to benefit from tourists while minimizing impacts to their community, must grapple with defining carrying capacity. One method for determining carrying capacity is the *limits of acceptable change* approach.
**Limits of Acceptable Change**

For tourism destinations highly dependent on finite natural resources, increasing tourism demand has created an urgency to develop coping strategies. The popularity of campgrounds on the edge of a national park or water activities in a marine park proximate to a major tourism source market can quickly lead to overuse and irreparable environmental damage. Initial efforts to address carrying capacity for outdoor recreation areas focused on “how much use can an area tolerate.” A significant shift in this approach occurred with the development of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), which aims to answer, “What are the conditions desired in the area.”

Developed in 1985 as a system for wilderness planning, the U.S. Forest Service adopted LAC (Table 4.1) to help managers logically respond to increased demand through a series of planning steps that considered not only current, but also future conditions of an area. Also, the LAC approach, which includes group definition of desired conditions, incorporates the varied perspectives of tourists and host communities as well as resource managers.

The LAC approach requires the definition of measurable indicators for subjective experiences involved with social issues. For example, if solitude is a quality that hikers would like to experience, park managers can monitor how many contacts a person has while walking along a trail. Ongoing monitoring and review of changes is crucial to the success of this approach for adapting to changes over time. Although time consuming and a process that

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**TABLE 4.1 Limits of Acceptable Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lac Step</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Identification of area concerns and issues including legal guidelines and organizational policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Definition and description of opportunity classes or subunits of an area with varying conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Identification of quantitative indicators for measurement of subunit resource and social conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Inventory of existing resource and social conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Development of standards for each indicator in each opportunity class or subunit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Identification of alternative allocations of the area among various opportunity classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Cost and benefit analysis for management of each alternative in terms of environmental impacts, administrative costs, and impact on visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Costs and benefits of each specific alternative are evaluated, and a final alternative is selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Implementation of the selected alternative and establishment of a monitoring program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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19Ibid., lli.
requires articulation of often hard-to-define and specific objectives, LAC provides a useful framework for destinations dependent on natural resources to manage according to defined standards and satisfactory levels of change.

**Sustainable Development and Its Global Reach**

Sustainable development has no borders. Due to the world’s environmental interconnectivity, sustainable development requires the involvement of all countries. Since the first world summit focusing on the human environment in 1972, major international meetings have contributed to sustainable development becoming an important policy goal for countries around the world. The creation of “Agenda 21” as discussed later, is an example of sustainable development concepts evolving into practical guidelines for local, regional, and international initiatives. These are especially important for the world’s tourism that depends on natural and cultural resources.

**Global Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism**

As discussed in other chapters, the tremendous growth of tourism demand worldwide has contributed to tourism development in wide-ranging environments and sites on each continent. The UN World Tourism Organization has addressed this growth with their forward-looking *Tourism 2020 Vision* reports. Developed as long-term forecasting and assessment tools, these regional reports are based on WTO’s quantitative 25-year forecasts using 1995 as a base for 2000, 2010, and 2020 forecasts. *Tourism 2020 Vision* projects a

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**Key Dates in the Emergence of Sustainable Development as a Global Initiative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>The first World Summit on Human Environment is held in Stockholm, Sweden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>The World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as The Brundtland Commission after its chairwoman) is established by the United Nations General Assembly to investigate relationships between the environment and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The publishing of “Our Common Future,” the final report of the Brundtland Commission coauthored by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (ICUN), leads to the ICUN’s Commission on Environmental Law to draft the “Earth Charter.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>The World Summit on Environment and Development is held in Rio de Janeiro. Commonly referred to as the “Earth Summit,” this event is most noted for the adoption of the far-reaching “Agenda 21.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Special Session of the United Nations dedicated to reviewing “Agenda 21” progress since its inception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The Johannesburg Summit involved approximately 64,000 participants considering successes and ongoing obstacles to achieving a sustainable world.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20http://www.sustainability.ca.
Development that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.


The worldwide level of more than 1.56 billion international tourist arrivals in the 2020. In comparison to WTO’s base year of 1995 with 565.4 million actual arrivals, this expected growth of tourism is certainly daunting. UNWTO’s research also forecasts that Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas will be the top three receiving regions for tourist arrivals by 2020.21

With its current levels and forecasted expansion, the sustainability of the tourism destinations is a concern. This has led to the call for developing only sustainable tourism ventures that are sensitive to host environments and cultures. The UN World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as

Development that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.22

This tourism specific definition builds on “Agenda 21,” which is an important outcome of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro. Widely referred to as “The Earth Summit,” this event is noted for developing a comprehensive action plan for achieving global sustainability. An impressive number of 182 governments signed the summit’s blueprint for the future, which, after itemizing unsustainable environmental and development practices, defines strategies to achieve sustainability. Agenda 21 is viewed as being the first sustainable development program to garner such broad international support and is widely acclaimed for increasing global awareness about the urgency of adopting sustainable practices.

