

Toolkit for Sustainable Tourism in Latin America

For Tour Operators



Toolkit for Sustainable Tourism in Latin America

For Tour Operators

April 2005 / Actualized April 2007

CREM BV and Rainforest Alliance

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

San José, Costa Rica



CREM BV
Spuistraat 104d
1012 VA Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Tel.: +31 (0)20-627 4969
Fax: +31 (0)20-626 6539
E-mail: office@crem.nl
Website: www.crem.nl



Rainforest Alliance
665 Broadway, Suite 500
New York, NY 10012 USA
Tel.: +1 (212) 677-1900
Fax: +1 (212) 677-2187
E-mail: canopy@ra.org
Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org

Credits

Development:

CREM BV, in co-operation with Rainforest Alliance

Graphic design:

Diseño Editorial S. A.
www.kikeytetey.com

Technical edition and adaptation:

Erick Vargas

Technical Review:

Alejandrina Acuña

Philologist:

Sonya Kozicki-Jones

Financed by:

Inter-American Development Bank

Fundecooperación

Kit

Content

INTRODUCTION

How to use this toolkit?.....8

1. **Background: The need for a sustainable tourism industry**9
 - Tourism: an industry without smokestacks?9
 - Toolkit objective.....9
 - Target audience 10
 - Partnerships with local stakeholders 10
2. **Sustainability of tourism** 11
 - What is sustainability? 11
 - Sustainable tourism 11
3. **Toolkit outline and main contents** 13

MODULE 1:

Improve the sustainability

performance of tour operators..... 18

1. Sustainable products and services 19
2. Six steps toward sustainable products and services..... 21

Step 1:

Choose your approach to sustainability 23

1. How can sustainability be approached? 23
2. Develop a profile of the type of clientele you want to focus on 23
3. Decide on an approach to sustainability..... 24
4. Draft mission and vision statements 26
5. Adopt product development as a component of your sustainability strategy 26

Step 2:

Put together your Sustainability Plan 28

1. Identify products and services included in your package tours 28
2. Identify key sustainability issues 29
3. Draft general sustainability general goals 32
4. Identify possible solutions 33
5. Put together a sustainability plan..... 34
6. Prepare for the implementation of the Sustainability Plan 38

Step 3:

Seek collaboration with local stakeholders	40
1. Identify local stakeholders	40
2. Start the sustainability dialogue	41

Step 4:

Implement the Sustainability Plan	44
1. Carry out plan implementation.....	44
2. Monitor development of the Plan.....	45

Step 5:

Promote your sustainable package tour	46
1. Use the appropriate communication channels ...	46
2. Use cross-selling	47

Step 6:

Evaluate and decide on follow-up	49
1. Evaluate the implementation of the sustainability plan	49
2. Share the results	50
3. Decide about follow-up	50

MODULE 2:

Fact Sheets for sustainability of tourism products and services	54
--	----

1. Introduction	55
2. Classification of tourism products and fact sheets	56

(sheet 1)

High mountains, volcanoes, caves, and other geographical and geological features	61
---	----

Planet Issues	65
Profit Issues.....	69
Certification.....	70
Guidelines and codes of conduct.....	71
Examples.....	71

(sheet 2)

Lakes, rivers, and other bodies of freshwater	73
--	----

People Issues	74
Planet Issues	78
Profit Issues.....	81
Certification.....	82
Guidelines and codes of conduct.....	82
Examples.....	83

(sheet 3)

Forests and protected nature areas 84

People Issues 85

Planet Issues 88

Profit Issues..... 92

Certification 93

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 94

Examples..... 95

(sheet 4)

Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas 96

People Issues 98

Planet Issues 102

Profit Issues..... 106

Certification 108

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 108

Examples..... 109

(sheet 5)

Accommodations 112

People Issues 113

Planet Issues 117

Profit Issues..... 122

Certification 124

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 125

(sheet 6)

Transport 128

People Issues 129

Planet Issues 130

Profit Issues..... 131

Certification 132

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 132

Examples..... 132

(sheet 7)

Marine and beach-based activities without engine use 133

People Issues 134

Planet Issues 138

Profit Issues..... 141

Certification 142

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 143

Examples..... 144

(sheet 8)

Marine and coastal-based activities with engine use 145

People Issues 146

Planet Issues 149

Profit Issues..... 152

Certification 153

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 154

Examples..... 155

(sheet 9)

Diving and snorkelling 156

People Issues 157

Planet Issues 158

Profit Issues..... 160

Certification 161

Guidelines and codes of conduct..... 161

Examples..... 161

MODULE 3:

Sustainability Directory 164

Guidelines, Codes of Conduct..... 166

Programmes for compensation of CO₂ emissions .. 170

Certification labels for sustainable tourism 171

Names and addresses of organisations..... 175

Sources of information 181

Accommodations 181

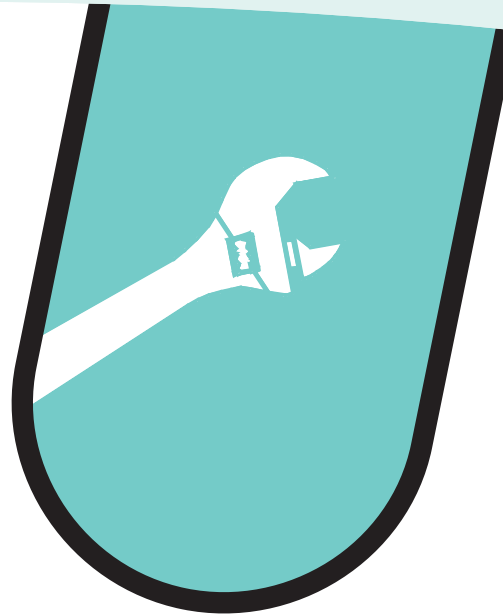
Sustainability labels 181

Governments and sustainable tourism 182

Tour operators and sustainability 182

Websites..... 183

INTRODUCTION



How to use this toolkit?

How to use this toolkit?





1. **Background: The need for a sustainable tourism industry**

Tourism: an industry without smokestacks?

Tourism has been called “the industry without smokestacks,” which refers to the absence of environmental repercussions. Nevertheless, it is known today that tourism, like any other human activity, can have negative impacts on natural and cultural resources as well as on the local people in destinations. One main reason why tourism has often been carried out in unsustainable ways is because there was little knowledge about its real social, cultural and environmental impacts. Fortunately, all around the world there is now growing concern about the impacts of tourism on the sustainability of our planet.

In response to this, the tourist sector is increasingly assuming its responsibility, developing initiatives to reduce its negative effects.

Sustainable tourism is NOT, therefore, a sector of tourism. It is more of a framework for all types of tourism that are intended to work sustainably: ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure, agrotourism, sun-beach-sea, incentives and others, as well as

for all products and services involved: lodging, transportation, tour operations, activities, food, souvenirs, and others. The development of a sustainable tourism sector is important for a number of reasons:

- Tour operators are becoming more interested in sustainable tourist products and services.
- The assets of the tourist industry are the environmental and cultural values of the destination, such as the presence of a large local biodiversity, a clean environment, beautiful landscapes and authentic cultures. It is therefore crucial that those assets be managed sustainably.
- Taking into account the interests of local people may be a precondition for a safe and attractive tourism destination.
- Sustainable tourism can also present opportunities to generate positive effects for the destination by contributing to the conservation of culture and nature and the development of the local economy.

Toolkit objective

The purpose of this toolkit is to support tour operators working in Latin America, which aim to improve their sustainability by developing package tours that combine sustainable products

and services. The toolkit provides a background for the identification of sustainability issues. Moreover, this toolkit recommends actions for dealing with them and for overcoming problems associated with them. It also offers marketing recommendations to position those packages in the market. It also provides inspirational examples, sources of information, and contacts.

Target audience

This Toolkit is intended for use by tour operators working with Latin American destinations, who aim to improve their sustainability performance. They may work with local suppliers such as private enterprises, family or community owned businesses, and cultural/environmental NGOs offering tourism products and services.

Suppliers' products and services may involve accommodations, food, transportation, tour activities, souvenirs, and others. They may be working in different tourism sectors, such as ecotourism, agrotourism, sun-beach-sea, cultural tourism, adventure and sports, leisure, health, or others.

Partnerships with local stakeholders

For strategic purposes, an important objective of this toolkit is to encourage the establishment of partnerships between tour operators and Latin American providers of tourist products and services.





2. Sustainability of tourism

What is sustainability?

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development, created by the United Nations, defined “sustainable development” as:

“that which meets the needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs.”

This concept became popular through the “World Summit on Environment and Development”, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. In 2002, the “World Summit on Sustainable Development” that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, defined economy, environment, and society as being the three principles for sustainability. The term “sustainable” has been applied to many human activities, including tourism.

Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism can be defined as that which:

“fulfils social, cultural, ecological and economic compatibility criteria. In the long-term, with regard to current and future generations, sustainable tourism is ethically and socially equitable, culturally compatible, ecologically viable and economically appropriate and productive” (Adapted from: NGO Forum for Environment and Development).

Another definition states that:

“sustainable tourism development meets the needs of 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” (Adapted from: World Tourism Organisation).

Sustainable tourism, therefore, involves the three principles of sustainability:

Society: Sustainable tourism should allow friendly and equitable interactions between visitors and the local people, in a context of mutual understanding and respect; it should provide high quality experiences and safety for tourists; it should offer opportunities to local people to improve their quality of life, as well as respect their rights, including those related to labor. Moreover, sustainable tourism should preserve and enhance the cultural values of the destination, including its history, architecture, landscape, traditions, technologies, gastronomy, language, and others. For practical purposes, in the context of this toolkit, the social aspect will be referred to as **“People.”**

Environment: Sustainable tourism must collaborate in the conservation and enhancement of the environment at the destination; thus, tourism activities, products, services and infrastructure must all allow the natural processes and cycles that take place within the ecosystems and on the planet as a

whole to be maintained. Sustainable tourism must also protect biodiversity and ensure that it can be responsibly enjoyed. In the context of this toolkit, the environmental aspect will be referred to as **“Planet.”**

Economy: Sustainable tourism must be profitable. Entrepreneurs won't be interested in sustainability if their business and activities are not successful. Tourism must generate acceptable levels of economic profitability for the tourism industry as a whole, as well as for local residents. In the context of this toolkit, the economic aspect will be referred to as **“Profit.”**

For a stakeholder to become more sustainable, all three aspects need to be given due attention; for example, a company might contribute to nature conservation (Planet) but neglect the effects of tourism on the local economy (Profit) or the impacts on the local culture (People). It is therefore important to assess the sustainability of a tourism activity in terms of the three different aspects.



3. Toolkit outline and main contents

The objective of the Toolkit is to provide practical measures, suggestions, examples and sources of information for the development of sustainable tourism. The Toolkit is composed of three main modules, as indicated by the schematic outline below.

Figure 1: schematic outline toolkit



Module one: “Improving the sustainability performance of tour operators offering package tours to Latin America”

This first module focuses on internal management procedures that managers can follow to develop and implement more sustainable tourism products and services. This methodology aims at enabling businesses to become more sustainable by working on the sustainability of all their products and services. Therefore, the tourism product is taken here as a point of departure to work for the sustainability of the entire company. The methodology is based on a cycle of six steps. Once sustainability issues have been identified and prioritized, the stakeholder can select measures to make the product more sustainable. The six steps include:

- Step 1:** Choose your approach to sustainability
- Step 2:** Put together your sustainability plan
- Step 3:** Establish strategic partnerships
- Step 4:** Implement and monitor your sustainability plan
- Step 5:** Market your sustainable tourism package
- Step 6:** Evaluate and decide on follow-up

Module two: “Sustainability of tourism products and services: Issues and suggested actions”

In the process of making ecotourism package tours sustainable, the tour operator may require more information on specific topics. The second module contains fact sheets with information about nine categories of tourism products and services, depending on the geographic, natural or cultural surroundings where they take place.

It is important to mention that, in tourism, a product is the result of adding up activities (e. g. hiking, bird watching) and services (e. g. transportation, box lunch, guiding), with the support of infrastructure (e. g. visitors’ centers, trails), and equipment (e. g. exhibits, binoculars), all of which allow the enjoyment of natural or cultural attractions (e. g. forest, birds). Even though all these components are included in the fact sheets, there is a special emphasis on tourism activities, since they permit rapid identification of sustainability issues that affect the performance of an organization or enterprise as a whole. The nine product categories are:

- Fact sheet 1:** Mountains, volcanoes, caves and other geographical and geological features
- Fact sheet 2:** Lakes, rivers and other bodies of fresh water
- Fact sheet 3:** Forests and nature protected areas
- Fact sheet 4:** Cities, villages and surrounding rural areas

- Fact sheet 5:** Accommodations
- Fact sheet 6:** Transportation
- Fact sheet 7:** Marine and beach environments (no engine use)
- Fact sheet 8:** Marine- and coastal waters environments (with engine)
- Fact sheet 9:** Diving and snorkelling

Since the fact sheets are designed to be read independently, the reader will notice that some information in separate sheets is similar. The basic outline of every fact sheet is shown below.





Figure 2: schematic outline of one fact sheet



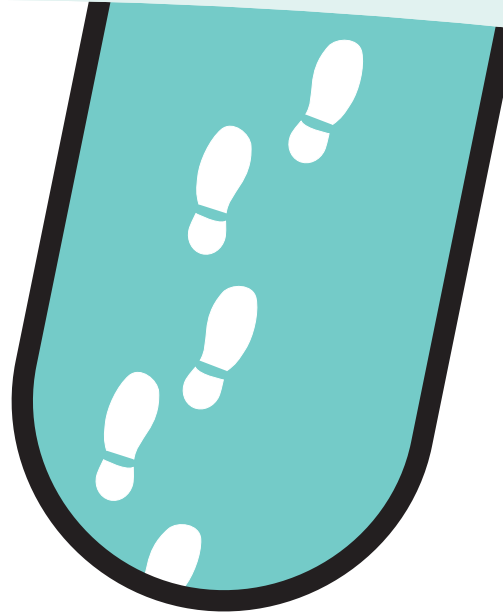
Module three: Latin America Sustainability Directory

The third module provides an overview and additional information of all guidelines, certification labels, names of organizations etc. that have been mentioned in Modules 1 and 2. Module 3 is divided into the following sections:

1. Guidelines, Codes of Conduct and Certification labels for sustainable tourism in Latin America. Overview and brief information of all guidelines, Codes of Conduct, certification labels etc. relevant to sustainable tourism in Latin America that have been mentioned in Module 2 (Fact Sheets) of the Toolkit
2. Names and addresses of organisations. Contact details of organisations working in the area of sustainable tourism.
3. Sources for more information. Further reading: selection of guides, brochures and books on sustainable tourism, containing practical information on measures and best practices.
4. Index.



MODULE 1:



**Improve the sustainability
performance of tour
operators**

Improve the sustainability performance of tour operators



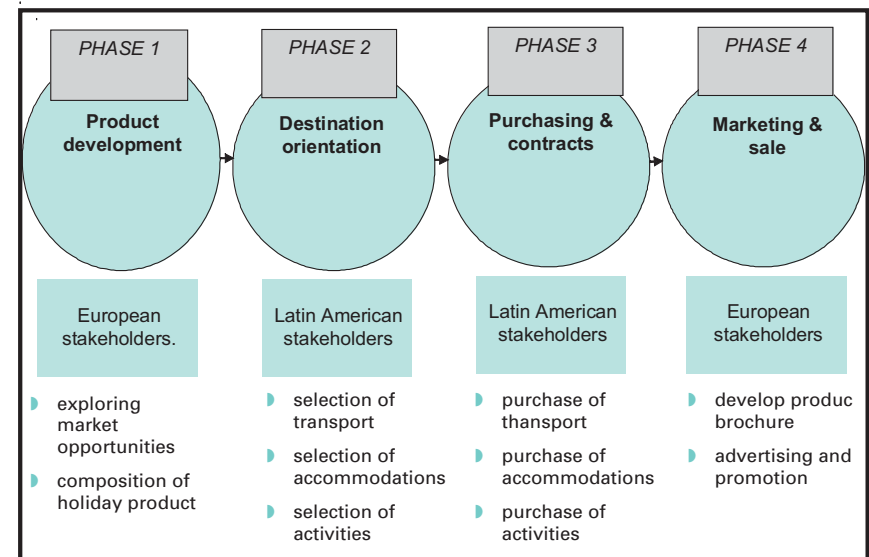
1. Sustainable products and services

Tourism packages provided by tour operators are composed of services and products. Sustainable tourism can relate to tangible tourist products, such as locally made food and drinks or handicrafts, clothes and other souvenirs. Sustainable tourism may also relate to intangible services, such as overnight stays, excursions to nature or cultural destinations and artistic performances. In this context, one way to improve your company's sustainability performance is by adopting the product as the point of departure. Ask yourself: "how can I enhance the sustainability performance of my products?" Please bear in mind that the objective of this approach is to control and reduce the negative environmental and social effects caused by tourism products and services.

In tourism, a product is the result of adding up activities (e. g. hiking, bird watching) and services (e. g. transportation, box lunch, guiding), with the support of infrastructure (e. g. visitor centers, trails), and equipment (e. g. exhibits, binoculars), all of which allow the enjoyment of natural or cultural attractions (e. g. forest, birds).