The key principles of Agenda 21 have since been applied to sustainable development of the world’s travel and tourism industry on regional, national, and local levels. In 1996, the World Travel and Tourism Council, the UN World Tourism Organization, and the Earth Council jointly introduced *Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development*.23 This publication describes the industry’s role in helping to achieve global sustainability with great emphasis placed on the importance of partnerships between all stakeholders in the public and private sectors. After discussing the strategic and economic importance of tourism, *Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry* emphasizes the need for the

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whole industry to be sustainable. These ideas are then supported with specific action steps to achieve objectives. Preparation of this blueprint, as well as regional seminars introducing its content, has engaged organizations throughout the world to adopt its recommendations and begin to implement specific strategies.\textsuperscript{24} Although time will tell how these actually contribute to sustainability, efforts to bring Agenda 21 concepts to the local level are especially noteworthy.

How does a destination such as mountain village in Cyprus or coastal area in Panama develop their tourism industry in a sustainable manner? Many destinations are interested in establishing or expanding their tourism. However, there can be concern about how long tourism will last and if it is the best industry to develop. \textit{Tourism and Local Agenda 21}, prepared by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), presents a step-by-step process for local authorities to follow to achieve sustainable tourism.\textsuperscript{25} This approach has contributed greatly to putting sustainable development concepts into practice. ICLEI estimates that over 3,500 communities worldwide are using Local Agenda 21 to guide diverse development initiatives.

\textsuperscript{24}World Travel and Tourism Council, \textit{Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development} (London: Author, 1996) as quoted at http://www.wttc.org/promote/agenda
data/21.htm.
Steps in the Local Agenda 21 Approach to Sustainable Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Setting up a Local Agenda 21 Forum and/or working groups;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Discussion and analysis of the main local issues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Identification of goals and ideas for action for the sustainable development of the local area;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Integration of these goals and ideas into a Local Agenda 21 action plan that is adopted by the local authority and others;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Implementation of the action plan, with the involvement of all relevant players.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there is no exact number of how many communities are using Local Agenda 21 strategies for tourism development, ICLEI has found three types of destinations motivated to apply these local development strategies to their tourism industries:

1. **Islands**: Local Agenda 21 is especially useful to islands where tourism is the primary employment and economic generator and when the finite size of the island and its resources are stretched due to tourism activity.

2. **Historic towns receiving relatively high tourist numbers**: As an integrated component of their economic activities, applying Local Agenda 21 approaches has varied in historic towns, often being applied to other local industries in addition to tourism.

3. **Established tourist resorts**: With many of these resorts dependent upon coastal locations, awareness of sustainable management is typically motivated by previous experiences with over development.

Communities are motivated to adopt a Local Agenda 21 approach to developing their tourism industry for a variety of reasons. The most typical of these are (1) to meet a preventive goal such as maintaining a quality tourism product, (2) to address existing problems such as too much growth or deterioration of the tourism resources, (3) to achieve a balance between the needs of tourists and residents, and (4) to promote and support sustainable development. In some cases, communities utilize Local Agenda 21 to achieve more than one of these goals.

Although Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21, with their specific applications to tourism, provide a valuable foundation for sustainable tourism development, there is much to be learned through monitoring developments and adapting practices to achieve desired goals. Integrating the experience of other destinations at the international, national, and local levels is the next challenge for all tourism stakeholders.

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26Ibid., 8–9.
27Ibid., 10.
28Ibid., 12–13.
A response to this challenge is already in action. GREEN GLOBE 21 is the worldwide benchmarking and certification program developed by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 1993 as an outcome of Agenda 21 recommendations. This program supports sustainable travel and tourism through defining standards for companies and communities as well as guidelines for ecotourism design and construction. This comprehensive approach provides standards for 25 different sectors in the travel and tourism industry from accommodation and activities to vehicle rental and visitor centers. The certification process invites business and community entities to demonstrate a basic and advanced level of environmentally and socially sustainable activity or operations. Displaying the GREEN GLOBE 21 logo notifies all travel and tourism industry stakeholders of the entity’s commitment to and success in achieving sustainable practices.29 Travelers who want to know that their visit does not destroy the environment or disrupt local cultures can be reassured when they see a GREEN GLOBE 21 certification seal.30

The UNWTO has also taken an active role in responding to the need for monitoring sustainability. Since 1993, the UNWTO has focused on defining and implementing indicators of sustainable tourism practices. For a destination to develop locally appropriate sustainable tourism development indicators, the UNWTO suggests a three phase process of: (1) research and organization, (2) indicators development, and (3) implementation.31 Ongoing research and case study analysis has led to the publication of Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations, designed to be both a resource book and how-to guide for researchers and practitioners. To measure and monitor tourism impacts, indicators must be appropriate for local situations. Examples of sustainability issues and indicators include economic, environmental, and cultural factors.

These examples of Agenda 21 and its application to tourism, GREEN GLOBE 21’s certification approach, and the UNWTO’s development of indicators for measuring sustainable tourism each illustrate the challenges of and progress toward defining and possibly achieving sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism requires a comprehensive approach to development incorporating cultural and environmental elements as well as economic or business considerations.