Tourism packages provided to customers by tour operators are composed of a chain of products and services for the commercialization of a destination. For each step in these product chains, different stakeholders are involved, including local agencies, private companies, family-owned enterprises, individual tour guides, artisans, local organizations and cooperatives, NGOs managing nature areas, and others. The following figure presents the phases of development of the final tourist product.

Figure: Product chain of the package tour to Latin America



Notice that the activities of phases 1 and 4 take place at the tour operator's office in Europe. The tour operator hires suppliers for office supplies, stationery, promotion materials, energy, and others. The stakeholders involved in these activities are based in the country of the tour operator's office in Europe. Sustainability issues relating to Phase 1 and Phase 4 can be addressed at the office(s) of the tour operator abroad and, if necessary, in collaboration with foreign stakeholders. For example, if the tour operator wants to reduce the amount of paper used for promotion material (Phase 4), this can be coordinated from the tour operator's office in Europe, for example within the framework of an environmental management system. These activities, however, are not the central point of attention in this guide.

On the other hand, the activities of Phases 2 and 3 are more related to operations at the travel destination, in this case Latin America. The tour operator selects and purchases the services of local suppliers or hires a local agency that acts as an intermediate. Suppliers of the package tour are, for example, managers of accommodations, transport organizations, owners of excursion agencies, and all kinds of local tourism entrepreneurs. Sustainability issues relating to Phases 2 and 3 cannot be addressed by the tour operator alone, but often require collaboration with local stakeholders.



2. Six steps toward sustainable products and services

This first module proposes a methodology that you, as a tour operator, can follow for the development of your sustainable tourism products and services in Latin America. The methodology consists of six steps that focus on the sustainability issues related to Phases 2 and 3 of the product development chain, that is, in Latin American destinations. This methodology encourages operators to seek collaboration with local stakeholders for the implementation of product improvement at the holiday destination. Tour operators and stakeholders will thus create a common understanding of sustainability and pave the way for a more sustainable tourist sector.

This methodology is based on a cycle of repetitive steps, which are described below. Once you have identified and prioritised sustainability issues, you can select measures to make your packages more sustainable. The methodology will relate to the actions and decisions of tour operators in the process of developing tourism packages, for example:

- Product Development: choice of destination and target groups, services included (flight, accommodations, other);
- Supply Chain Management: procedures for selection and contracting of service providers;
- Activities at the Destination: procedures for collaboration with local partner organisations, selection and planning of activities / projects carried out at the destination, etc.;
- Customer Relations: actions focussing on customers with regard to among other things awareness-raising about sustainability and marketing of sustainable package tours, among other things.

Step 1: Choose your approach to sustainability

The first step consists in deciding on how the organization is going to approach “sustainability,” either by operating in a niche market for sustainable tourism or by incorporating sustainability as one of the aspects of quality. Mission and vision statements will also be drafted in this step to reflect the organization’s commitment to sustainability. Here, the tourist product will be adopted as the point of departure to improve the company’s sustainability performance at the destination.

Step 2: Put together your sustainability plan

With this step, tour operators will gain insight into the sustainability problems related to existing or new tourism products and services included in their packages. This information will then allow mitigating measures to be identified. Finally, the entire sustainability plan will be put together.

Step 3: Seek collaboration with local stakeholders

This step aims to identify local stakeholders in the tourist sector interested in collaboration to address the sustainability issues identified and jointly implement mitigating measures. Strategic partnerships can be established between tour operators and Latin American providers of tourist products and services who are committed to sustainability. Due to the growing interest of tour operators in sustainable products and services, an important objective of this module is establishing partnerships between tour operators and Latin American providers.

Step 4: Implement and monitor your sustainability plan

The objective of Step 4 is to carry out the implementation of the sustainability plan and to monitor its development.

Step 5: Promote your sustainable tourism packages to Latin American destinations

Step 5 provides several suggestions on how to successfully promote the tour operator’s tour packages and on how to communicate with customers about sustainability.

Step 6: Evaluate and decide on follow-up

The objective of Step 6 is to review the tour operators’ sustainability performance, and based on the achievement of the plan’s specific objectives, to share the results with personnel, customers, the media and local stakeholders, as well as to decide on further improvement.

Figure 3: schematic overview of the six steps



Step 1:

Choose your approach to sustainability

The objectives of Step 1 are to decide on an approach to improve your organization's sustainability performance, to draft mission and vision statements to reflect your commitment to sustainability, and to adopt product development as a component of the corporate sustainability strategy.

1. How can sustainability be approached?

The first step is to decide on how your company will approach sustainability:

Is it your company's objective to operate in a niche market for sustainable tourism and to place special emphasis on the sustainable character of your services in advertisements? Or would you prefer not to emphasize the sustainability performance of your company, but rather to communicate about sustainability as one of the aspects of quality?

This section will provide you with a general framework for product development (Step 1), for your sustainability plan (Step 2) and your marketing strategy (Step 5). Your commitment to sustainability should be incorporated in your company's mission and vision statements.

2. Develop a profile of the type of clientele you want to focus on

Start by devising a profile of the type of clientele you want to focus on. You might already have information on the characteristics and buying habits of your customers. Also, gather information from national tourism authorities about visitor profiles for your destinations in Latin America. Request reports with figures of surveys carried out among visitors, etc., which are usually freely available. The results of these surveys may be a useful basis for your own customer profile, your choice of

a sustainability approach, and your marketing strategy. Some market segments might be interested in sustainable products; others may prefer to view sustainability as one of the qualities of the product.

An example of this is the study on Commercialization Chain and Market Opportunities for Eco and Sustainable Tourism prepared by the Sustainable Tourism Division of the Rainforest Alliance PROARCA/APM project. More information about this study can be obtained at Rainforest Alliance (www.rainforestalliance.org)

3. *Decide on an approach to sustainability*

You can either choose to operate in a niche market for sustainable tourism, or to integrate sustainability as part of overall product quality. That depends partly on the profile of the type of customer you want to focus on, as well as on how you want to be perceived by your customers. Each of these choices is described below:

- **First choice:**

- **Operate in a niche market for sustainable tourism**

- One way to handle your tour packages is to place great emphasis on their sustainability, thus creating a niche market for sustainable tourism. The sustainable character of your offer is promoted explicitly as a distinguishing factor.

If you choose this framework, the following suggestions may be of help:

- **‘The proof of the pudding is in the eating’**

- Your customers will choose your product because they are sensitive towards sustainability issues related to travelling. Therefore, when communicating about sustainability, be as specific as possible about the activities that your company has carried out. Describe concrete examples, projects, and initiatives in order to reflect your company’s view on sustainability.

- **Be transparent**

- Use figures when communicating about the sustainability initiatives of your company, e.g. the financial contribution per customer that is donated to a certain project per customer. When describing the projects, focus on the results, and try to express these in figures and appealing indicators.

- **Provide additional information on sustainability upon request**

- Even though you are promoting the sustainable character of your product, be prepared for requests for more information. Have information ready in leaflets or on the corporate website for customers who would like to know more.

Example: Creating a niche market

Discovery Initiatives has created its own niche market with a special kind of product: 'discovery holidays.' During these holidays, customers can get involved as field assistants in specific research projects. For example, ANAI (Talamanca, CR) promotes volunteer programs in which tourists can work for a conservation program by protecting turtles.

■ **Second choice:**

Integrate sustainability as part of overall product quality

Instead of creating a niche market, you may prefer to treat 'sustainability' as one of several aspects that jointly determine the overall quality of your products and services. If this is the case, it is not necessary to emphasize sustainability as a distinguishing factor, but rather include it in combination with other quality aspects (e.g. reliability of the services provided, guaranteed levels of comfort, and others). You could take the following marketing suggestions into account:

■ **Quality comes first**

Address your customer's needs and wishes first. The priority of any tourist product or service, whether

sustainable or not, should be to satisfy customer demands. The sustainability aspect is a 'plus'. In other words, sustainability is an addition to the product, but not its core (at least, it is not presented as such).

■ **Promote 'positive experiences,' not sustainability**

Only a small number of tourists will place a strong emphasis on sustainability issues. Most tourists are primarily concerned with their own well-being and that of their travel partners. They focus on having a wonderful holiday, and they care about seeing beautiful scenery and splendid wilderness areas, or having interesting cultural experiences. It is recommended that these 'positive experiences' be referred to in everyday language, rather than by using the abstract concept of 'sustainability.'

■ **Provide information on sustainability when required**

Have information ready for customers who are interested in sustainability issues and request for information. Detailed information that is not prominently presented in marketing campaigns and brochures can be made available on the website or in leaflets which are available upon request.

Example: Creating a niche market

Hotelplan, a Swiss tour operator, has established an Eco-fund to finance its activities in the field of tourism and the environment. For each customer of Hotelplan's 'Holidays at the Seaside' package (packages which represent 25% of total sales), the tour operator reserved five Swiss francs for the Eco-fund. In 2002, an amount of 750,000 US\$ was raised in this way. The fund has financed several activities, for example, environmental management measures implemented by Hotelplan partners, several projects on sustainable tourism, and emergency aid in case of natural disasters. The Eco-fund initiative is not specifically described in product brochures. However, the corporate Annual Environmental Report is available on the website for customers (or other stakeholders) who are interested in Hotelplan's environmental policy.

SINAC also drafted the following Vision Statement:

"(SINAC) efficiently manages tourist products within wild protected areas for the enjoyment of their features by different sectors of society, in a framework of sustainability and conservation, as a complement to the local and national tourism offer, and in a way that results profitable for all stakeholders involved".

Other examples of mission statements can be found at:
www.horizontes.com/our_story (a Costa Rican ecotourism operator)
www.fundelfin-costa-rica.org/FUNDELFINmission.htm
 (of the Delfin Amor Eco lodge)

4. Draft mission and vision statements

Examples of mission and vision statements for sustainable tourism are the ones drafted by Costa Rica's National System of Conservation Areas, SINAC. Its Mission Statement for its Sustainable Tourism Program reads as follows:

"Offer basic conditions for the use and enjoyment -by present and future generations- of natural and cultural tourist products within wild protected areas, according to their conservation goals, in such a way that sustainable tourism contributes to SINAC's financial stability, integrates local communities as beneficiaries, and allows different stakeholders of society to derive environmental, social, economic and spiritual benefits."

5. Adopt product development as a component of your sustainability strategy

Once you have defined your company's sustainability approach, and have drafted your mission and vision statements, you should make a formal decision to take the product as point of departure to improve your company's sustainability performance. Please keep in mind that the objective of this approach is to control and reduce the negative environmental and social effects caused by your product.

Example: taking the product as point of departure to enhance corporate sustainability performance

ANVR is the umbrella organisation for tour operators in the Netherlands. ANVR has developed a programme for the implementation of 'product environmental management' by Dutch tour operators. ANVR has obliged every Dutch tour operator to meet four specific requirements in order to obtain the Basic Certificate. The requirements are more or less specific, e.g.:

- Formal adoption of 'product environmental management' with a policy declaration signed by the board;
- Implementation of (at least) five measures listed in the programme to improve the environmental performance of the product.



Actions Step 1: Choose your approach to sustainability.

- ▶ *Develop a profile of the type of customer you focus on.*
- ▶ *Define your company's sustainability approach.*
- ▶ *Draft your mission and vision statements as a commitment to sustainability.*
- ▶ *Make a formal decision to adopt the product as point of departure to improve your company's sustainability performance.*

Step 2:

Put together your Sustainability Plan

The objective of Step 2 is to gain into the sustainability problems related to tourism in Latin America and then identify mitigating measures. Then you can put together a sustainability plan.

1. *Identify products and services included in your package tours*

You have adopted product development as a component of your sustainability strategy. One of the first steps toward improving the sustainability performance of your product is to identify all elements which comprise the package tour is composed, from start to finish. Those elements might include transportation, accommodations and meals and recreational activities. You should include an overview of the suppliers and other parties involved, such as managers of accommodations, transport organisations, owners of excursion agencies and all kinds of local tourism entrepreneurs.

A practical example

A tour operator sending tourists to Latin America wants to improve his or her company's sustainability performance. S/he will first need to identify all products and services included in the company's packages, as well as specific suppliers, and then record the findings as follows:

Tour operator

Elements composing tour package and overview of suppliers

Elements composing the package	Products and services	Overview of suppliers
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Air transportation to Latin America ▶ Transportation from/to the city ▶ Others... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ International airline ▶ Tour operator in the country
Accommodations and meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two-night lodging ▶ Three breakfasts ▶ Three lunches ▶ Two dinners ▶ Others... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lodge in the countryside
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hiking tour in the forest ▶ Wildlife watching ▶ Others... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ National park ▶ Tour operator in the country ▶ Tour guide

2. Identify key sustainability issues

Once you identify all products and services included in your packages, as well as specific suppliers, you need to gain insight into the sustainability problems related to them. Your packages' products and services may have social, economic, and environmental impacts, so in order for you to operate in a more sustainable way, you have to identify those sustainability issues or impacts.

Sustainability issues related to products are very different from those related to services. For example, an important sustainability issue related to 'products' are those souvenirs manufactured from endangered species placed on the CITES list (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). An example of an important sustainability issue related to 'services' is the physical exploitation of children, women and immigrants.



Issues are not restricted to the final product. It takes a number of phases to develop a product or service including, for example, design, production, marketing, operation and others. Sustainability issues can appear in each of these different phases. Sustainability issues that may arise in the phase of

'manufacturing of the product,' for example, could be waste generated, or intensive energy consumption. Remember to cover all sustainability issues for each phase.

You may depend on various suppliers of tourism products in order to operate your package. They could include managers of accommodations, transportation companies, owners of tour agencies, protected area managers, and local tour guides, among others. You will have to pay attention to the sustainability of their offer, which may require infrastructure such as visitor centers, restaurants, lodging, and others types, as well as all kinds of equipment, which will create impact not only during construction but during operation as well. Impacts include removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of wastes, and others.

Possible issues to encounter

The following general people/planet/profit issues show what you might find when analyzing your packages' sustainability performance. Specific characteristics will vary depending on the natural and cultural environments of the destinations that you market: mountains, rivers, forests, historical villages, the sea, and others.

People issues

In general, people issues you might encounter include aspects related to:

- Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions.
- Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle.
- Safety hazards for tourists and personnel.

Planet issues

Planet issues might be very diverse. These include aspects related to the following:

- Pollution and degradation of natural ecosystems, cultural landmarks and landscapes due to tourist visits.
- Impact of construction on physical and biological environments.
- Disturbance of wildlife, including changes in animal behavior.
- Inadequate land use planning.
- Purchase of products and services, such as souvenirs, foods and others that jeopardize the biodiversity of natural populations.
- Creation of waste and its inadequate disposal.
- Impact of transportation on physical and biological environments.
- Lack of awareness about environmentally responsible behavior.



Profit issues

Profit issues you might come across include aspects related to the following:

- Unstable income and dependence on tourists flow.
- No benefit for the local economy.

Back to the practical example

Let's go back to the example of the tour operator who wants to improve his or her company's sustainability performance. S/he has already identified products and services included in the company's packages, as well as specific suppliers. This tour operator now needs to recognize the impacts caused by the company's operation, a step which is necessary in order to identify proper solutions and, accordingly, take measures for improvement.

The package includes different areas of services, such as transportation, accommodations, and meals and activities. The tour operator decides to analyze the potential impacts of a hiking tour in the forest, which is carried out in a national park located near a small local community. Suppliers include

management staff of the national park, a tour operator in the country that provides transportation and tours, and a guide hired by a tour operator outside the region who takes tourists into the forest.

The tour operator studies the hike's operation in terms of people/planet/profit. As a resource, s/he uses the Fact Sheet "Forest and nature area-based activities" from the second module of this Toolkit. In terms of "people", s/he worries about some potential safety issues that might affect the company's customers, as well as its personnel. These hazards include falling while hiking along the trails and getting bitten by poisonous snakes. In the field "planet," the tour operator realizes that transportation to the nature area generates CO2 emissions, and also identifies evidence of forest degradation due to visits: vegetation damaged by trampling, trail erosion, disturbance of fauna, and waste left along the trails. When analyzing "profit," the operator realizes that there is little or no contribution from the operation to the local economy. The tour guide, for example, is hired from outside the region and not from the community. Money is not being spread around communities in the form of salaries, purchases, or in other ways. The following table presents the findings in terms of key sustainability issues:

Hiking tour to nature area

People/Planet/Profit: Key sustainability issues identified by tour operator

Field	Key sustainability issues
People Effects of tourism on tourists, employees, and local people and their culture.	Potential safety issues include falling while walking along the trail and bites by venomous snakes.
Planet Effects of tourism on the natural environment.	CO2 emissions of engine from transportation to nature area. Forest degradation due to visitation: vegetation damaged by trampling, trail erosion, disturbance of fauna, accumulation of waste in nature area.
Profit: Impact of tourism on the local economy.	No contribution to the local economy: Operation does not spread money around communities located near nature area.

IBISTA, a tool to identify key Planet issues

A comprehensive method you might want to use for assessing Planet-sustainability issues is the 'Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment System-Tourism Activities,' or IBISTA, which is a system to identify the positive and negative impacts on biodiversity caused by tourists' activities, in which the different forms of impact are jointly assessed. Generally speaking, IBISTA is an assessment tool which can be used by tourism operators so they can get an image of the potential impact

of their activities on biodiversity. IBISTA does not cover the assessment of People and Profit sustainability issues. With IBISTA, a tour operator can obtain insight into the impact the company's activities have on biodiversity. Moreover, s/he can gain understanding on how to reduce such impact.