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### Selected Tourism Sustainability Issues and Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Issue</th>
<th>Suggested Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effects of tourism on communities</td>
<td>Ratio of tourists to locals who believe that tourism has helped bring new services or infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining tourist satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction by visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception of value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of return visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefits of tourism</td>
<td>Number of local people (and ratio of men and women) employed in tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revenues generated by tourism as a % of total revenues generated in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy management</td>
<td>Per capita consumption of energy from all sources (overall and by tourist sector, per person per day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of businesses participating in energy conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water availability and conservation</td>
<td>Water use (total volume consumed and amount per tourist per day)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water saving (% reduced, recaptured or recycled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid waste management (garbage)</td>
<td>Waste volume produced by the destination (by month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volume of waste recycled</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity of waste in public areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development control</td>
<td>Existence of a land use or development planning process, including tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of area subject to control (in terms of density, design, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling use intensity</td>
<td>Number of tourists per square meter of the site or per square kilometer of a destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total tourist numbers (average, monthly, seasonally)</td>
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### Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Tourism

#### Community-Based Tourism

At its most basic level, tourism involves the interaction of a host and guest. Around the globe, the interaction of host and guest often happens in a local community. **Community-based tourism** (CBT) is tourism that incorporates environmental, social, and cultural sustainability goals, which is managed and owned by the community. It aims to share local ways of life and the community’s natural and cultural resources with visitors. It can be defined as a product and as a development strategy. The growing popularity and possibility of community-based tourism has contributed to new insights and guidelines for success.

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32Ibid., 244–245.
The concept of community-based tourism is valued from both demand and supply perspectives. Independent travelers wishing to avoid mass tourism, often seek small-scale community-organized tourism experiences. In response, communities with rich cultural and natural resources looking to generate much-needed economic revenues can offer intimate tourism experiences and glimpses of day-to-day life not offered in more developed, mass-tourism destinations.

For many smaller communities, tourism as an economic development tool is often embraced with limited comprehension of its complexities and nuances. Tourist expenditures in a community can have a great impact or no impact, depending on where and how tourists spend their money. For mass-tourism destinations that are highly reliant on external tour operators, travel fees can be paid in the generating market with only a small percentage of these revenues being turned over to the destination. In contrast, small communities with emerging tourism offerings, provided by local entrepreneurs, may retain a high proportion of tourism revenues and benefit directly.

In general, community-based tourism is guided by a number of fundamentals. At its foundation, community-based tourism is developed and operated by local residents in support of their economy and way of life. As a development approach, community organizers may ask, “How can tourism contribute to the process of community development?” The combination of product and community development approaches contributes to a community’s ability to create sustainable tourism. Developing tourism, which supports social sustainability, complements economic advancement goals. Desired local involvement includes debating tourism development options and building consensus about plans before they are implemented. Distribution of revenues to benefit the community overall is another goal that can be achieved through establishing coops, joint ventures, and business associations that utilize local expertise and labor.

Preservation of the community and its assets is another fundamental of community-based tourism. Protection of, and in some instances invigoration of, traditions, heritage, and culture can be achieved. Reverence for natural resources and heritage is another key component.

Community-based tourism can take a number of different forms. For example, as defined by WWF International, community-based ecotourism is “a form of ecotourism where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management; a major proportion of the benefits remain in the community.”

34Ibid., 10.
of the benefits remain in the community.\textsuperscript{36} The pro-poor tourism movement utilizes community-based tourism development strategies to reduce poverty.\textsuperscript{37} Key approaches utilized for poverty reduction through tourism include (1) employment of the poor in tourism enterprises, (2) supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor, (3) direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor, and (4) establishment of tourism enterprises by the poor.\textsuperscript{38} Application of these approaches can be seen in the efforts of WWF International in Namibia in their support of Communal Area Conservancies that include tourism development activities.\textsuperscript{39}

Community-based tourism is as individual as each community in which it develops. Key to success is financial viability, which mandates realistic business planning and adequate cash flow. The growth of micro-lending programs, where relatively small amounts of money are loaned to individuals developing entrepreneurial businesses, has proven influential in fostering small-scale tourism development over time. For communities that have a variety of ecological and cultural assets, capacity building of locals may be of great importance in conquering tourism development successfully. Capacity building, or training programs to build expertise and skills, are often developed and delivered by government agencies or NGOs.

The typically small-scale of community-based tourism development emphasizes the importance of collaboration among stakeholders inside and outside the community. The most successful community-based tourism involves community members, NGOs, tour operators, government agencies, and marketing organizations to assist with promotion. For example, a community that develops their tourism product, but fails to build relationships with tour operators, may flounder due to a lack of tourists.

A logical, step-by-step planning approach is generally viewed as being a useful guideline for communities wishing to develop tourism. The many variables and numerous stakeholders involved with tourism development at a community level make following each step a challenge. Timing and depth of involvement with each step varies widely, depending on the community. The motivation for development, organization of local residents and availability of leadership resources all contribute to the path of tourism development. Guidelines for a desirable step-by-step approach are shown in the box on page 115.

\textsuperscript{37}Caroline Ashley, D. Roe, and H. Goodwin, “Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor,” \textit{Pro-Poor Tourism Report No. 1} (Nottingham, UK: Overseas Development Institute, 2001). See www.propoortourism.org.uk.
Monitoring the growth of community-based tourism and its impacts over time has contributed to the adoption of a variety of indicators. Initially, the viability of community-based tourism was measured primarily on the basis of financial profitability. Economic gain, easy to quantify and monitor, was viewed as the primary indicator of success. While economic success is crucial, critics suggested that this was shortsighted, as it did not take into account the opportunities and impacts over time on both ecological and cultural resources. Current efforts, with a goal of sustainability, focus on achieving a positive **triple bottom line**, or success as measured by economic, environmental, and community advancements. Community-based tourism development is increasingly being viewed not only for its potential as an economic development strategy. Utilization of community-based tourism as a guide for conservation and community development, as well as economic advancement, provides the basis for a holistic approach to tourism development.

Hatton, ibid.
Conservation and Tourism: An Uneasy Marriage

A greater focus on protecting the world’s environment in recent decades has spread globally as countries face depletion of natural resources and increasing levels of pollution. Protecting biodiversity, or the variation among all living organisms, has become the rallying cry for scientists, governments, and local stakeholders around the world. Simultaneously, travel activity has increased dramatically in both volume of visitation and number of frequented destinations. These two trends have collided with the growth of tourism in protected areas such as wilderness reserves and national parks. Although tourism can bring much needed revenues and attention to these precious areas, there is also potential for increasing numbers of tourists to “love nature to death.” Over three decades ago, the uneasy nature of this marriage was raised in a thought-provoking paper entitled “Tourism and Environmental Conservation: Conflict, Coexistence or Symbiosis?”41 The answer to this question is the subject of continuing debates.

The World Conservation Union, or IUCN (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), is a global organization of government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), scientists, and experts from 181 countries. IUCN’s mission is “to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of nature is equitable and ecologically sustainable.”42 Through scientific efforts and policy suggestions, the IUCN works with other international organizations to support the establishment and management of protected areas. With respect to tourism, IUCN views the global industry as a tool for conservation and support of protected areas.

A protected area is defined as an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means.

The number of protected areas has grown steadily since the late 1800s. Europe currently has the largest number with over 43,000, whereas North America has more than 13,000, and Australia and New Zealand combined have nearly 9,000. An example of the economic importance of protected areas is demonstrated by Canada, where over 28 million people visit the country’s


## Protected Area Classifications

As a guide for management efforts, IUCN has classified protected areas as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category Ia:</td>
<td>Strict nature reserve/wilderness protection area managed mainly for science or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Nature</td>
<td>wilderness protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve/Wilderness</td>
<td>Protection Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Ib:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category II:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Category III:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Monument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category IV:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat/Species</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category V:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation/recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Landscape/Seascape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category VI:</td>
<td>Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural resources⁴³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Area</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

41 national parks each year. Its national parks and historic sites provide more than 38,000 jobs annually.⁴⁴

Tourism in protected areas increases awareness of the environment. However, as tourists become more sophisticated in their travel preferences and expectations, the challenge for protected parks to balance conservation with increased visitation becomes more difficult. As noted in IUCN’s *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas; Guidelines for Planning and Management,*

> It may appear that protected area managers have a relatively simple job in achieving the task of conservation and visitor use, but in fact it is not easy at all. Managers have the challenging responsibility of balancing the many

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⁴³IUCN, *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 1994).
Mini-Case: The Evolving Challenge of Sustainable Tourism in the Arctic Through SMART and Arctic Tourism Principles

With today’s growing emphasis on extensive tourism infrastructure and community-based experiences, it is surprising to find tourists interested in travel to destinations with no developed infrastructure and no welcoming hosts in the form of a permanent population. Yet, this is what high-latitude tourism to places in the Arctic has to offer increasing numbers of curious and adventurous tourists.

Due to the unusual ecological conditions of the Arctic, travelers to areas such as Franz Josef Land, the Nova Zembia islands, and the North Pole, can cause long-term environmental damage without being aware. Inadequate infrastructure, tour operators’ insufficient environmental knowledge, the concentration of tourism at limited sites, and even the use of inappropriate transport, such as tractors, all contribute to negative environmental impacts. Given high-latitude ecology, which includes very slow regeneration of plants, disruption of the flora can take years to recover.  

An important international response to this development is Sustainable Model for Arctic Tourism or SMART. SMART includes members from Finland, Sweden, Norway, United States, Russia, and Canada. The vision and mission for this international effort is to empower the tourism sector in the Arctic to continually innovate and use more sustainable practices. This will be achieved through assisting with the adoption of economically, environmentally, and culturally sustainable tourism practices. To achieve this, members are guided by the following principles:

- Support of local economies
- Operating in an environmentally friendly manner
- Supporting the conservation of local nature
- Respecting and involving local communities
- Ensuring quality and safety of operations
- Educating visitors about local nature and culture

Current SMART initiatives include distribution of competency-building modules to communities through face-to-face seminars and online training courses. Plans include further development of an Arctic-wide marketing and recognition program.