The knowledge acquired can be useful to evaluate the biodiversity impact of activities carried out by suppliers at a specific location, and if necessary, on the basis of this evaluation, to then request that suppliers make adjustments. The use of IBISTA can also help you improve your image. It shows that you are concerned about biodiversity and that you are prepared to enter into a dialogue on tourism activities with landowners, authorities, and nature organizations. A copy of IBISTA can be obtained through Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).

3. *Draft general sustainability general goals*

Once you, as a tour operator, understand the issues faced by the operation of your products, you will be able to draft general sustainability goals for your sustainability plan. These goals will be helpful in the identification of the most appropriate mitigating measures for your company. Make sure there is common understanding and consensus about the general goals among the company's employees.

4. *Identify possible solutions*

Once you have identified the most important sustainability issues emerging from the operation and have defined your objectives, the next step is to determine how your company will implement those issues: Which measures can you, as a tour operator, adopt to address the negative impacts generated by package tours? While deciding on possible solutions, some priority areas you might want to consider include:

- Moderation in the use of natural resources (fuels, water, timber, energy, others).
- Reduction of excessive consumption of goods and services, as well as of excessive waste generation (reduction, reutilization, recycling).
- Maintenance of environmental processes and services, such as the water cycle and control of gases which add to the greenhouse effect.
- Conservation of biological diversity (ecosystems, species, genes).
- Supporting the local economy and society.
- Education and training opportunities for personnel and their families.
- Preservation and enhancement of cultural attractions and values.
- Careful planning of tourism at local, regional and national levels.

- Involvement of local people in planning and decision-making processes.
- Quality, safety and hygiene of products and services.
- Responsible marketing of products, services and destinations.
- Strategic alliances for sustainable tourism.
- Raising the awareness of tourists.
- Research for the generation of knowledge and understanding about tourism.
- Monitoring of positive and negative impacts of tourism on culture and nature.

Example: enhancement of the sustainability performance of tourism products

The goal of TUI Nederland and its brands is to strive to sustain all offered holiday products within the possibilities of economic and technical feasibility during the coming years. One of the tools TUI uses to enhance the sustainability performance of their tourism products is by using environmental checklists for accommodations and the environment at the destination (waste management, landscape and planning, local culture etc.) An English version of these checklists can be found at: www.tuinederland.nl/tui/files/binaries/Milieujaarverslag_2001-2002.pdf

These checklists can be used by clients and personnel of TUI to identify sustainability issues and therefore gain insight into the sustainability performance of the destination.

These checklists can be used by clients and personnel of TUI to identify sustainability issues and therefore give insight in the sustainability performance of the destination.

The second module of this Toolkit, “Sustainability of specific tourism activities: issues and suggested actions” will help you to both identify possible solutions in order to address the key sustainability issues related to your company’s products and services, as well as to then put together a plan.

Some sustainability issues can be addressed by your organization alone; others are outside your immediate realm and can only be addressed by collaborating with local stakeholders. Since the focus here is on sustainability effects at the travel destination, the measures needed to mitigate these effects may require undertaking joint efforts with local stakeholders to achieve optimal results.

Example: Taking sustainability measures both at home and abroad

Exodus, a British travel agency, has a Responsible Tourism policy including measures that are implemented both at home and at the travel destination:

1. Limiting group size based on local situations
2. Purchasing local products and services whenever possible and for all trips
3. Hiring more local guides to provide better experiences and to support local communities
4. Working with local tour operators to implement policy

Not every measure requires a lot of effort or a large investment. There are plenty of ‘light’ measures that can be taken which require relatively little effort and are very effective, for example:

- Provide information to customers on “do’s and don’ts”
- Employ only local staff
- Purchase products which have been produced locally
- Offer your customers the opportunity to compensate air travel for climate change, with your company taking care of the administrative matters

5. *Put together a sustainability plan*

Once you know which issues you are dealing with and have identified possible solutions, you’ll want to create a sustainability plan. This plan should include specific objectives as well as the resources needed for their implementation, such as time, money, people, sources of information, and results. After you have identified possible solutions, drafting the objectives become easier. Make them SMART, that is, Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic and Time-bound. Later, these



specific objectives will allow you to monitor your plan's impacts and results. When you complete your sustainability plan, make sure it gets the approval of your company's managers. Also, make sure that all employees are familiar with the plan, as well as with their specific roles in its implementation.

Back to the practical example referred to earlier, the tour operator in question has already identified key sustainability issues. Now, based on the sustainability issues identified, s/he defines the following general goals:

1. Guarantee the safety of tourists and employees.
2. Reduce impact of emissions generated by transportation.
3. Minimize impact of visits within the protected nature area.
4. Increase the company's contribution to the local economy.

Now, s/he needs to decide which measures will be taken to optimize the company's sustainability performance and to accomplish its goals. In order to do this, s/he goes to the Fact Sheets in the second module and identifies measures that

address the company's issues. These measures will be within the framework of his company's specific characteristics, as well as being suitable for the sustainability goals that s/he has set.

In order to complete the plan, the tour operator includes, for each mitigating measure selected, the time needed for implementation (short, medium, long term), financial resources needed (when applicable) and the key figures responsible for the implementation. S/he also identifies available resources that could provide additional information and ideas for the implementation of the measures. Both the Fact Sheets (second module) and the Sustainability Directory (third module) are highly useful for this whole process.

The following table presents the Sustainability Plan:



Plan to make package tour to Latin American destination more sustainable.
Key issues, mitigating measures, timeline, budget, figures responsible for implementation and resources available

Field	Key sustainability issue	Mitigating measure	Time needed for implementation	Financial resources needed annually	Responsible of implementation	Resources available	
People: Effects of tourism on tourists, employees, and local people and their culture.	Potential safety issues include falling while walking along the trail and bites by venomous snakes.	Request updated emergency protocols to tour in the country	Short term	None	National Park management	Nature area reports on potential risks. Nature area safety rules and recommendations.	
		Adopt insurance to protect customers and employees.	Short term	100	Tour perator		
		Work only with tour operators in the country that hires trained guides on first aid and emergency protocols.	Short term	None	Tour perator in the county		
		Monitor existence of updated safety and first-aid equipments, including anti-venom in the National Park headquarters.	Periodic monitoring	None	Tour operator in the cooperation with National Par management		
Planet: Effects of tourism on the natural environment.	CO2 emissions of engine from transportation to nature area.	Assess annual exhaust of greenhouse gasses and compensate this by supporting forest service payments.	Annual payments	300	Tour operator in cooperation with tour operator in the country: technical studies hired to local entity	National park 1 pay ments programs.	
	Forest degradation due to visitation: vegetation damaged by trampling, trail erosion, disturbance of fauna, accumulation of waste in nature area.	Work with smaller groups.	Short term	None	Tour operator in the country	Nature area updated regulations for public use.	
		Stay only within zones established by nature area for public use.	Short term	None	Tour operator in the country		
		Do not enter trails in bad condition. Encourage nature area management to improve them.	Short term	None	Tour operator in the country		
		Verify adequate final disposal of wastes generated by operation.	Periodic monitoring of waste disposal	None	Tour operator in the country		
		Hire independent part to apply IBISTA.	Periodic monitoring	100	Tour operator		IBISTA, a tool to identify key planet issues Get a copy through Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).

Field	Key sustainability issue	Mitigating measure	Time needed for implementation	Financial resources needed annually	Responsible of implementation	Resources available
Profit: Impact of tourism on the local economy.	Limited contribution to the local economy: The company's operation does not spread money around communities located near nature area.	Request tour operator in the country to hire local guides when possible.	Medium term	None	Tour operator in cooperation with tour operator in the country; local guide training hired to national entity.	Chapter 4 of Costa Rica's CST for tour operators includes design of policies towards the community, involving the community, and spreading of benefits.
		Support local guide training.	Medium term	150	Seek co-operation with non-governmental organisations.	
		Purchase lunch at local restaurant.	Short term	Depends on operation	Tour operator in the country.	
		Combine other local destinations as part of the package. Make an inventory of local attractions.	Medium term	Depends on operation	Tour operator in cooperation with tour operator in the country.	
	Support local school.	Short term	200	Tour operator in cooperation with tour operator in the country.		

6. *Prepare for the implementation of the Sustainability Plan*

Timeline for implementation of measures

Review the time needed for the implementation of each measure, and create a timeline accordingly. In order to do this, identify what is designated for short, medium, and long term.

Budget

Out of all the measures, identify what depends on a budget and what doesn't. For all those measures that depend on money for their implementation, provide for a budget and, if necessary, seek additional funding. Some initiatives require financial resources in order to achieve results. Participants can only be expected to contribute according to their financial strength, which is likely to be different for each organisation. Allocate a budget and try to be creative in finding additional sources of funding and in saving costs, for example:

- Organize benefit fund-raising events, such as performances by local artists or celebrities, crafts fairs etc; Find means to cover investments (e.g., by charging entrance fees).
- Find sponsors that support your initiative, whether by financial donations or support in kind (e.g., hotels that will host your fund-raising events without fees in return for free advertising).

- Check on the availability of subsidies or funds. There may also be funds available for private companies and/or non-governmental organizations in the home country of foreign partners.
- Seek collaboration with non-governmental organizations.
- Create an internship position for a student.

Include implementation in your company's work plan

The implementation of the Sustainability Plan should be incorporated into the company's plan of activities. Make sure that the personnel involved in the implementation of measures include activities assigned to them as part of their work plans. This will allow for the time needed to carry out activities according to the established timeline.

Other preparatory actions may include:

- Collect learning experiences from previous initiatives that have been developed in the same area, if any exist. Try to get an impression of the success and/or failure factors of these initiatives. The failure factors may be the pitfalls of your company's new project. Discuss ways to avoid these pitfalls with the project's work team.
- Make use of existing guidelines and codes of conduct. The Fact Sheets included in Part II of this Toolkit provide suggestions and links to guidelines that are relevant for sustainable tourism in Latin America.



Actions Step 2:

Put together your sustainability plan.

- ▶ *Identify products and services included in your package tours.*
- ▶ *Identify key sustainability issues.*
- ▶ *Draft sustainability goals.*
- ▶ *Identify possible solutions.*
- ▶ *Put the sustainability plan together.*
- ▶ *Prepare for the implementation of the Sustainability Plan.*



Step 3:

Seek collaboration with local stakeholders

The objective of Step 3 is to identify local stakeholders that may want to be involved in the sustainability issue(s) and to jointly implement the Plan.

1. *Identify local stakeholders*

Partnerships may be established with business partners, for example, tour operators in the country, local entrepreneurs, and hotel owners. You can also involve entities that you usually have no working relationship with, such as a non-governmental organization concerned with the protection of the environment. Another idea is to start a sector-wide initiative, for example with all hotels in the region. A prerequisite is that the organizations you choose share an interest in the sustainability issues that need to be resolved. Stakeholders can be divided into three groups:

1. Private sector (tour operators, hotels, restaurants, excursion agencies, diving schools, and others).
2. Public sector (local government bodies for environmental management, governmental entities offering training to local people on tourism, etc.).
3. Non-profit sector (non-governmental organizations, trade associations, universities, and other such entities).

Tourism for nature, nature for tourism

The NC-IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) brings Dutch tour operators into contact with nature conservation NGOs. If a particular NGO has a project that is suitable for visits from tourists, a tour operator can include this project in his tour.

The Dutch Tour operator Sawadee worked together with the NGO Arbofilia in Costa Rica. A tour group visited a reforestation project near Manuel Antonio on the Pacific Coast. The tourists stayed in the village of El Sur and went on excursion to see the project. The revenues from the excursion go to Arbofilia and the earnings from lodging and food to the local tourism entrepreneurs. More information can be found at www.sawadee.nl and www.iucn.nl.

Make a list of stakeholders involved in the issue you want to address. For example, start with your own suppliers and, if necessary, ask your product manager for Latin American package tours or your incoming agent to provide more information. You might want to include the following:

- The type of service provided and the volume (number of beds and excursions).
- Type of the relationship with the supplier (duration of the contract signed, history of the relationship) and interdependence (whether this is the supplier's only client, and if other, similar suppliers in the region exist).

- Specific information available about the supplier, e.g. awards and certificates, evaluation rates (internal or from customers), overall communication with supplier (how accommodating the supplier is to the tour operator's wishes, and so on).

The list will help to create an overview of the relevant stakeholders involved in the tourist sector, and to also provide a brief analysis of them. The information can be used to select the right partner to initiate actions with in the field of sustainable ecotourism.

2. *Start the sustainability dialogue*

When the relevant stakeholders have been identified, it is time to contact them and share opinions on the sustainability issue and possible solutions. There will be some activities in your sustainability plan that are not pertinent to potential partners, while others may be important to them. Share your plan with them, and identify which aspects they want to participate in. If you think you have found common ground, find out whether the organization is interested in taking joint action. Take the following points into account when seeking partnerships:

- All parties involved should be motivated and have a clear interest in obtaining positive results. Interests

may be different for each participant: a hotel manager may want to reduce energy costs, a non-governmental organization might wish to increase public awareness on a certain issue, and a tour operator may want to improve his or her enterprise's environmental reputation.

- Involve organizations with specific expertise in the project, such as a university department or research institute.
- If several parties are involved, it may be best to include a neutral participant that can assume the role of facilitator. The only interest of the facilitator is to turn the initiative into a success. The facilitator is able to activate the other partners and to catalyze transformative processes, if necessary.
- When asking an organization to undertake collaborative action, always make sure that the manager or director of the organization is committed to the objectives and the approach of the action. Do not start if there is no commitment from the management.
- Share your mission, vision, goals, and plan with your potential partners. If some of your measures can be jointly implemented with your partners, include them in the list of actors responsible for implementing measures.
- Although the goals of different stakeholders can vary, tourism activities can only become sustainable if implemented with a common understanding and a consensus-based approach toward development.

Example: co-operation with local stakeholder in awareness-raising campaign

Accor Tour, a tour operator that sells package tours worldwide, recognizes the need to preserve the environment at travel destinations and to limit the impacts generated by tourists. One of the destinations that is extremely sensitive is the Red Sea coast, a popular place for underwater diving. The Accor Environment Department sought collaboration with Aquarev, a subsidiary agent specializing in diving packages, and NAUSICAA, a marine science center. The parties joined forces to develop a leaflet informing tourists about the impacts of irresponsible diving behavior and tips for prevention. The leaflet was distributed in hotel rooms, reception desks, and in the travel documents of all divers traveling to the Red Sea with Aquarev. In addition, Accor hotels host sessions of the training course on Environmental Resources Management for hotel staff and staff of diving centers and national parks.

If the stakeholder(s) has expressed an interest in taking joint action, decide on the type of collaboration:

- Partnership: structural collaboration on a long-term basis, usually between two parties. The partnership can be formalized through a signed declaration of intent for collaboration, and may cover several issues.
- Public-private partnership: collaboration between a governmental institution and the private sector on a topic of mutual interest;
- Multi-stakeholder initiative: taken by a multitude of actors, usually to address a single, specific sustainability

issue. It is known beforehand that the actors may have conflicting interests, but once entering the initiative they are committed to finding a solution that is satisfactory to all parties.

Example: cooperation with NGO

Together with the WWF, TUI Netherlands started a campaign to inform Dutch travelers about illegal souvenirs. Information was provided about souvenirs that may not be imported into the Netherlands. Furthermore, tourists were warned about the consequences for the natural environment of producing illegal souvenirs.

TUI Netherlands actively supported the campaign. The "Watch, Don't Touch" flyers were distributed in several ways to tourists: via flight attendants, by travel agents, enclosed in travel documents and enclosed in hotel books at the destination.



TUI and WWF flyer "Watch, Don't Touch."

Actions Step 3:

- Identify foreign or local stakeholders involved in the sustainability issue to be addressed and/or the measure(s) you seek to implement.
- Contact the stakeholder(s) and discuss possibilities for a concerted action.
- Find agreement on the type of co-operation.



Step 4:

Implement the Sustainability Plan

The objective of Step 4 is to implement the sustainability plan and to monitor its development.

In the previous steps, you decided on how your organization was going to approach “sustainability,” whether operating in a niche market for sustainable tourism or incorporating sustainability as one of the aspects of quality. You also drafted mission and vision statements to reflect your organization’s commitment to sustainability (step 1). Then you gained insight into the sustainability problems related to existing or new tourism products and services and identified mitigating measures and put together a sustainability plan (step 2). Finally, you carried out a brief stakeholder analysis and created liaisons with one or more stakeholders in order to work together on sustainable tourism (Step 3).

1. Carry out plan implementation

Implement measures

When you feel you have adequately prepared for the implementation of your Sustainability Plan, you are ready to start. As mentioned earlier, mitigating measures can range from the simple, e.g. installation of water-saving flush devices in toilets, to more complicated measures, such as setting up a project for the protection of an endangered animal species.

The biggest pitfall in this phase is that the measures planned may get stuck or come to a dead end. In order to prevent this from happening, keep close track of developments, and make sure that each participating organization has appointed a person (not necessarily the same one in every case) who will:

- Act as contact person.
- Be responsible for the timely implementation of the tasks his or her organization has agreed to carry out.
- Check on the progress made and point out problems or bottlenecks that may hinder the plan’s implementation.

2. **Monitor development of the Plan**

If there are problems during the implementation, find the cause. The following questions may be helpful:

■ **Complete picture**

Is the information collected on the subject sufficient, or is more information needed?

■ **New developments**

Are there any new developments that were not taken into account at the time of preparation which influence the implementation? For example, there may be more factors involved than previously identified, new stakeholders, new developments, etc.

■ **Training and education**

Do the staff workers responsible for the activity have enough training and skills, including knowledge on environmental management, to carry out the tasks?

■ **Means and resources**

Are the available resources and means sufficient? (tools, equipment, machinery, budget, human resources).

■ **Communication**

Is there still common understanding about the activities and the expected results?

Solutions for the problems will involve knowledge transfer, supply of additional resources, improved communication, etc.

Marketing the sustainability product or service (see Step 5):

Design and implement a marketing strategy for the specific sustainable tourist product or service that has been developed.

Evaluate and decide on follow up (see Step 6):

Carry out an evaluation, either alone or together with other stakeholders involved, in order to assess whether the objectives have been achieved.

Actions Step 4:

- ▶ *Carry out implementation of the sustainability plan.*
- ▶ *Keep up closely with the implementation of the activities planned and take mitigating measures when bottlenecks occur.*

Step 5:

Promote your sustainable package tour

The objective of Step 5 is to successfully promote the sustainable package tour to Latin American destinations, and to communicate with clients about sustainability.

In Step 1, you defined the approach of your organization or company to sustainability. This chapter provides several suggestions for the marketing strategy of the specific sustainable tourist product or service that you have developed.

1. ***Use the appropriate communication channels***

A tour operator can use a number of communication channels to promote his or her products. The promotion of sustainability and sustainable package tours should be considered carefully, and channels used in a way that may be different from other holiday tours. Some ideas are presented here:

Example: Use several channels to inform customers

In 1999, TUI Nederland launched the Environmentally Aware Tourism project on Bonaire and Curacao. TUI uses several information channels to inform customers about the project and to encourage them to choose sustainable products at the travel destination. In the holiday brochures, basic information is provided on sustainability issues. Once a customer has booked a holiday to Bonaire or Curacao, more specific information is provided as follows:

- ▶ Suggestions for environmentally sound practices are included right in the ticket voucher.
- ▶ During the trip to the destination, an in-flight video informs passengers about sustainable excursions and activities that comprise part of the project.
- ▶ Upon arrival at Bonaire and Curacao, the tour operator's hostesses inform customers about sustainable excursions and activities that are available.
- ▶ A resource book developed by TUI Nederland is placed in each hotel reception area for further directions on these sustainable excursions, activities, and attractions.

Holiday brochures and guides

Information on sustainability may not be prominently featured in holiday brochures and guides, but it may be presented in the margins, or in a small text box that describes a specific sustainability initiative or project. Emphasize the achieved results, not the approach. The text box may not only serve to 'spice up' the brochure, but also to trigger interest; clients with an eye for sustainability will be more motivated to ask for additional information. Provide a telephone number or a website to serve these customers.

Internet

The corporate website is an ideal place to supply additional information for customers who are really interested in sustainability topics. Information can be provided about the corporate sustainability policy (mission statement, targets, and objectives), the measures taken at home (such as environmental management system) or the initiatives developed abroad (projects, partnerships).

Fairs

Tourist fairs such as the London World Travel Market are important venues for business-to-business marketing. Such fairs are not only useful for finding new destinations and local tourism entrepreneurs, but also for maintaining relationships with existing clients.

European governmental support provided for tourism entrepreneurs from developing countries

Several European countries have governmental centers for the promotion of imports from developing countries, such as the CBI in the Netherlands and Sippo in Switzerland (www.cbi.nl, www.sippo.ch). The social and cultural aspects of sustainability are important issues in their policies. They therefore endorse and support sustainable, community-based ecotourism. For example, the CBI enables organizations from Latin American countries such as the following to promote their vacation services at tourism fairs in the Netherlands:

- ▶ Ecuador (Feptce and Runa Tupari) promotes vacations in the upper Andes with indigenous people.
- ▶ Guatemala (Verapaz, Eco-Quetzal) promotes vacations in the jungle.
- ▶ Nicaragua (Solentiname Tours) promotes vacations with local fishermen on small islands in the big lakes.

2. *Use cross-selling*

A very attractive marketing technique, especially when you have already established a partnership, is 'cross-selling.' Cross-selling means that two organizations jointly promote a service or product that they have developed together. The objective is to mutually benefit from one another's corporate image, thus reinforcing the marketing potential of the product. Both organizations attach their brand and their image to the product, and make use of each other's promotion channels and address databases. For example, the cross-selling technique

can be used as part of a partnership between a Latin American non-governmental organization and a foreign tour operator.

Example: Non-governmental organization and tour operator join forces

The World Wide Fund for Nature has taken several initiatives to promote the development of sustainable tourism, in particular ecotourism at nature parks. WWF thus aims to create a new source of income for the local population while at the same time encouraging local authorities, businesses, and inhabitants to take nature conservation measures. WWF has joined forces with Dutch tour operator SNP to develop and promote package tours to nature parks within and outside Europe. The package tours on offer include visits to parks that comply with the European eco-label for nature parks: PAN Parks.

More info at: www.snp.nl



Action Step 5:

- Choose the appropriate channels to communicate on sustainability, e.g. internet, brochures, local media, and others.

Step 6:

Evaluate and decide on follow-up

The objective of Step 6 is to review the results of the implementation of the sustainability plan, and to decide on further improvement.

1. *Evaluate the implementation of the sustainability plan*

Carry out an evaluation to assess whether the plan's general goals and specific objectives have been achieved; this can be done either alone or together with the other stakeholder(s) involved.

Just as it is advisable to define quantitative objectives, it is also recommended to process your evaluation results in quantitative indicators. Use percentages and charts to present the results. Add a brief written analysis to the figures that focuses on the success and failure factors of the activity and the lessons learned.

Below are other aspects you might want to consider in your evaluation.

■ **Customer satisfaction**

Note how your customers responded to the new product, as follows:

- How do your customers rate the new product?
- Has the product raised customer awareness about the sustainability issue?
- Have customers indicated that they would be interested in this product (or a similar one) in the future?

■ Profitability

Determine whether the activity resulted in a product that is commercially viable:

- Profits made compared to those of other products of the product range
- Initial investments versus long-term prognosis.

■ Contribution to sustainable tourism in Latin America

Focus on whether the activity has mitigated the sustainability issue:

- People issues (contribution to improving social conditions of local people & culture)
- Planet issues (contribution to protection of the natural environment)
- Profit issues (contribution to development of the local economy)

2. *Share the results*

Communicate the results of the sustainability plan to employees and customers. Also share these results with others. For example, among other aspects, the concept of the method you applied, its results, and the lessons learned may all serve as useful examples to external stakeholders and to other companies in the tourist sector, as well as to trade associations. You might want to involve the media as well in order to reach the general public.

3. *Decide about follow-up*

Based on the results, you might have to make a decision on the follow-up that your company (and possible partners) will give to the initiative, depending on the evaluation results. In general, there are four options:

- Suspend the activity for the time being
- Continue the activity as it is presently carried out
- Continue the activity, but in a different way
- Expand the activity to include other services, products, sustainability issues, stakeholders etc.

A final decision has to be made as to whether the sustainable tourist product or service is successful for your company, and accordingly, if the activity cycle should be started up again.

Example: Try-out and withdrawal of the Green Thumb logo

By means of a logo in 2000, TUI Nederland had developed a way to share the information gathered about the environmental performances of accommodations suppliers with their customers. During the one season try-out period, the logo and regular information about accommodations was placed in brochures; within the text of the brochures were listed the accommodations suppliers who had scored positively on a set of environmental criteria. The Green Thumb was published in the winter brochures of 2000/2001 of Fit Vliegvakanties for Turkey, Isropa Reizen for Egypt and Cyprus, Arke and Holland International for snow destinations, and Arke and Holland International for the Caribbean. It was expected that the Green Thumb would induce environmentally conscious customers to choose accommodations with good environmental performance. However, when a customer research study was done, reactions to the use of the logo proved to be negative:

- ▶ People did not trust a logo coming from a tour operator since there was no independent certification organization involved.
- ▶ People thought that the hotels with a Green Thumb would be more expensive, as with other eco-labels.
- ▶ People expected the luxury level of the hotels involved to be lower than at other hotels.

As a result, fewer accommodations at green hotels were sold instead of more. Therefore, it was decided to withdraw the Green Thumb logo from the brochures, which had been intended as a positive means of selection, after the just one season.

Schematic overview of the six steps



Actions Step 6:

- ▶ *Evaluate the implementation of the sustainability plan.*
- ▶ *Share the results with personnel, customers, the media and other stakeholders.*
- ▶ *Decide on follow up by your company, with or without your possible partner.*



MODULE 2:



**Fact Sheets for
sustainability of tourism
products and services**

Fact Sheets for sustainability of tourism products and services





1. Introduction

Package tours to Latin America provided to customers by foreign tour operators are composed of products and services that allow the commercialization of a destination. The tour operator either selects and contracts the services of local suppliers, or else hires a local agency that acts as an intermediate. Suppliers of the package tour are, for example, managers of accommodations, transport organizations, owners of excursion agencies, and all kinds of local tourism entrepreneurs.

In the process of improving the sustainability of tourism products and services, foreign tour operators working in Latin America may require more information on specific topics related to their package tours.

This second module provides a background for the identification of sustainability issues, and recommends actions for dealing with them. It contains fact sheets with information about the sustainability of specific tourism products and services. These fact sheets are divided into nine categories, depending on the geographic, natural, or cultural surroundings where activities take place, the type of activities involved, and comparable impacts on the environment (e.g. the use of combustion engines or not). Accommodations and transportation have their own worksheets.

The sustainability issues for package operation in Latin America cannot be addressed by the tour operator alone, but often will require collaboration with local stakeholders. It is highly recommended that foreign tour operators work with local operators in the implementation of mitigating measures. It might be necessary to also work with suppliers of products and services included in the packages, such as private enterprises, family or community owned businesses, and cultural/environmental NGOs offering tourism products and services. Such products and services may involve accommodations, food, transportation, tour activities, souvenirs, and others.

2. Classification of tourism products and fact sheets

It is necessary to stress that in the context of tourism, a product or service is the sum of its activities and services, with the support of infrastructure and equipment, all of which allow the natural or cultural attractions to be enjoyed. Even though all these components are dealt with in the fact sheets, for practical reasons a special emphasis is placed on tourism activities since they make it possible to carry out rapid identification of sustainability issues that affect the performance of an organization or enterprise as a whole.

The nine fact sheets are:

- 1: Mountains, volcanoes, caves, and other geographical and geological features.
- 2: Lakes, rivers and other bodies of freshwater
- 3: Forests and protected nature areas
- 4: Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas
- 5: Accommodations
- 6: Transportation

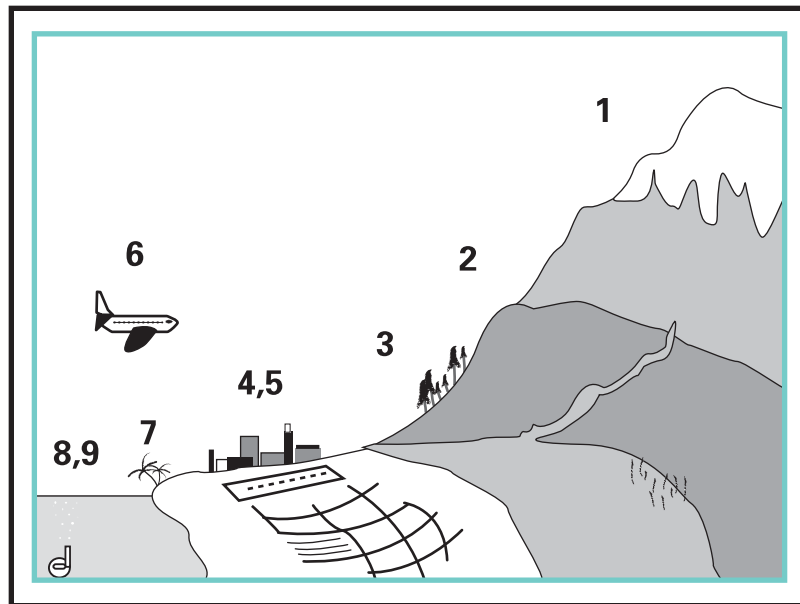
- 7: Marine and beach environments (no engine use)
- 8: Marine- and coastal water environments (with engine use)
- 9: Diving and snorkeling

Sustainability issues of “hiking/walking,” for example, are assessed in different fact sheets: 1) “Mountains, volcanoes, caves and other geographical and geological features,” 3) “Forests and nature protected areas,” and 4) “Cities, villages and surrounding rural areas.” You may wish to choose the fact sheet that corresponds to the environment where you carry out any given activity offered as part of your product, and then identify sustainability issues for that activity in that particular context. You might also want to consult other fact sheets in order to get information on the range of sustainability issues faced by similar activities in different contexts.

To help visualize the classification of the fact sheets and their tourism activities, the sequence of the fact sheets is arranged from high altitude activities, via forests and protected nature areas, through villages and agricultural grounds, down to beach, coastal waters and underwater activities. In this way, going through all possible scenarios while descending an imaginary mountain to sea level, all possible tourism products and their activities are covered:



Figure 2.1
Visual representation of the fact sheets *



▶ The numbers refer to the fact sheet

Since the fact sheets are designed to be read independently, the reader will notice that some information in separate sheets is comparable. For practical reasons, Fact Sheet number 4 has been divided into 4a) Cities and villages, and 4b) Surrounding rural areas.

The table below lists activities that have been identified as part of tourism packages in Latin America, and they are organized in alphabetical order.

For simplification, involvement in different attractions is indicated by the name of the attraction. For example, you will find “Museums” instead of “Visit to museums”, or “Cultural/historical events” instead of “Participation in cultural/historical events”.

“General tourism facilities” is a very broad category that involves any facilities needed to carry out the activity offered in your product. For example, for “hiking/walking”, general facilities might include restrooms, trails, observation points or outlooks, parking lots, signs, and others. You will need to decide which general facilities correspond to your specific products.

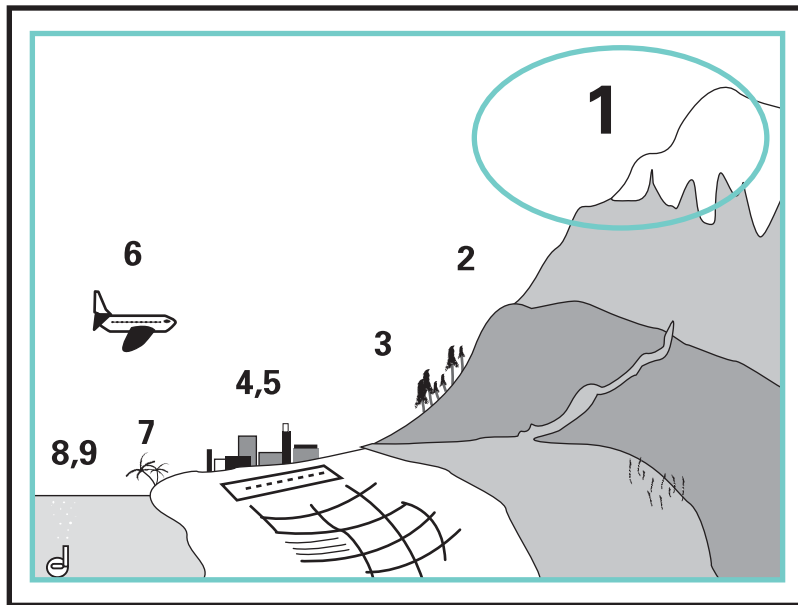
Table: List of activities according to fact sheets

ACTIVITIES	1. High mountains, volcanoes, caves and others	2. Lakes, rivers and other bodies of freshwater	3. Forest and nature protected areas	4a.Cities and villages	4b.Surrounding rural areas	5. Accommodations	6. Transportation	7. Marine and beach based activities (no engine use)	8. Marine- and coastal waters based activities with engine	9. Diving and snorkelling
Accommodation operations	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Air transportation							X			
Animal rescue centre					X					
Aquatic transportation							X			
Archaeological sites	X		X	X						
Architectonical landmarks				X					X	
Banana boat ride									X	
Biking	X		X		X					
Bird watching		X	X		X			X		
Body boarding								X		
Boogie boarding								X		
Botanical gardens				X	X					
Butterfly farms				X	X					
Buying souvenirs	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Camping			X			X				
Canoeing		X						X		
Canopy rides			X							
Canyoning	X									
Catamaran (motor-powered)									X	
Catamaran (sail-powered)								X		
Caving	X		X							X
Countryside lifestyle							X			
Cultural/historical sites and events	X	X	X	X	X					
Diving										X
Down hill biking	X									
Farms, plantations and ranches					X					
Four wheel driving					X					
General boat trips		X							X	
General tourism facilities	X	X	X	X						X
Geological exploration	X									
Glass bottom boat trip										X



(sheet 1)

High mountains, volcanoes, caves, and other geographical and geological features



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to high mountains, volcanoes, caves, and other geographical and geological features in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

People value outstanding geographical and geological features such as high mountains, active volcanoes, and caves. High altitude habitats may include plateaus and savannas. They usually offer an environment in which to practice adventure and nature-oriented sports and activities. They also offer an opportunity to learn about natural history, geology, and volcanology. In many cases, they are protected by parks and reserves, which can be public, private, or community-owned.