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45See “Sustainable Tourism Case Studies; Arctic Tourism” at http://www.biodiversity.ru/coastlearn/.
through development of a certification process and other resources for small and medium-size tourism businesses operating in the Arctic region.46

Another group active in promoting best practices in the Arctic is WWF International. Through facilitating input from local communities, governments, diverse tourism industry stakeholders, conservation groups, and scientific institutions, WWF International developed three user-friendly guides fostering sustainable Arctic tourism:

- The Ten Principles for Arctic Tourism
- Code of Conduct for Tour Operators in the Arctic
- Code of Conduct for Arctic Tourist

Each of these guides informs tourism stakeholders about the fragility of the Arctic environment and how to contribute to its conservation. Available at http://www.panda.org in several languages, these are another example of the effective linking of sustainable practices with locally based tourism through awareness and education.47

competing pressures thrust upon them. This challenge grows and becomes more complicated with increasing numbers of visitors, changes in patterns of visitor use, and the emergence of an ever more critical public demanding higher standards in conservation management.48

Although tourism in protected areas increases conservation awareness, generates revenues for management and support of local communities, and contributes to preserving indigenous cultures, it can also have negative impacts. Fragile ecosystems can be threatened by increased visitation as well as demand for crafts made from nonrenewable natural resources.49 Tourism in isolated areas of the Arctic is an example of the delicate nature of tourism and a surprisingly fragile ecosystem.

The uneasy marriage of conservation and tourism is addressed by numerous organizations and through a variety of partnerships. Organizations within the United Nations, such as the WTO (World Tourism Organization), UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and UNEP (United Nations Environmental Program), support environmental and cultural conservation through advocating sustainable tourism policies and implementing supportive programs. A particularly innovative program is the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development supported by all of these organizations. This voluntary program guides tour operators to support both natural and cultural resource preservation through their international business activities.50

46See “Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism; SMART Newsletter” at http://www.artictourism.net.
47See WWF International’s “Ten Principles for Arctic Tourism” at http://www.panda.org.
49Ibid., 8.
Partnerships enable creative funding approaches as well as foster greater program visibility. For example, Conservation International (CI), a global NGO, has joined *National Geographic Traveler* magazine to present the World Legacy Awards “honoring businesses, organizations and places that have made a significant contribution to promoting the principles of sustainable tourism including the conservation of nature, economic benefit to local peoples and respect for diversity."\(^5\)

The World Wildlife Fund International (WWF International) describes itself as “The Global Conservation Organization.” Founded in 1961, WWF International works with partners in more than 100 countries to define and implement specific conservation solutions on a project-by-project basis. WWF International is dedicated to conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring sustainable use of renewable natural resources and reducing pollution and wasteful consumption. Consequently, an important area of the organization’s activity is promoting responsible tourism. The Mediterranean is an example of WWF’s wide-reaching efforts. Projections suggest that in less than 20 years, tourists in the Mediterranean will grow from the current level of 220 million annually to 350 million. Through projects in Croatia, Libya, Tunisia, and Turkey, WWF is helping to minimize negative impacts through promoting responsible tourism and the repair of degraded coastal areas.\(^6\)

These organizations are just a few of the many involved at local, national, and regional levels in balancing tourism demands with environmental

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\(^6\)See WWF’s “Promoting Responsible Tourism” at http://www.panda.org/about_wwf.
conservation. The pressing importance of achieving such a balance is emphasized by the statement, “Tourism is like fire—you can cook your dinner on it or it can burn your house down.”\textsuperscript{53} The number of opportunities for programs aimed at balancing positive and negative impacts of tourism in protected areas continues to grow and will certainly continue to be high on the agenda of these not-for-profit organizations.

**Regional Tourism Development and Sustainability**

Tourism sustainability initiatives are often targeted to address local challenges. However, the expansion of tourism destinations and interconnectedness of the tourism industry contributes to the growing need for regional sustainability initiatives led by both public- and private-sector organizations. An example of a successful regional initiative is CAST, or the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism. Positioned as the environmental subsidiary of the Caribbean Hotel Association, CAST works with hotel operators across the region to implement best practices related to sustainable tourism. Programs include education and training in current standards such as Green Globe 21, Blue Flag, and Quality Tourism for the Caribbean. Through development and distribution of best practice tools such as manuals, videos, and guides, CAST publicizes successful programs and activities supporting sustainable tourism.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53}See UNEP’s “Physical Alterations and Destruction of Habitats (PADH): Tourism Threats” at http://padh.gpa.unep.org.

\textsuperscript{54}See http://www.cha-cast.com.
A regional, public-sector, sustainable tourism initiative, also in the Caribbean, is the Association of Caribbean States’ designation of “The Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean” (STZC) focused on balanced development contributing to sustainability. The zone, which stretches across the Caribbean, fosters sustainable development through policies, programs, and investment incentives. Whether organized by the private or public sector, such regional organizations promote sustainable development through education, partnerships, and programs linking diverse stakeholders involved with tourism. To achieve a sustainable industry, stakeholders need to be aware of the impacts of their actions. They must also continually strive to follow emerging best practices.

**Sustainable Tourism: Tomorrow’s Challenge Today**

How will we know when we have achieved sustainable tourism? The definition of sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” compels us to face tomorrow’s challenge today. The diversity and complexity of tourism in developed and developing countries means that there is no perfect or easy formula for achieving sustainable tourism. The increase in tourism globally has also fostered sharing experiences of successes and failures. The work of governments, NGOs, and communities in the planning and implementation of tourism has been supported by ongoing research and analysis. Such collaborations, as well as continuing innovation and monitoring, are integral to the goal of achieving sustainable tourism. This is a challenging goal and one that only a dynamic and ever-changing industry, such global tourism, can face and conquer.

**Interview**

Starting in 2002, the government of Montenegro, the local office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and local citizens groups worked together to develop a strategic framework for the development of sustainable tourism in the northern and central areas of Montenegro. Although mass tourism had been developed on Montenegro’s coast, tourism in the mountainous central and northern region had not been fully planned. Through the support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, stakeholders worked together to create an inspiring strategy for sustainable tourism development that will benefit locals struggling in this economically challenged region.

Ms. Bojanic, a member of UNDP’s staff was a key leader in this process. The following interview highlights the real-life process and steps involved with defining and establishing one of the world’s most forward-thinking strategies for sustainable tourism.

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tourism development. Through both public- and private-sector collaboration, as it is implemented, this strategy will certainly achieve the ultimate goal of a positive “triple bottom line.” The full strategy, titled “Strategic Framework for Development of Sustainable Tourism in Northern Montenegro and Central Montenegro; Roadmap for development of “wild beauty” can be found at http://www.undp.org/cpsd/countrylaunches/Montenegro-Tourism.pdf

**Question:** Why was the “Strategic Framework for Development of Sustainable Tourism in Northern and Central Montenegro” developed?

**Ms. Bojanic:** Let me first give you a bit of background and explain why developing the Strategic Framework was important.

In 1991 the Montenegrin Parliament adopted a declaration of Montenegro as an Ecological State. This commitment was included in Montenegro’s Constitution in 1992 in which Montenegro is defined as a “democratic, civic and ecological state” (Article 1 of the Montenegrin Constitution). The implementation of these aspirations was disrupted by a difficult decade marked by conflict in the region, economic crisis, and political instability. Nevertheless, environmental issues remained on the government agenda. These were: a commitment to sustainable development that was confirmed in 2001, when the government adopted a strategy document entitled “The Developmental Directions of Montenegro as an Ecological State” and adopted even more firmly in 2002 when Montenegro relaunched the concept of Montenegro as an ecological state at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. With this momentum, The National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) was founded in August 2002.

Financial support from the Rockefeller Brother Foundation enabled two missions to Montenegro in 2002, led by Dr. Rene Castro, former Costa Rican Minister of Environment and a Senior Advisor to UNDP.

At the request of President Djukanovic, then president of the Republic of Montenegro, Dr. Castro in his first mission in July 2002 focused on identifying crucial areas for turning the Ecological State vision into practice. Dr. Castro defined three areas of key importance: eco/sustainable-tourism, energy efficiency/renewable energy, and sustainable forestry. In his second mission, in December 2002, he led a team of experts, each covering one of the selected areas, and they together identified priority interventions in all three areas.

The subsequent Strategic Framework for Development of Sustainable Tourism in Northern and Central Montenegro was the project suggested as a priority by sustainable tourism expert Dr. Crist Inman, a member of Dr Castro’s team. Since funding was secured from Rockefeller Brothers Fund for this project, it was the first one to be implemented.

**Question:** Why was developing the “Strategic Framework for Development of Sustainable Tourism in Northern and Central Montenegro” so important?

**Ms. Bojanic:** To that date, most of the emphasis in tourism in Montenegro was placed on “heads in beds” mass tourism on the coast. The Tourism Master Plan for Montenegro, prepared by the German Investment and Development Company (DEG) in March 2001, also focused mainly on developing standard tourism on the
coast, and only briefly considered the potential for development of sustainable tourism in the inland areas.

Essentially, no plan in terms of tourism—standard or sustainable tourism that is—was developed for the central and northern areas of the country. Although these areas had tremendous potential in our opinion, these areas represented and still represent an underdeveloped part of Montenegro with serious depopulation and poverty issues. Some of the villages in the countryside are completely deserted, and there are twice as many people below the poverty line than in other areas of the country. Two National Parks—Biogradska Gora and Durmitor—clearly had potential but lacked a development strategy, strong management teams, and community participation . . . So, they were not able to build on the resources of the National Parks.

Inland forested areas have had little business over the past ten years. This was seen as an opportunity since there was less visual or other pollution related to tourism infrastructure. That represented an opportunity for Montenegro to follow the latest trends now and develop in a sustainable manner. This was of long-term strategic importance as well as of urgent current importance, as each choice made has an impact on the ability of Montenegro to maneuver in the future.

On the other hand, changing demand trends in tourism created a clear market opportunity as tourists showed—then and now—a tendency to move away from standard mass tourism to a more individual sophisticated and eco-oriented holiday experience. They have been demanding more active and interactive tourism, with greater respect for the sociocultural and ecological interests of the local communities, with higher standards of service, and with the ability to protect and regenerate the natural environment as well as to learn about local customs.