Facilities

Offering package tours to high mountains, volcanoes, caves and other geographical and geological features may require general facilities such as visitors' centres, restaurants, parking

lots, restrooms, lodges, signs, observation points or outlooks, equipment, and others.

Activities

This fact sheet includes the main activities identified for mountainous areas, caves, and volcanoes:

- ▶ Accommodation operations
- ▶ Archaeological sites
- ▶ Biking
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Canyoning
- ▶ Caving
- ▶ Cultural/historical sites
- ▶ Downhill biking
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Geological exploration
- ▶ Hang-gliding
- ▶ Hiking/walking
- ▶ Hiking with guide
- ▶ Horseback riding
- ▶ Hot springs
- ▶ Ice climbing
- ▶ Information centers for visitors
- ▶ Mountaineering
- ▶ Paragliding
- ▶ Rappeling
- ▶ Rock climbing
- ▶ Skiing
- ▶ Snowboarding
- ▶ Tram rides
- ▶ Trekking
- ▶ Volcanic environments
- ▶ Wildlife watching

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** These may affect porters, guides, cooks and drivers. Examples are long working hours, lack of protection against weather conditions on mountains, and lack of insurance and medical care.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local



attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. Also, companies may modify the façades of buildings and place signs in a way that pollutes the prevailing cultural landscape.

3. **Safety issues:** These range from falling while practicing mountain sports or exploring a cave, to being caught by a volcanic eruption in an unsafe or unauthorized zone, among many other dangers.

Suggested Actions

1. Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid restaurants, hotels, and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Make sure that customers are informed on tipping guides and porters prior to departure.
- Ensure that local suppliers use a code of conduct on human and fair treatment of employees (see guidelines and codes of conduct).

- Regarding acceptable labor conditions for porters in mountainous areas, one can use the guidelines of the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG). See www.ippg.net). This group was founded to raise awareness of the problems endured by trekking porters, to educate, and to change practices when necessary. The IPPG has established a set of guidelines for the protection of porters, including:

- ▶ Adequate clothing for protection in bad weather and at high altitudes.
- ▶ Access to shelter and sleeping gear when above the tree line.
- ▶ Food and warm drinks, or cooking equipment and fuel.
- ▶ Basic medical care, including insurance.
- ▶ Handling sick porters; they should be sent down with someone who speaks their language, and sufficient funds should be provided to cover the cost of their rescue and treatment.

2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle

When possible, work with tour operators at the destination that care about the local community, its culture and lifestyle. Together, you can apply the following measures:

- Promote understanding and respect of local cultures, their customs and traditions.

- Ask community leaders about which activities they are willing to share with tourists. Respect their decisions and do not impose the presence of visitors when not welcome.
 - Adopt specific policies for the protection of the historical and cultural patrimony of the communities involved.
 - Provide visitors with briefings to minimize their negative impact on the local culture, for example on:
 - ▶ clothing which should or should not be worn;
 - ▶ subjects that should not be raised.
 - ▶ language, such as vulgarities, that should not be used
 - ▶ areas that should not be entered;
 - ▶ items that should not be touched;
 - ▶ places, items or people that should not be photographed;
 - ▶ performances or events that require avoidance of certain behavior (laughing, dancing) etc.
 - Adopt cultural and social impact assessments as a regular company activity. Include feedback from representatives of the local community. Share reports with customers.
 - Support training of local people on tourism management as a way to avoid or mitigate social and cultural negative impacts.
- The country's or region's language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of the local language to name tourist destinations and for signs. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as complements for the local language, not as substitutes.
 - When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign language, remind them on the importance of their own language.

Safety issues

Tour operators are responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and the customers who are visiting a destination; thus, the enterprise should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can request proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that hotels have adequate safety measures, such as fire escapes and properly equipped bathroom facilities, that guides and drivers have the proper training and licenses, and that restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to ensure that the following measures are taken:

- Comply with national / local safety regulations.



- Study safety recommendations and reports on risks for your destination.
- Check weather reports regularly for the areas visited by your company.
- Obey warning signs on risks and dangers.
- Design and implement emergency protocols.
- Take out insurance to protect your customers and employees.
- Train personnel on risk assessment.
- Train personnel on how to behave in emergency situations (first aid, emergency protocols).
- Inform tourists about each activity's physical requirements and demands.
- Make sure that tourists are carefully instructed on safety measures.
- Make sure to have appropriate equipment that is in good condition.
- Maintain up to date safety and first-aid equipment.
- Respect zoning: For example, different zones should be defined around volcanoes depending on varying risk levels. If this hasn't been done, coordinate with national and local authorities and other entrepreneurs to implement this feature.

For most types of mountain sports there are safety rules which you should know and enforce. A good example are skiing safety rules, which minimize the risk of accidents. The International Ski Federation (FIS) has created 10 safety-rules for the conduct of skiers and snowboarders (www.fis-ski.com).

Climbing tour operators should work only with material and training methods in accordance with the UIAA rules and labels. These can be found at: www.uiaa.ch. The model for training standards is also available in Spanish.

Planet Issues

1. **Degradation of ecosystems due to visits:** This includes vegetation damaged by trampling, disturbance of fauna, changes in animal behavior, scared animals being driven away from their habitat, trail erosion, and others.
2. **Generation of waste:** Tourism may increase the amount of waste generated and discarded at the destination. Inappropriate disposal may impact both the natural environment as well as communities involved in providing services.
3. **Rock damage:** Damaged rocks and their degraded appearance are commonly caused by the spikes and lime employed by climbers to help them negotiate these surfaces.

4. **Large scale erosion at ski sites:** Large scale erosion usually occurs in areas that are used for skiing and related activities. Slopes are cleared to construct tracks or pistes, which means that the soil is no longer protected against wind and rain; this can lead to heavy erosion such as mudslides. Also the pressure of machinery and tourists on the thin layer of soil in mountainous areas leads to soil compression, which prevents the growth of young trees and plants.
5. **Impact of construction on physical and biological environments:** Carrying out tourism activities may require building general facilities such as visitor centers, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, observation points and others, which will create impact not only during construction but also during operation. Their impact includes removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of waste, and others.

Suggested Actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. Also choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with your local tour operators to ensure the implementation of the following measures:

1. Degradation of ecosystems due to tourist visits:

General:

- Adopt a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices, carefully defining what your company or personnel can and cannot do during expeditions. Make sure that all your personnel understand and apply this code.
- Adopt impact assessments on biodiversity as a regular company activity. A useful methodology is the “Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment-Tourism Activities”, IBISTA, which can be obtained from the Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).
- Keep updated regulations of all tourism destinations visited by your company.
- Whenever possible, organize small groups of visitors, especially in fragile areas.
- Stay only within zones established for public use. Do not enter restricted areas.
- Support studies that generate information on biodiversity, including distribution, animal territories and breeding seasons, as well as ecology, geology and volcanology. Use that knowledge to upgrade your sustainable products.



- Determine which areas are accessible and when the most appropriate times are for tourist visits, for example, with regard to breeding seasons.
- Make sure that guides and porters have received training on environmentally responsible trekking, e.g. using stoves instead of making campfires, carrying waste out instead of discarding it in the environment, etc.
- Make sure that guides who can communicate with foreigners in their language (especially English-speaking ones) are always available.
- Make sure that guides provide reliable information, and that the appropriate equipment is used by guides and visitors.
- If your company manages its own area or destination, plan adequate trails that minimize impact and avoid those areas where wildlife congregates.

Mountaineering and skiing:

- Stay on the designated paths and trails; the animals in the areas know the trails are there and have adjusted their behavior accordingly. Venturing outside the trails can lead to the disturbance of wildlife
- Disturbing animals has a greater impact in cold areas (snow, mountains) than in moderate climates, since

a waste of body energy poses an extreme risk for of animals' survival,

- Don't hike or ski through forests or brush, as animals may shelter there.
- Carefully avoid walking wherever you see animal tracks.

2. Generation of solid waste

- Adopt measures to reduce, reutilize, recycle and/or adequately dispose of waste, including that generated during construction.
- Verify adequate final disposal of trash and waste generated by your operation.
- Don't leave climbing gear or other materials behind.
- Minimize buying products that generate waste, such as plastic bottles. Provide refillable bottles.
- Don't use disposable dishes, cups, or silverware.
- When possible, reutilize paper, containers, and other reusable items.
- Participate in recycling programs when available.
- Separate solid wastes for reutilization, recycling and adequate final disposal.

- Inform visitors about recycling, and motivate them and your employees to contribute to proper waste management.

3. Rock damage

- Prevent spike fixing and lime traces. Instead of spikes use removable belaying materials such as friends, nuts, camalots etc.
- Prevent lime traces. Don't use lime during climbing

4. Large scale erosion in skiing sites

The "Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz" (the Bavarian (German province) Environmental Ministry, www.stmugv.bayern.de/de/natur/freizeit/ski1.htm; website in German) has tips for skiers on how to behave in nature areas. Some of these are mentioned under sub 1 and 2 under skiing. Others are listed here:

- Use public transportation as much as possible.
- When using a car, park at the designated areas as "wild parking" in the winter can lead to damaged vegetation.
- Only go skiing when you have enough experience. Beware of the dangers of avalanches.
- Use good equipment; this increases safety and prevents accidents

5. Impact of construction on the physical and biological environments

If you or your tour operators are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities, the following mitigating measures can be useful:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.
- Make sure that residual waters – sewage – will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Ensure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.



If your tour packages make use of visitor facilities, make sure that your clients know these policies and that they comply with them. Choose destinations that manage their facilities responsibly.

Profit Issues

- 1. Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
- 2. No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if goods and services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally.

Suggested Actions

- 1. Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow.**
 - Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
 - Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Inventory the tourist attractions that are available in the region throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
 - Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
 - Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.
- 2. No contribution made to the local community**

The operation of your packages can be carried out in a way that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

 - Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that will benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.

- Make sure that suppliers at the destinations hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Consult with local authorities about the most appropriate allocations, such as improvement of social services and education.

Certification

- The NEAP label (Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program) includes criteria on collaboration with the local community (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp). They recommend that tour operators:
 - Provide constructive ongoing contributions to local communities.
 - Be sensitive to, interpret and involve different cultures, particularly indigenous ones.
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. This could be a good tool to identify partners and suppliers in that country. The CST for tour operators includes prevention of impacts,

protection of the natural environment, management of emissions and garbage, efficient resource management, human resource management and training, and direct and indirect socioeconomic benefits, among others. Information is available at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr



- The UIAA (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme) has also developed an environmental label which is intended to promote high standards of conduct and responsible access for climbing and mountain activities. Providers of organized mountain activities who are committed to acting in accordance with the UIAA's Environmental Objectives and Guidelines and to supporting them can apply for the label. Such providers may include training centers, trekking or expedition organizations, qualified instructors, and guides. The complete text of the UIAA guidelines can be found at: www.uiaa.ch/?c=53. Regional UIAA members are:

- Argentina, FASA, Federación Argentina de Ski y Andinismo (fasa@bariloche.com.ar)
- Brazil, CAP, Clube Alpino Paulista (www.webventure.com.br/cap)
- Brazil, FEMERJ, Mountain Sports Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (bernardo@femerj.org, www.femerj.org)





- Chile, FACH, Federación de Andinismo de Chile (fedandinismo@transtar.cl, www.feach.cl)
- Guatemala, FNAG, Federación Nacional de Andinismo de Guatemala (fandinismo@confede.org, fna_guatemala@yahoo.com)
- Mexico, FMDEM, Federación Mexicana de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada (femeex@mexico.com, www.montanayescalada.org)
- Peru, FEPADI, Federación Peruana de Andinismo y Deportes de Invierno (fepadi@mail.com)
- Venezuela, FEVME, Federación Venezolana de Montañismo y Escalada (fevmevenezuela@yahoo.com, <http://fevme.tripod.com.ve>)

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- The International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) has established a set of guidelines for the protection of porters. These guidelines apply to trekking companies, trekkers and porters: www.ippg.net.
- The International Ski Federation has a general set of environmental guidelines. These guidelines are very basic and consist of a list of issues to consider, such as transportation, energy, sewage etc. These guidelines can be found at: www.fis-ski.com/uk/rulesandpubs/73/70.html.

- The ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work aims to ensure that social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development. The Declaration commits the signatory states to respect and promote the ILO principles and rights of workers. www.ilo.org.
- The International Mountaineering and Climbing Foundation (UIAA) has established codes for mountain expeditions (www.uiaa.ch):
Recommended Code of Practice for High Altitude Guided Commercial Expeditions (International Mountaineering and Climbing Foundation (UIAA), 1997)
 - UIAA Ethical Code for Expeditions (International Mountaineering and Climbing Foundation (UIAA), 1997)
 - UIAA International Mountain Code (International Mountaineering and Climbing Foundation (UIAA), 1997)

Examples

Examples of Latin American UIAA environmental label holders are:

- Fernando Grajales expeditions, Argentina (www.brokersinternet.com.ar/grajalesnet)
- INKA expediciones, Argentina (www.inka.com.ar)

TMI Andes cooperates with partners in Northern Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela to conserve the alpine grasslands known as paramos. Community-based conservation projects sponsored by TMI strengthen the skills required by rural populations to improve their livelihoods. TMI Andes supports traditional mountain cultures and promotes public awareness of mountain issues through education and research (www.mountain.org).

The Inka Porter Project (Porteadores Inka Ñan is its local Quechua title) is dedicated to improving working conditions and practices of all porters and donkey drivers (arrieros), and helping to protect the environment in Peru and the Andes. The projects are based on input from the porters' themselves, which helps them build a more powerful self-image through participating in practical, health and environmental projects (www.peruweb.org/porters).

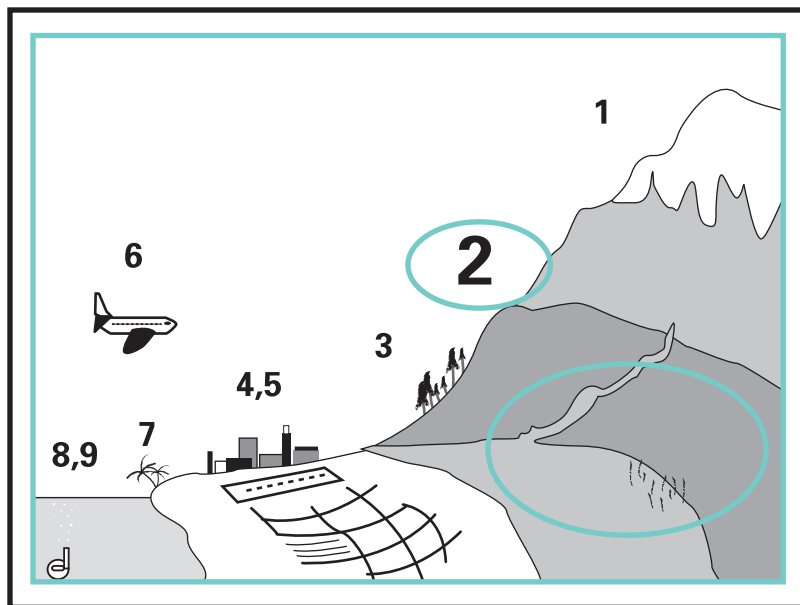
The National Ski Areas Association's SWAG (Sharing Warmth Around the Globe, more information available at: www.swagusa.org) program is dedicated to the distribution of discarded ski resort uniforms to those in need in cold weather countries throughout the world. For example, in Peru 1,000 winter outfits were delivered by **Humanitarian International Services Group**.





(sheet 2)

Lakes, rivers, and other bodies of freshwater



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

Lakes, rivers, waterfalls, creeks and hot springs offer a wide range of possibilities for adventure, leisure and nature tourism products. These can be geographical as well as cultural destinations. They may include sites of historical or cultural significance (e. g. rivers used for exploration and colonization purposes, towns with important functions as ports or markets), as well as traditions such as cultural celebrations or old fishing or sailing techniques.

Facilities

Tourism facilities may include constructions near or by the water, such as visitors' centres, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, quays, observation points and others.

Activities

- ▶ Accommodation operations
- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Canoeing
- ▶ Cultural/historical sites
- ▶ General boat trips
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Hot springs
- ▶ Information centers for visitors
- ▶ Market visits
- ▶ Non-traditional animal farms (fish, freshwater turtles, alligators, others)
- ▶ Rafting
- ▶ Sailing
- ▶ Sport-fishing
- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Tubing
- ▶ Water-skiing
- ▶ Waterfall visits
- ▶ Wildlife watching
- ▶ Wind-surfing

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** These may affect boat captains, guides, cooks and others. Examples are long working hours, inadequate protection against weather conditions, and lack of insurance and medical care.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. Also, companies may modify the façades of buildings and place signs in a way that pollutes the prevailing cultural landscape.
3. **Safety issues:** Rafting and white-water canoeing can be life threatening, and tourists may not meet the physical requirements needed to practice these activities, thus risking their lives. Other kinds of accidents can happen, such as being pushed by rushing water towards walls of rocks while rafting.