Question: The need seems as though it was quite clear . . . So, how was the “Strategic Framework” developed?

Ms. Bojanic: Simply, it was developed and adopted in a consultative process and that ensured buy-in and commitment especially of local stakeholders. In a period of 12 months, seven consultative workshops with relevant stakeholders were organized, including two presentations/debates at the university and two sessions of the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) at which the Strategic Framework was presented and discussed, approved and recommended to government for adoption. Also, numerous individual meetings were held with relevant ministries, agencies, donors, NGOs, and experts. In addition to this, the government of Montenegro, in its procedure of adopting the Strategic Framework, circulated the document to all relevant institutes, municipalities, domestic and international partners. During Strategic Framework project implementation UNDP established an ongoing coordination/cooperation with other donor agencies and initiated what has now become a standard practice—donor coordination meetings.

After being officially adopted by the government of Montenegro, the Strategic Framework was published in English and local language and distributed throughout...
Chapter 4 Sustainable Tourism Development: Tomorrow’s Challenge Today

INTERVIEW

the country and to our partners abroad. The UNDP office in Podgorica and the government of Montenegro organized a joint launch and public promotion of the Framework on December 15, 2004. At that event a follow-up pilot training and planning project called “Unleashing Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurship” was also launched. Through this UNDP-funded pilot initial resources were secured to start concrete activities on the implementation of some of the Framework recommendations. These were also an important step in building human capacity and tourism entrepreneurial skills of locals in the northern areas.

Question: In this process, what stakeholders were really involved and what were their roles?

Ms. Bojanic: Who was involved . . . more than 100 people. The principal author of the Strategic Framework was Dr. Crist Inman, internationally renowned expert, as an academic as well as a practitioner, in sustainable tourism. For the UNDP team there was Garret Tankosic-Kelly, head of the UNDP Liaison office in Podgorica and myself as project manager. We worked closely with the Minister of Tourism, Mr. Predrag Nenezic, and together we provided guidance and support to the whole process. The Council for Sustainable Development played an instrumental role as, in two of its sessions, it provided a forum for constructive discussion on the Framework and its Chairman, the Prime Minister, was very supportive from the start of the project.

And, it is important to emphasize that the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, that financially supported the project, stayed actively and directly involved throughout the implementation of the project, and that was very important for its success. As Mr. Stephen Heintz, President of Rockefeller Brothers Fund, said in the foreword, “The Strategic Framework is a product of an unusual collaboration between UNDP, government, citizen groups, and a private foundation.”

Question: What do you feel were the greatest challenges and key turning points in getting the Strategic Framework adopted by the various stakeholders?

Ms. Bojanic: The first challenge was to overcome initial skepticism about the tourism potential of the North and Center for tourism development since it was mainly seen as an addition to coastal tourism not as an attraction on its own.

The second challenge was to eliminate doubts about whether yet “another strategic document” was needed in the light of the fact that when we started discussion about this project in December 2002, the “Tourism Master Plan for Montenegro” was already developed with the assistance of DEG and adopted by the government.

As with all strategic documents, the third challenge was “fine-tuning” the document and incorporating the comments received in the consultative process and making a document which is general enough to be strategic and reflect issues of concern to all relevant stakeholders, but still specific/concrete enough so that it is “actionable” and that its implementation could be monitored.

The flexibility of all parties was important. Productive discussions at the Council for Sustainable Development sessions and throughout the consultative process as well
as buy-in and commitment—especially of local stakeholders—led to overcoming the challenges and the adoption of the Strategic Framework.

**Question:** What is your vision for Montenegro’s tourism?

**Ms. Bojanic:** My vision for Montenegro’s tourism corresponds with the vision defined in the Strategic Framework. I would like to see Montenegro get back on the world tourism map in a new light—as a tourism destination that can provide travelers with the most dynamic mix of different and unique experiences—from sailing on Ada Bojana to rafting on the Tara River—from climbing the stairs above the old town of Kotor to have a spectacular view of the UNESCO cultural world heritage site and Kotor bay to hiking and mountain climbing around Durmitor, or Bjelasica and from swimming in the sea to swimming in the Black, Biogradsko, or Skadar lakes.

Montenegro has been really fortunate to have so many natural and cultural attractions concentrated in such a small space. The tourism offer, especially its packaging and promotion, should reflect and take full advantage of that. A condition for that is that the private sector, entrepreneurs and public officials commit to preserve the natural and cultural heritage and pass it on in an undiminished form to other generations. Focus needs to be shifted from quantity to quality and diversity, from counting tourists and the nights they spend in Montenegro. Instead, we need to count how much of visitor expenditures stays in the country. . . and how many Montenegrins do not leave their hometowns, especially in the North, because they can provide high-quality tourism-related services to upscale tourists.

**Question:** What is the future for Montenegro’s tourism based on the Framework and its formal adoption?

**Ms. Bojanic:** As indicated in the Framework, the biggest challenge for Montenegro—and especially the Northern part of the country as an impoverished region and developing tourism destination, which is slowly getting back on the map of European travelers—is not to equate the philosophy of development with expansion. Rocky Mountain Institute’s Michael Kinsley takes pains to differentiate between economic growth versus economic development. The trouble is, the word “growth” has two fundamentally different meanings—both “expansion” and “development.” When a community is poor and when people are leaving and unemployment is high, the usual response is to call for economic development—any economic development. That creates the atmosphere where “everything goes”—and any investment is good. In the case of tourism this can lead to the devastation of some of the best tourism attractions. You have a situation that local government officials come under intense pressure to do something—residents want to see action—and very often this translates into a single, cure-all strategy. This business recruitment, which, when pursued indiscriminately, can be termed smokestack-chasing. It takes the form of indiscriminate courting of outside corporations—a risky, high-stakes game that has left many a small town in the lurch or at the mercy of one or a couple of foreign investors and corporations.

The focus on quantity—or increasing the number of beds—more than on quality—or the building of a better, diversified tourism product—has not allowed Montenegro
to fully capitalize on its natural resources, cultural, and historical heritage and has led to attracting lower-end clientele. This is a continuing challenge for us.

We are facing other big challenges. These include building human resources, changing the mind-set and attitude of local people towards the environment, building the capacity of relevant public institutions such as the National Parks. . .and, attracting quality (foreign) investors while avoiding a situations in which one or a couple of investors control the whole town or even an entire region.

In this context, I hope we will learn from the experiences of other countries and not make the same mistakes but apply new, more environmentally sensible and sustainable development models. I also hope that our national and local governments will build further on the Strategic Framework and that it can be a useful guide for other countries in the future.

INTERVIEW

Tourism is highly dependent on the world’s natural and cultural resources. As these resources are in greater demand, achieving sustainable tourism has become an important priority.

Measuring tourism impacts over time is a crucial factor in the goal to achieve sustainability. Tourism area life cycles help stakeholders to understand and plan sustainable tourism development.

International organizations, such as the World Tourism Organization and Green Globe, have developed important guidelines for monitoring and measuring tourism impacts and sustainable practices.

Community-based tourism development aims to balance the needs of tourists and locals to achieve a “triple bottom line” of positive economic, environmental, and cultural impacts.

Tourism operators can work with conservation programs to protect precious environmental assets integral to tourism.

The diversity of tourism destinations and their complex economic, cultural, and environmental elements demands holistic and creative development approaches in the quest to achieve a sustainable tourism industry.

Summary

Tourism is highly dependent on the world’s natural and cultural resources. As these resources are in greater demand, achieving sustainable tourism has become an important priority.

Measuring tourism impacts over time is a crucial factor in the goal to achieve sustainability. Tourism area life cycles help stakeholders to understand and plan sustainable tourism development.

International organizations, such as the World Tourism Organization and Green Globe, have developed important guidelines for monitoring and measuring tourism impacts and sustainable practices.

Community-based tourism development aims to balance the needs of tourists and locals to achieve a “triple bottom line” of positive economic, environmental, and cultural impacts.

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The diversity of tourism destinations and their complex economic, cultural, and environmental elements demands holistic and creative development approaches in the quest to achieve a sustainable tourism industry.

Discussion Questions

1. What is sustainable tourism?
2. Give an example of a local, regional, and international organization involved with sustainable tourism development.
4. State two sustainable tourism indicators and examples of how these are measured.
5. What are the stages in Butler’s tourism area life cycle?
6. What is the limits of acceptable change (LAC) framework? How is it used?
7. How does GREEN GLOBE 21 support sustainable tourism?
8. State three reasons why residents are motivated to develop community-based tourism.
9. How does the “Tragedy of the Commons” apply to tourism? Give a tourism example to explain your answer.
10. What is carrying capacity? Give an example for a destination that you have recently visited.

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5. What are the stages in Butler’s tourism area life cycle?
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7. How does GREEN GLOBE 21 support sustainable tourism?
8. State three reasons why residents are motivated to develop community-based tourism.
9. How does the “Tragedy of the Commons” apply to tourism? Give a tourism example to explain your answer.
10. What is carrying capacity? Give an example for a destination that you have recently visited.

11. Is it more difficult to define tourism carrying capacity for a resort, historic town, or national park? Why?
12. Consider your hometown’s tourism. What aspects are sustainable? Which are not sustainable?
13. Why is the relationship of conservation and tourism considered an “uneasy marriage”? Is it possible to “love nature to death”?
14. Compare two public- and two private-sector organizations assisting to achieve sustainable tourism. Consider their target groups and methods for supporting sustainable tourism. How are they similar? How are they different?

**Useful Web Sites**

Conservation International  
www.conservation.org

GREEN GLOBE 21  
www.greenglobe21.com

Responsible Travel  
www.responsibletravel.com

The Mountain Institute  
www.mountain.org

Tourism Concern  
www.tourismconcern.org.uk

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
www.undp.org

United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)  
www.uneptie.org/tourism

Visit Montenegro/Ministry of Tourism  
www.visit-montenegro.com/ministry-tourism

WWF International  
www.panda.org

The World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) (IUCN)  
www.iucn.org

World Tourism Organization  
www.world-tourism.org