Suggested actions

1. Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid restaurants, hotels, and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Adopt a code of conduct on human and fair treatment of employees (see guidelines and codes of conduct). Examples of these codes are:
 - ▶ The IPPG (www.ippg.net). See also sheet 1: Activities on high mountains, volcanoes, caves, and other geographical and geological features (sheet 1). River-based activities usually take place in mountain areas. Therefore, local tour operators may employ the same people for rafting trips as for trekking.
 - ▶ The ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work aims to ensure that social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development.

2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle

When possible, work with those tour operators at the destination that care about the local community, its culture, and lifestyle. Together, you can apply the following measures:

- Adopt specific policies for the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of communities visited around rivers and lakes.
- Promote understanding and respect of local cultures, their customs, and their traditions.
- Ask community leaders about which activities they are willing to share or participate in with tourists. Respect their decisions, and do not impose the presence of visitors when they are not welcome.
- Provide visitors with briefings to minimize their negative impact on the local culture, for example:
 - ▶ clothing which should or should not be worn;
 - ▶ subjects that should not be raised;
 - ▶ language, such as vulgarities, that should not be used;
 - ▶ areas that should not be entered;
 - ▶ items that should not be touched;
 - ▶ places, items or people that should not be photographed;
 - ▶ performances or events that require avoidance of certain behavior (laughing, dancing) etc.

- Adopt cultural and social impact assessments as a regular company activity. Include feedback from representatives of the local community.
- Support training of local people on tourism management as a way to avoid or mitigate social and cultural negative impacts.
- The country's or region's language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of the local language to name tourist destinations and for posting signs. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as complements for the local language, not as substitutes.
- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign languages, remind them of the importance of their own language.

3. Safety issues

Tour operators are responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and the customers who are visiting a destination; thus, the enterprise should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can request proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that hotels have adequate safety measures, such as fire escapes and properly equipped bathroom facilities, that guides and drivers have the proper training and

licenses, and that restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to ensure that the following measures are taken:

- Comply with national/local safety regulations.
- Study safety recommendations and reports on risks (currents, whirlpools, and others) for your destination.
- Check weather reports regularly for the areas visited by your company.
- Obey warning signs on risks and dangers.
- Design and implement emergency protocols.
- Take out insurance to protect your customers and employees.
- Train personnel on risk assessment.
- Train personnel on how to behave in emergency situations (first aid, emergency protocols).
- Inform tourists about each activity's physical requirements and demands.
- Make sure that tourists are carefully instructed on safety measures.
- Make sure to have appropriate equipment that is in good condition.
- Maintain up to date safety and first-aid equipment.



There are some general safety issues for canoeing and rafting. Be aware that the destination's circumstances may require specific safety measures, so make sure that your operator has checked with the local authorities. Tour operators should address the following guidelines with regard to their own staff and tourists:

- Wear your life jacket. Make sure it is the proper size and in good condition. There must be a serviceable life jacket aboard for each person.
- Don't stand up in a canoe or raft.
- Always paddle directly into or away from the wake of larger boats.
- If you capsize, stay with the canoe or raft. If you are in a strong current or white water, float down river feet first and toes up, with the canoe or raft ahead of you.
- Do not drink alcohol before or while canoeing or rafting as it affects balance, coordination, and judgment.
- For more stability in rough conditions, kneel on the bottom of the canoe or raft instead of sitting on the seats.
- The most experienced paddler should take the stern position.
- Know the conditions before you set out. Always paddle within your abilities.
- Load the canoe or raft evenly, both fore and aft and from side to side.
- Be sure that you have the right boat for the conditions.
- Wear proper clothing, including a hat. If you end up in the water, do not remove your clothes. They will help to keep you afloat as well as to protect you against hypothermia.
- Stay away from low head dams. They are extremely dangerous from both up and down stream.
- Rough water, white water, or rapids are not for beginners. Always wear a solid, correctly fitted helmet when white water canoeing.
- Paddle near shore, out of channels.
- Paddle with a partner.
- Always leave a float plan with someone ashore. Be specific about where you plan to go and when you will be back. Be sure to report back in when you return.

Make sure that rafting and canoe companies use trained guides who know how to react in emergency situations in order to safeguard the tourists' and their own safety.

Planet Issues

1. **Degradation of aquatic/freshwater environments and shoreline:** These are caused by practicing tourism activities, and may include trample damage to bank and shoreline vegetation, soil erosion and compaction near landing areas, damage to nesting sites (birds, turtles, alligators, etc.) among other harm. Disturbance may be caused by physical presence of humans handling and transporting canoes or rafts.
2. **Disturbance of wildlife:** Vulnerable species include birds, fish, crabs, otters, crocodiles, aquatic larvae of insects living in mud, and many others.
3. **Over-fishing:** Fish population might diminish due to excessively large catches, which may be caused by the absence of limits on how much one can fish, and the lack of monitoring on local fish populations.
4. **Generation of solid waste:** Tourism may increase the amount of waste generated at the destination. Waste might be discarded in the water, thus spoiling the quality of the destination. Also, inappropriate disposal may impact the communities that are involved in providing services.
5. **Impact of construction on physical and biological environments:** Practicing tourism activities in rivers, lakes, waterfalls, hot springs and other bodies of water may require general facilities such as visitor centers, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, quays,

observation points and others, which will have impact not only during construction but also during operation. New trails might be needed to access waterfalls, pools, riverbanks, and lakeshores. Construction might involve removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of waste, and other factors. These facilities may also be built too close to the water.

Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practice. Moreover, choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. As a tour operator, one can investigate the ways that local canoe and rafting agencies try to minimize their impact on the environment. Work with your local tour operators in order to ensure implementation of the following measures:

1. **Degradation of aquatic/freshwater environments and shorelines**
 - Adopt a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices, defining what your company or personnel can and cannot do during lake and river expeditions. Make sure that all your personnel understand and apply the code.
 - Keep regulations up to date for all tourism destinations visited by your company.



- Make sure that guides provide reliable information and that they use appropriate equipment.
- Routinely use the same landing spots.
- Promote water sports and activities that have less impact on the natural environment.
- Avoid landing on banks that are susceptible to erosion.
- Avoid landing on banks that are covered with vegetation.
- If your company manages its own area or destination, plan appropriate access to waterfalls, pools and other attractions to minimize impact. Avoid areas where wildlife congregates.
- Support studies that generate information on freshwater ecology, geography and geology. Use that knowledge to up-grade your sustainable products.

2. Disturbance of wildlife

- Adopt impact assessments on biodiversity as a regular company activity. A useful tool is the “Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment-Tourism Activities,” IBISTA, which can be obtained through Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).
- Instruct tourists to make the least noise possible.

- Support studies that generate information on biodiversity, and use that knowledge to upgrade your sustainable products.
- Train your personnel on the plants and animals in the area.
- Include interesting biodiversity information as part of the tour experience.
- Do not feed the animals or allow visitors to do so.
- Tell tourists how to minimize disturbance and maximize enjoyment.

3. Over-fishing

- For freshwater fishing, stay within the legally established amounts, and respect closed seasons.
- Report any decrease in fish population that you notice to local authorities.
- Do not use illegal fishing methods.

4. Generation of solid waste

- Adopt measures to reduce, reuse, recycle and/or adequately dispose of waste, including that generated during construction.
- Verify adequate final disposal of trash and waste generated by your operation.

- Don't leave fishing gear or other materials behind.
- Minimize buying products that generate waste, such as plastic bottles. Provide refillable bottles.
- Don't use disposable dishes, cups, or silverware.
- When possible, reutilize paper, containers, and other reusable items.
- Participate in recycling programs when available.
- Separate solid wastes for reutilization, recycling and adequate final disposal.
- Inform visitors about recycling, and motivate them and your employees to contribute to proper waste management.

5. Impact of construction on the physical and biological environments

If you or your tour operators are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities near aquatic attractions, the following mitigating measures should be applied:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion

with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.

- When possible, design facilities that could eventually be removed.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.
- Make sure that residual waters – sewage – will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Make sure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.

If your packages involve the use of visitors' facilities, make sure that your customers understand these policies. Urge your clients to comply with them.





Profit Issues

- 1. Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
- 2. No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if goods and services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally.

Suggested actions

- 1. Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow.**
 - Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
 - Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Inventory the tourist attractions that

are available in the region throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.

- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.
- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.

2. No contribution made to the local community

The operation of your packages can be carried out in a way that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that will benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Make sure that suppliers at the destinations hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.

- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Consult with local authorities about the most appropriate allocations, such as improvement of social services and education.

Certification

- The NEAP label (Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program) includes criteria on collaboration with the local community (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp): they recommend that tour operators:
 - Provide constructive ongoing contributions to local communities.
 - Be sensitive to, interpret, and involve different cultures, particularly indigenous ones.
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. This could be a good tool to identify partners and suppliers in that country. The CST for tour operators includes prevention of impacts, protection of the natural environment, management of emissions and garbage, efficient resource management, human resource management and training, and direct

and indirect socioeconomic benefits, among others. Information is available at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr



- The PAN Parks Initiative involves certification, principles and criteria for natural parks in Europe. The WWF PAN Parks project is an initiative to raise awareness and support for Europe's protected areas through tourism. Principles and criteria have been established as the basis for recognition as a PAN park. These are concerned with the inherent quality of the natural heritage, natural resource management, visitor management and the quality of the visitor experience, and the existence of a responsible tourism development strategy. Involvement of the local community and tourism enterprises, both in drawing up the strategy and in working with the park authority on implementation, is a fundamental requirement. (www.panparks.org)

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- The International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) has established a set of guidelines for the protection of porters applying to trekking companies, trekkers and porters; see: www.ippg.net. Since rafting and canoeing take



place in mountainous areas, these activities are usually organized by tour operators that also do mountain climbing trips, hikes and other mountain sports (see Mountain Sports, sheet 1). They usually use the same personnel, for example, to transport gear such as the rafts, tents, clothing, personal belongings of tourists.

- The ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work aims to ensure that social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development. The Declaration commits the signatory states to respect and promote the ILO principles and rights of workers. www.ilo.org.



Examples

Fundación Ríos Tropicales in Costa Rica

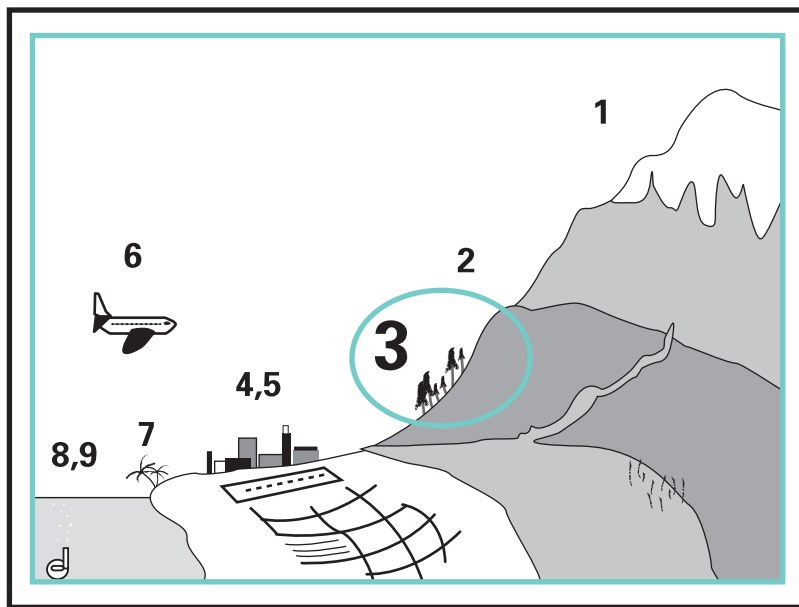
(www.riostropicales.com/pages/foundation.html) is a private, non-profit organization working under the auspices of the outdoor adventure company, Ríos Tropicales. It was founded in 1994 because of the increasing concern about the hydroelectric projects proposed on the Pacuare and Reventazón Rivers, and about the well-being of the surrounding communities. The Foundation functions independently. However, the issues on which it focuses are of interest to the majority of the customers of Ríos Tropicales and all river runners, as well as to all environmentally concerned individuals.

Their mission is to preserve, protect and restore Costa Rica's rivers, streams and watersheds. In doing so, they hope to create local environmental awareness of river issues, support environmental activities and projects that promote sustainable development and environmental education, and fund more thorough studies of aquatic systems.

They also initiated a river environmental education program in the Caribbean region of Turrialba and Siquirres. The objectives are to educate children about the rivers of their community and their impact upon them. They intend to motivate the students to take action as they grow up in order to keep the rivers clean and free-flowing, and to practice sustainable farming and developmental methods through efficient use of the valuable natural resources of their surroundings. The pilot program began at the Escuela Eduardo Peralta Jiménez in the town of Tucurrique, which is about 24 km east of the Cachí Dam on the Reventazón River. Tucurrique is a small, conservative and very rural community that is primarily dependent on the cultivation of palmito and pejibaye. With a low source of income, the town lacks much infrastructure. The roads are unpaved. There is no local dump for waste, and sanitation measures are lacking. Under this scenario, they intend to bring about some change and to help the community prosper in a sustainable manner.

(sheet 3)

Forests and protected nature areas



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to forests and protected nature areas in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

This fact sheet concerns tourism products that take place in forests and protected nature areas in general. Attractions within these areas may include natural ecosystems as well as cultural attractions. Many of today's Latin American forested areas used to be pre-Columbian cities or villages or, in more recent history, agricultural lands and cattle ranches that were eventually abandoned. Because of this background, many forest destinations also incorporate archaeological, historical, or cultural attractions that become part of the visitor's experience.

Local communities also add cultural meaning to forests through their use of medicinal plants, food, construction materials, among many other items. Forests also protect other resources that are valued by the community, such as fresh water and scenic beauty.



Nature areas can be public, private, community owned, managed by NGOs or universities, and others. Their management categories may range from “national parks” to “private reserves.”

Facilities

Offering package tours to forests and nature protected areas may require general facilities such as visitor centers, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, observation points, trails and others.

Activities

Activities may be nature or adventure oriented, as well as culturally oriented. Forest and nature area-based activities include:

- ▶ Accommodations operations
- ▶ Archaeological sites
- ▶ Biking
- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Camping
- ▶ Canopy rides
- ▶ Caving

- ▶ Cultural/historical sites
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Hiking/walking
- ▶ Horseback riding
- ▶ Information centers for visitors
- ▶ Rappeling
- ▶ Tram rides
- ▶ Trekking
- ▶ Waterfall visits

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** These may affect guides, cooks and drivers. Examples are long working hours, lack of protection against weather conditions on mountains and lack of insurance and medical care.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists’ lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local

language. Also, companies may modify the façades of buildings and place signs in a way that pollutes the prevailing cultural landscape.

3. **Safety issues:** People may fall, get lost in unauthorized (“off-limits”) zones, suffer from sunstroke or dehydration, and be bitten by animals such as poisonous snakes, or stung by wasps.

Suggested actions

1. Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven’t, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid restaurants, hotels, and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Make sure that customers are informed on tipping guides and porters prior to departure.
- Ensure that local suppliers use a code of conduct on human and fair treatment of employees (see guidelines and codes of conduct).

2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its culture and lifestyle

When possible, work with tour operators at the destination that care about the local community, its culture and lifestyle. Together, you can apply the following measures:

- Adopt specific policies for the protection of the cultural and historical patrimony of the communities around forests and nature areas involved in the visit.
- Promote understanding and respect of local cultures, their customs and traditions.
- Provide visitors with briefings to minimize their negative impact on the local culture, for example on:
 - ▶ clothing which should or should not be worn;
 - ▶ subjects that should not be raised.
 - ▶ language, such as vulgarities, that should not be used
 - ▶ areas that should not be entered;
 - ▶ items that should not be touched;
 - ▶ places, items or people that should not be photographed;
 - ▶ performances or events that require avoidance of certain behavior (laughing, dancing) etc.
- Adopt cultural and social impact assessments as a regular company activity. Include feedback from representatives of the local community. Share reports with customers.



- Support training of local people on tourism management as a way to avoid or mitigate social and cultural negative impacts.
- The country's or region's language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of the local language to name tourist destinations and for signs. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as complements for the local language, not as substitutes.
- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign language, remind them on the importance of their own language.

3. Safety issues

Tour operators are responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and the customers who are visiting a destination; thus, the enterprise should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can request proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that hotels have adequate safety measures, such as fire escapes and properly equipped bathroom facilities, that guides and drivers have the proper training and licenses, and that restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to ensure that the following measures are taken:

- Comply with national / local safety regulations.
- Design and implement emergency protocols.
- Study safety recommendations and reports on risks for your destination.
- If you are the manager of the nature area, maintain trails to prevent people from falling due to unsafe conditions. If you are a user of the nature area, urge management to keep their trails in good condition.
- Before beginning the tour, make sure that tourists have sun screen, bottled water, appropriate hiking shoes, sun glasses, hats, and any other item that might make the experience more enjoyable and avoid potential health risks.
- Check weather reports regularly for the areas visited by your company.
- Obey warning signs on risks and dangers.
- Take out insurance to protect your customers and employees.
- Train personnel on risk assessment.
- Train personnel on how to behave in emergency situations (first aid, emergency protocols).
- Inform tourists about each activity's physical requirements and demands.
- Make sure that tourists are carefully instructed on safety measures.

- Make sure to have appropriate equipment that is in good condition.
- Maintain up to date safety and first-aid equipment.
- Respect wild animal territories (e.g. peccaries).
- Respect zoning: Do not enter unauthorized trails.
- Avoid any potentially dangerous situation, such as feeding wild animals, wandering off official trails, crossing rivers, and others.

Planet Issues

1. **Inadequate land use planning:** Lack of planning affects the interaction between tourism activities and the natural surroundings, especially when business decisions take priority over environmental protection.
2. **Lack of a nature area management plan:** Conservation goals are not clear, actions might be dispersed and inefficient, fundraising might be difficult due to lack of credibility, local support may diminish, and nature preservation might suffer.
3. **Degradation of ecosystems due to visits:** Damage to vegetation, trail erosion and compaction, disturbance of fauna, changes in animal behaviour, scared animals driven away from their habitat, accumulation of waste left by tourists, and others.
4. **Generation of solid waste:** Tourism may increase the amount of waste generated at the destination. Waste might be left behind in the forest, thus spoiling the quality of the destination. Also, inappropriate disposal may impact the communities involved in providing services.
5. **Impact of constructions on the physical and biological environments:** Practicing tourism activities in forests and nature areas may require general facilities such as visitor centres, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, observation points and others, which will have impact not only during construction but also during operation. They include removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of wastes, and others.
6. **Purchase of unsustainable souvenirs, foods, and other products and services which endanger biodiversity:** Souvenirs and meals could be made from endangered plant or animal species.
7. **Disturbance caused by construction and operation of canopy rides:** Specific issues of canopy rides are damage caused to trees during construction and use, as well as disturbance of wildlife.



Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

1. Inadequate land use planning

- For your package tours, choose destinations that have a land use plan.
- The planning and realization of new tourist facilities should be preceded by environmental impact assessments. Obtaining a building permit should also be part of the procedure before construction starts.
- In Costa Rica, the Instituto Costarricense de Turismo, ICT, has designed a "General Plan of Sustainable Tourism Development, 2002-2012." This process is based on the principle that land use planning and management is basic to promote environmental, social and economic sustainable tourism. More information can be found at: www.visitcostarica.com.
- Another example of this is the spatial planning of nature areas in and around the National Refuge Gandoca Manzanillo, Talamanca, Costa Rica (see map). More information about how this was done can be obtained from SINAC (www.sinac.go.cr).

2. Lack of a nature area management plan

One major action is the development of a program for ecologically sound and socially responsible nature area management. This programme should include several main issues, among which the following three are the most important:

- A. Sustainable nature area management
- B. Increasing environmental and social awareness of visitors
- C. Collaboration with local communities

If your operation is using a private nature area, an area managed by a local organization or an NGO, or a public nature park or reserve, suggest that managers develop such a program and support them in their efforts.

3. Degradation of ecosystems due to tourist visits

- Adopt a code for environmentally and socially responsible practice, defining what your company or personnel can and cannot do during expeditions to nature areas. Make sure that all your personnel understand and apply the code.
- Adopt impact assessments on biodiversity as a regular company activity. A useful tool is the "Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment-Tourism Activities," IBISTA, which can be obtained through

the Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).

- Keep up to date regulations of all forests and nature destinations visited by your company.
- Work with small groups of visitors, especially in fragile areas.
- Stay only within zones established for public use. Do not enter restricted areas.
- Determine which areas are accessible, and determine the appropriate time for tourist visits, for example, with regard to animal breeding seasons.
- Make sure that guides and porters have received training on environmentally responsible trekking, e.g. using stoves instead of making campfires, carrying waste out instead of discarding it in the environment, etc.
- Support studies that generate information on forest biodiversity and ecology, and use that knowledge to upgrade the quality of your sustainable products.
- Make sure that guides provide reliable information, and that they use the appropriate equipment.
- Support sustainable park management by complying with all rules and guidelines.
- If your company manages its own area or destination, plan suitable trails that minimize impact.
- Avoid areas where wildlife congregates.

4. **Generation of solid waste**

- Adopt measures to reduce, reutilize, recycle and/or adequately dispose of waste, including that generated during construction.
- Verify adequate final disposal of trash and waste generated by your operation.
- Minimize buying products that generate waste, such as plastic bottles. Provide refillable bottles.
- Don't use disposable dishes, cups, or silverware.
- When possible, reutilize paper, containers, and other reusable items.
- Participate in recycling programs when available.
- Separate solid wastes for reutilization, recycling and adequate final disposal.
- Inform visitors about recycling, and motivate them and your employees to contribute to proper waste management.

5. **Impact of construction on the physical and biological environments**

If you or your tour operators at the destination are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities within forests and nature areas, the following mitigating measures should be implemented:



- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.
- Make sure that residual waters – sewage – will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Ensure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.

If your tour packages make use of visitor facilities, make sure that your clients know these policies and that they comply with them. Choose destinations that manage their facilities responsibly.

- 6. Purchase of unsustainable souvenirs, consumption of food, and use of other products and services which endanger biodiversity**
 - Provide information on existing endangered endemic species to visitors and tour operators.
 - Inform tourists about unsustainable souvenirs.
 - Remove questionable souvenir shops from your tour.
 - Do not permit products and souvenirs made of materials from endangered species to be sold in tourist shops or anywhere else at your facilities.
 - Do not put dishes which include ingredients derived from endangered species on the menu (e.g., turtle soup, lobster).
- 7. Disturbance caused by the construction and operation of canopy rides**
 - The canopy of tropical rainforest is full of both known and unknown plant and animal species. Normally, this world is hidden from the tourists' eye, but with the aid of canopy rides visitors are able to see canopy life up close for the first time. A canopy ride usually starts at the top of a hill, where tourists are strapped into a climbing harness. They then climb to

a platform at the first of several (10 – 20) trees. The trees are connected with steel cables. With the aid of the harness and pulleys, an instructor will send the visitors on a ride through the canopy.

Examples of measures to prevent damage and destruction of plants and trees are:

- Use of protective materials in constructing canopy rides (sleeves for steel cables, only one platform per tree, and use of fallen wood (not wood that has been cut).
- Teaching tourists to not damage plants.

There are also standards for canopy rides: The Association for Challenge Course Technology or ACCT is a trade organization serving Challenge Course Professionals all over the world. The purpose of the association is to promote the use of Challenge Courses and to set minimum standards for Challenge Course installation, operation, and inspection. Information about standards can be found on the ACCT web site. These standards promote quality, safety, and ethical practices for canopy rides. (www.acctinfo.org).

Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if goods and services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally.

Suggested actions

- 1 **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow.**
 - Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
 - Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Inventory the tourist attractions that are available in the region throughout the year,



and design products that you can offer in different seasons.

- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.

2 No contribution made to the local community

The operation of your packages can be carried out in a way that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that will benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Make sure that suppliers at the destinations hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Consult with local authorities about the most appropriate allocations, such as improvement of social services and education.

Certification

- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. This could be a good tool to identify partners and suppliers in that country. The CST for tour operators includes prevention of impacts, protection of the natural environment, management of emissions and garbage, efficient resource management, human resource management and training, and direct and indirect socioeconomic benefits, among others. Information is available at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr



- The NEAP label (Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program) includes criteria on collaboration with local communities (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp); they recommend that tour operators:
 - Provide constructive ongoing contributions to local communities.
 - Be sensitive to, interpret and involve different cultures, particularly indigenous ones.
- The PAN Parks Initiative involves certification, principles and criteria for natural parks in Europe. The WWF PAN

Parks project is an initiative to raise awareness and support for Europe's protected areas through tourism. Principles and criteria have been established as the basis for recognition as a PAN park. These are concerned with the inherent quality of the natural heritage, natural resource management, visitor management and the quality of the visitor experience, and the existence of a responsible tourism development strategy. Involvement of the local community and tourism enterprises, both in drawing up the strategy and in working with the park authority on implementation, is a fundamental requirement. (www.panparks.org)

Guidelines and codes of conduct

Condé Nast Traveler EcoTourism Award. Tour agencies, tour operators, local residents, governmental bodies, media and conservation NGO's, etc., all have somewhat different interpretations of what constitutes ecotourism. Even if they agree on the basic criteria, they weigh the components differently. When it comes to certifying what constitutes sustainable ecotourism, there is little consensus. The World Tourism Organization estimates that more than 60 certification programs were created between 1992 and 2002, and the Ecotourism Association of Australia puts the number at more than 100 around the world. Because of this, ecotourism awards often play a greater role in raising awareness for ecotourism than certification. A good example of this is the Condé Nast

Traveler annual EcoTourism Award (www.cntraveller.com). This Ecotourism Award is a transparent award program, featuring the award winners for tour operator, destination and hotel/resort. Tour operators or hotels nominate themselves and submit materials and testimonials. Because of the absence of any common standard, the Condé Nast Traveler EcoTourism Award does not require winners to be certified for ecotourism. Winning the award all depends on what they can prove and what tourists think of the ecotourism product. Condé Nast Traveler then sorts through the nominees and delivers pertinent information to the judges.

- The International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) has established a set of guidelines for the protection of porters applying to trekking companies, trekkers, and porters themselves: www.ippg.net.
- The ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work aims to ensure that social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development. The Declaration commits the signatory states to respect and promote the ILO principles and rights of workers. www.ilo.org.
- Standards for canopy rides: The Association for Challenge Course Technology, the ACCT is a trade organization, serving Challenge Course Professionals all over the world. The purpose of the association is to promote the use of Challenge Courses and to set minimum standards for Challenge Course installation, operation and inspection. Information about standards can be found



on the ACCT website. These standards promote quality and safety for canopy installation, inspection, operation, and ethical practices. (www.acctinfo.org).

- Natourdata: The Dutch Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has developed a database with information on natural areas and parks. Tour operators and other parties can use the database in order to raise their awareness and get information on the nature of their holiday destination. The database includes information on nature in a variety of destinations, related sustainability topics and nature conservation projects (www.natourdata.net).
- There are several websites with regard to unsustainable souvenirs: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), species database at www.cites.org. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature also publishes a Red List of endangered species at www.redlist.org. The Worldwide Fund for Nature is campaigning to raise awareness about unsustainable souvenirs, see example section below and www.wwf.org.



Examples

WWF: understanding natural systems and conservation challenges.

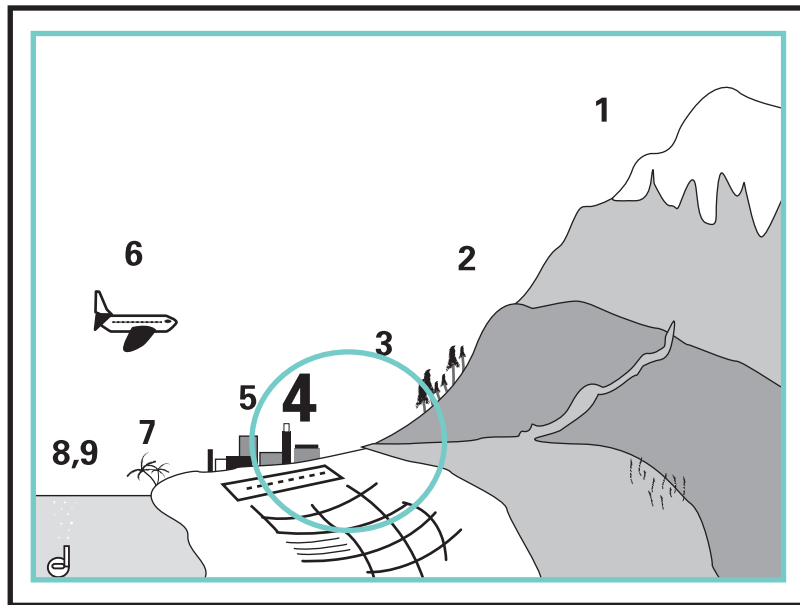
WWF's mission is the conservation of nature. To enhance members' understanding of natural systems and conservation challenges, WWF offers trips to regions of the world rich in wildlife that highlight the organization's goals. Led by a naturalist and WWF staff, travel in the congenial company of others who share the travellers' commitment to the conservation of wilderness areas. Founded in 1961, WWF has offered trips to members since 1983. Participation of tourists helps advance conservation around the globe. Source: www.worldwildlife.org/travel.

WWF and Dutch tour operator SNP join forces

The World Wide Fund for Nature has taken several initiatives to promote the development of sustainable tourism, in particular eco-tourism to nature parks. WWF thus aims to create a new source of income for the local population while at the same time encouraging local authorities, businesses, and inhabitants to take nature conservation measures. WWF has joined forces with Dutch tour operator SNP to develop and promote package tours to nature parks within and outside Europe. The package tours on offer include visits to parks that comply with the European eco-label for nature parks: PAN Parks. More info at: www.snp.nl

(sheet 4)

Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Cities and villages

Related attractions

Attractions in cities and villages include places and events of historical, architectural, educational, and cultural importance: museums, stadiums, churches, temples, monasteries, holy sites and religious celebrations, workshops, sport events, markets, cemeteries, musical and artistic festivals, renovated historical neighborhoods, restaurants and parks. The prevailing local language can also be considered as an attraction.



Facilities

Offering package tours in cities and villages may require general facilities such as lodging, restaurants, parking lots, visitor centers, restrooms, access roads, trails, and others, with universal access for all kinds of tourists.

Activities

- ▶ Accommodation operations
- ▶ Archaeological sites
- ▶ Architectural landmarks
- ▶ Botanical gardens
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Cultural/historical sites and events
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Hiking/walking
- ▶ Hiking/walking with guides
- ▶ Market visits
- ▶ Museums
- ▶ Religious/spiritual landmarks and events
- ▶ Sport events
- ▶ Tasting local food
- ▶ Zoos

Rural areas

Related attractions

Attractions in rural and agricultural areas include farms, cattle ranches, agro-industries (such as coffee and sugar processing plants), forestry plantations, farms with animals not traditionally raised as livestock (deer, iguanas, butterflies, capybaras, fresh water turtles, alligators, fish, etc.). Other places of interest include fruit orchards and plantations, vegetable gardens, and greenhouses for raising ornamental plants and flowers. Modern and traditional technologies, indigenous traditions, country lifestyle, and local foods are often part of a tour or package. Wildlife also counts, since birds and wild animals in general have made farms and ranches their home. Other attractions might include conservation and education efforts such as animal rescue centers, zoos, and botanical gardens.

Facilities

Offering package tours to rural areas may require general facilities and infrastructure such as lodging, restaurants, parking lots, visitors' centers, restrooms, roads in good condition, access to agricultural areas, and trails.

Activities

- ▶ Accommodation operations
- ▶ Animal rescue centers
- ▶ Biking
- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Botanical gardens
- ▶ Butterfly farms
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Country lifestyle experiences
- ▶ Cultural/historical sites and events
- ▶ Farms, plantations and ranches
- ▶ Four wheel driving
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Hiking/walking
- ▶ Hiking/walking with guide
- ▶ Horseback riding
- ▶ Non traditional animal farms
- ▶ Off road motor-biking
- ▶ Quad riding
- ▶ Scooter riding
- ▶ Shaman activities
- ▶ Tasting of local food
- ▶ Visitor centers
- ▶ Zoos

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** These may affect guides, cooks, drivers, and others. Examples are long working hours, inadequate protection against weather conditions, and lack of insurance and medical care.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. Also, companies may modify the façades of buildings and place signs in a way that pollutes the prevailing cultural landscape.
3. **Negative impacts on the cultural landscape of cities, towns and rural areas:** A serious cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, with the exclusion of the local language. This way, foreign languages begin to prevail over the local language in the streets and other public areas of the destinations. Also, companies might modify facades of buildings and place signs that pollute the cultural landscape.



- 3. **Safety issues:** People may fall, get lost in unauthorized (“off-limits”) zones, suffer from sunstroke or dehydration, and be bitten by animals such as poisonous snakes, or stung by wasps. Safety issues may also include risks for public health due to lack of access to drinking water and lack of quality control in restaurants.

Suggested actions

1. Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven’t, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid restaurants, hotels, and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Inform customers on tipping guides and porters prior to departure.
- Adopt a code of conduct on humane and fair treatment of employees (see guidelines and codes of conduct).

- As a tour operator, one can address local personnel that is underpaid and / or treated in an inhumane manner, for example, by avoiding restaurants, hotels, farms and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Managers of those enterprises should be urged to take corrective measures.
- More information about what is considered unacceptable labor practices and working conditions can be found at the website of ILO (International Labor Organization) (www.ilo.org).

2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community, its culture and lifestyle

Ten Rules for Responsible Traveling*

1. Show respect for natural and cultural heritages.
2. Respect local traditions.
3. Take your time.
4. Ask before you take someone’s photo.
5. In good trade, both parties are satisfied.
6. Do not give money to begging children.
7. Buy locally produced products.
8. Support local environmental activities.
9. Reduce the use of natural resources.
10. Travel in low season.

* developed by the Nordic UNESCO World Heritage Foundation, in co-operation, with the tourism industry.

When possible, work with tour operators at the destination who are concerned about the local community, its culture, and lifestyle. Together, you can implement the following measures:

- Educate tourists by means of brochures, flyers, posters, and booklets to inform them about the value of local culture.
- Post signs at the entrance of temples, churches, etc. with rules on proper conduct.
- Provide information to guests regarding local customs in order to prevent negative impact.
- Become a signatory of the International Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (www.thecode.org).



- Combat the exploitation of vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrant workers. For example, collaborate with other stakeholders in the tourist sector to raise awareness of customers regarding forced and poverty-driven prostitution practices. Develop and distribute information materials not only on the social and economic background of the sexual exploitation

of children and women, but also the risks involved when using their services (www.ilo.org).

- Organize special events to educate children, such as plays, activities, tours, drawing contests, etc. for children only. Develop educational materials especially for children and make them aware of the importance of preserving cultural heritage sites.

3. Negative impact on the cultural resources of cities, towns, and rural areas

- Organize guided tours to restoration projects in progress. When tourists can see the needs for restoration, along with the benefits of such efforts, they will be more willing to provide financial support.
- Cultural sites of great importance can be proposed for the World Heritage List of UNESCO, www.unesco.org.
- Support research studies that generate information on the history, culture, traditions, local technologies and other aspects. Use that knowledge to upgrade the quality of your sustainable products.
- Always remember that the country's or region's language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of the local language to name tourist destinations and use the local language



for signs. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as a complement, not as a substitute.

- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign language, remind them on the importance of their own.
- Invite the local government to lead the creation of an officially approved and regulated preservation and renovation plan which will contribute to the process. Include rules about modifying facades, as well as regulations about the types of signs that will not be allowed.

4. Safety issues

Tour operators are responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and the customers who are visiting a destination; thus, the enterprise should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can request proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that hotels have adequate safety measures, such as fire escapes and properly equipped bathroom facilities, that guides and drivers have the proper training and licenses, and that restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to ensure that the following measures are taken.

- Comply with national / local safety regulations. Tour operators can check whether hotels comply with national laws on safety measures such as fire escapes and hygienic bathrooms.
- Make sure that guides and drivers have the proper training, including first aid procedures, and licenses.
- Support quality control in restaurants. Tour operators can inform tourists on which restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards.
- Design and implement emergency protocols.
- Train personnel how to respond in emergency situation (first aid, emergency protocols).
- Study reports on risks and safety recommendations for your destination.
- Take out insurance to protect your customers and employees.
- If you are the manager of the farm or plantation, maintain trails to avoid people from falling due to hazardous conditions. If you are the user of a farm, urge management to keep their trails in good condition.
- Before beginning the tour, make sure that tourists have sun screen, bottled water, appropriate hiking shoes, sunglasses, hats, and other items to make the experience more enjoyable by avoiding potential health risks.

- Make sure to have appropriate equipment that is in good condition for each activity.
- Maintain up to date safety and first-aid equipment.
- Make sure that tourists are carefully instructed regarding safety measures.
- Inform tourists about the physical requirements needed to participate in each activity.
- Respect zoning: Do not enter unauthorized areas.
- Check weather reports regularly for the areas visited by your company.
- Obey warning signs on risks and dangers.
- Avoid any potentially dangerous situations, such as feeding wild animals, wandering off official trails, crossing rivers, and others.



Planet Issues

1. **Inadequate land use planning:** Lack of planning affects the interaction between tourism activities and the natural surroundings, especially when business decisions take priority over environmental protection.
2. **Impact of constructions on the physical and biological environments:** Practicing tourism activities in forests and nature areas may require general facilities such as visitor centres, restaurants, parking lots, restrooms, lodges, observation points and others, which will have impact not only during construction but also during operation. They include removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of wastes, and others.
3. **Creation of waste and discarded waste at or near cultural sites:** Waste is one of the biggest sources of irritation for tourists, and causes management problems for entrepreneurs.
4. **Purchase of unsustainable souvenirs, foods, and other products and services which endanger biodiversity:** Souvenirs and meals could be made from endangered plant or animal species.
5. **Impact from unsustainable agricultural and agro-industrial practices:** Conventional agriculture can be highly pollutant due to the use of agrochemicals. It can also be abusive of the environment, since deforestation precedes many agricultural activities.



Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with your local tour operators on the implementation of the following measures:

1. Land use planning

Governments and the tourism sector in general may consider the following policy measures to mitigate the effects of tourist facilities in cities, towns and surrounding rural areas:

- Develop a land use planning policy which provides for the protection of areas of natural importance and high biodiversity, such as by the creation of natural parks or 'green belts.' Also include the preservation of countryside or urban landscapes of cultural value. The most basic approach in planning is to develop a regional or national land-use plan that integrates tourism, environmental and socio-economic priorities. The plan should specify where tourism can be developed and to what degree, and should designate appropriate types of tourism for appropriate places (please also consult the CELB document, listed in the Certification section below, to find out more on this topic).

- The planning and realization of new tourist facilities should be preceded by environmental impact assessments. Obtaining a building permit should also be part of the procedure before construction starts.
- In addition, consider land conversion of tourist facility areas for other, more traditional income-generating activities, such as agriculture, fishing, tree plantations, etc.
- Make sure that new tourist accommodations are built only once a permit has been issued.
- Apply environmental criteria for construction materials used, the maximum height of buildings, proper disposal of building waste, etc.
- Make sure that the land use planning policy is adhered to after construction, and enforce it if necessary.

2. Impact of construction on the physical and biological environments

If you or your tour operators are involved in the construction or operation of facilities within forests and nature areas, the following mitigating measures can be useful:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.

- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.
- Make sure that residual waters – sewage – will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Ensure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.
- If your packages involve the use of visitors' facilities in forests and nature areas, make sure that your customers understand these policies and that they comply with them.

3. Creation of waste and discarded waste at / or near cultural sites and rural areas

It is important to develop an adequate waste management policy, both for solid waste from restaurants, bars, and other facilities, as well as for litter in streets and in the countryside.

Solid waste:

- Adopt measures to reduce, reutilize, recycle and/or adequately dispose of solid waste, including that generated during construction.
- Avoid purchasing products that generate waste, such as plastic containers. Purchase bulk goods for refill packaging, and introduce refillable bottles.
- In general, use products that minimize waste and that are not toxic.
- Don't use disposable dishes, cups, or silverware.
- When possible, reutilize paper, plastic containers, and other items.
- Participate in existing recycling programs.
- Separate trash from organic waste, which can be useful to local farmers).
- Whenever possible, convert biodegradable waste to compost; utilize the biomass, or process the waste with digestive anaerobic systems.
- Urge visitors and employees to contribute to waste management.
- Reject disposable bottles from suppliers and find alternatives together. Negotiate the possibility of returning glass, plastic bottles, and aluminium cans to them for recycling.



Discarded waste:

- Discuss methods with local stakeholders to combat the problem of discarded waste, e.g., by making sure sufficient trash cans are available. Bring the problem of discarded waste to the attention of your customers, and ask them to dispose of waste in a responsible manner.
- Take action to combat pollution of the environment surrounding cultural sites by displaying signs, placing a sufficient number of appropriate garbage bins that are frequently emptied.
- Verify that final disposal of trash and waste generated by your operation is suitably carried out.
- Ensure that the community has appropriate sites for garbage disposal that are managed with respect for the natural surroundings.

4. Purchase of unsustainable souvenirs, consumption of food, and use of other products and services which endanger biodiversity

- Inform visitors and local tour operators about endangered endemic species.
- Inform tourists about unsustainable souvenirs.
- Remove questionable souvenir shops from your tour.

- Do not permit products and souvenirs made of materials from endangered species to be sold in tourist shops or anywhere else at your facilities.
- Dishes which include ingredients derived from endangered species should not be offered on menus (e.g., turtle soup, lobster).

Unsustainable souvenirs

Together with the WWF, TUI Netherlands started a campaign to inform Dutch travelers about illegal souvenirs. Information was provided about souvenirs that may not be imported into the Netherlands. Furthermore, tourists were warned about the consequences for the natural environment of producing illegal souvenirs.

TUI Netherlands actively supported the campaign. The “Watch, Don’t Touch” flyers were distributed in several ways to tourists: via flight attendants, by travel agents, enclosed in travel documents and enclosed in hotel books at the destination.



TUI and WWF flyer “Watch, Don’t Touch.”

5. Impact of unsustainable agricultural and agro-industrial practices

Since the purpose of this Toolkit is to develop and promote sustainable tourism, it is important to take into consideration that the cultural and profitable components of a tourism product should also be sustainable or, at least, show clear evidence that the component is moving towards sustainability. Therefore, responsible tourism entrepreneurs must carefully examine activities:

- Agro-tourism destinations used by the tour operator must apply sustainability policies that involve the environment, society, culture, and quality of service.
- Tour operators should choose agro-tourism destinations that are applying sustainable practices such as farm diversification, alternative sources of energy, and organic production.
- The agro-tourism destination must comply with national and international environmental legislation.
- The agro-tourism destination must adopt mitigating measures to prevent environmental impact.

Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if goods and services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally.
3. **Shortage of locally produced food and basic products:** Due to the influx of tourists, the supply of locally produced foods or other types of products (e.g., building materials) may not be sufficient to meet increased demand. This can lead to unacceptable price increases or the unavailability of these products for local people because most of these products are being produced for the tourist industry.



Suggested actions

1. Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow.

- Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
- Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Inventory the tourist attractions that are available in the region throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.
- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators, and others.

2. No contribution made to the local community

The operation of your packages can be carried out in a way that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that will benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Make sure that suppliers at the destinations hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Consult with local authorities about the most appropriate allocations, such as improvement of social services and education.

3. Shortage of locally produced foods and basic products

Managers of tourist accommodations need to be aware of this possible effect and take preventative measures:

- Pass on increased costs for food and basic products in accommodation prices. Tourists are usually in a better position to pay higher prices of such products than local people.

- Plant organic vegetable gardens for additional produce.
- Import products as a last resort.


Certification

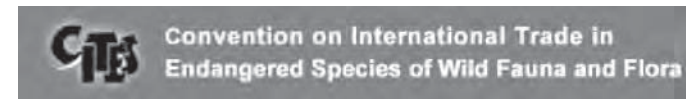
- The NEAP label (Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program) includes criteria on collaboration with the local community (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp). They recommend that tour operators:
 - Provide constructive ongoing contributions to local communities.
 - Be sensitive to, interpret and involve different cultures, particularly indigenous ones.
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. This could be a good tool to identify partners and suppliers in that country. The CST for tour operators includes prevention of impacts, protection of the natural environment, management of emissions and garbage, efficient resource management, human resource management and training, and direct and indirect socioeconomic benefits, among others. Information is available at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism: www.thecode.org.



- ILO (International Labor Organization) Conventions on standards for working conditions, www.ilo.org 
- Ideas on how tour operators and tourists can contribute to sustainable tourism: www.tourismconcern.org.uk.
- Tips for tourists to travel responsibly www.responsibletravel.com



- CITES. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), species database. www.cites.org.
- Red list. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature also publishes a Red List of endangered species. www.redlist.org.
- WWF. The Worldwide Fund for Nature is campaigning to raise awareness about unsustainable souvenirs. www.wwf.nl/souvenirs.



- The World Tourism Organization has published the 'Guide for Local Authorities - Supplementary Volume on Latin America and the Pacific.' This guide is a regional supplement to the 'Guide for Local Authorities.' It seeks to provide technical guidelines and methodological instruments for local authorities and public service officials at the local level, as well as private developers, enabling them to assume their responsibilities in this field with more effective, up-to-date knowledge. The publication includes many case studies of community-based tourism all over Latin America, and describes realistic design approaches for achieving sustainable tourism development at the local level. The guide can be ordered at www.world-tourism.org/cgi-bin/infoshop.storefront.
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, has adopted a series of charters for the restoration and conservation of monuments and sites, for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas, and for the conservation and revitalization of sites of cultural importance. There is plenty of information at the website: <http://www.international.icomos.org/>.

Examples

In 1978, **the old city center of Quito** became the first urban site in Latin America to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. As a result of social and economic change, well-off residents moved out, abandoning the old city, which turned into a transit area for city buses and street vendors. As a result, the sometimes more than 400 year-old buildings and public spaces deteriorated quickly. Property owners even tried to hasten the decay so they could demolish them and build new structures. Government attempts to halt the decline failed, and an initiative to link conservation with tourism was only able to gather a small part of the investment required to conserve the historic center.

It was not until the creation of the Empresa del Centro Histórico de Quito (Downtown Quito's Historic Enterprise, or ECH) that things changed. The ECH is a non-profit, semi autonomous public-private enterprise, created by the municipality of Quito. Creating this company proved critical for streamlining funds, contracting and procurement procedures. Nowadays, restoration is going well and new housing is being made available for the original residents of the restored buildings. The Quito initiative is widely known throughout the region, and has prompted several similar initiatives such as those in Santa Domingo, Montevideo, Buenos Aires and Recife.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct to combat child abuse

The Fritidesor Group has not just signed the international Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism; the company is also actively working on the implementation of the code within the organization. To this end, the Fritidesor Group has taken the following actions:

- Official recognition within the company's sustainable policy statement of the connection between tourism and child exploitation
- Delivery of training modules to all staff, including background information on child abuse, ECPAT, and conflict training
- Providing awareness-raising programs for customers, mainly during welcome for arrivals, at five pilot destinations
- Distribution of information to all customers through leaflets, brochures, the company's website, and an in-flight video

The Fritidesor Group is also working on a specific clause to be included in its contracts with hotels. Employees of the Fritidesor Group express their pride in the initiative taken on this topic. The tour operator has also received positive comments from both customers and local suppliers and communities. Source: www.toinitiative.org.

Beyond Touring is a tour operator in Belize that has as its mission the promotion of ecotourism opportunities that

support community enhancement, education, and research. Beyond Touring has trips to the Maya area, primarily Belize, which includes archaeological investigations and community service with cultural experiences. Beyond Touring is a growing company that strives to develop a non-profit foundation with money generated from ecotourism opportunities that will provide resources for conservation, education, community enhancement and service, and academic research throughout the Maya world.

Beyond Touring is a member of BETA (Belize Ecotourism Association); more information is available at: www.beyondtouring.com

Tour operator TUI is keeping a close eye on the activities offered to customers by their local agents and at the destinations. Some particular activities are only included in the tour program when the provider has signed a document that the activity is carried out in a sustainable way (for instance, activities involving animals). TUI staff workers at the destinations take an active role in the selection of activities, and receive training on sustainable practices. Source: www.tui.nl. In 2002, TUI signed the ECPATS code of conduct against the sexual exploitation of children. TUI was the first operator in the Netherlands to sign the ECPAT code. In order to inform tourists, the following actions were taken:





1. A short informative text about compliance with ECPAT has been published in the TUI brochure, which points out problem destinations.
2. Within the travel documents issued by a number of tour operators, a text has been placed to warn tourists about the fact that sexual exploitation of minors is punishable by law at the destination and in the Netherlands.
3. During the introductory talks given, TUI representatives inform tourists about the issue.
4. An information leaflet can be found in the hotel catalogs of a number of tour operators.

TUI Netherlands has chosen three pilot destinations to concentrate the actions of informing “key persons” at the destinations. The pilot destinations are Costa Rica, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic. A representative of TUI Netherlands visited Costa Rica, where a workshop was organized to address the issue of how incoming operations can help to fight sexual exploitation of minors in relation to tourism. The workshop was attended by TUIs incoming agent Camino Travel, as well as 15 other incoming agents in San Jose. The participants recognized the need to take action, and have agreed to follow up this workshop by making a concrete plan to fight this problem in Costa Rica.

(sheet 5)

Accommodations

Introduction

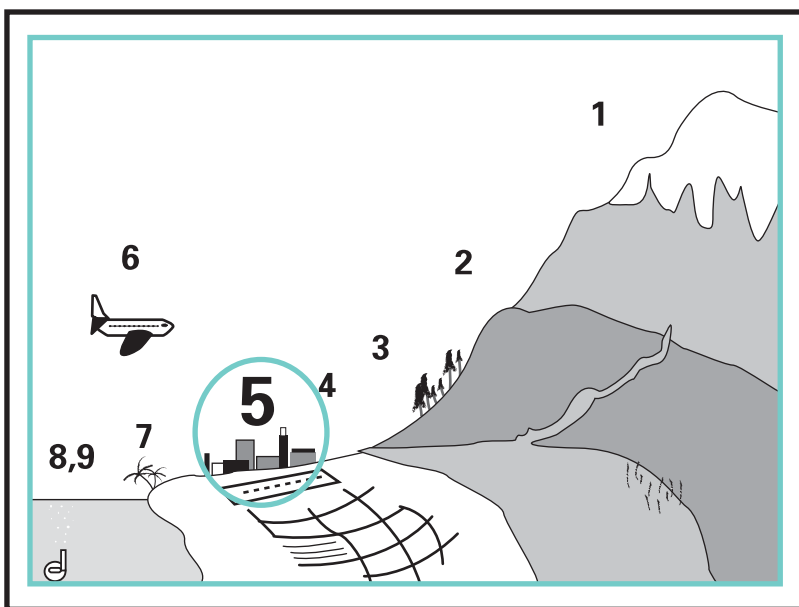
Lodging plays an important part in the package tours provided by tour operators to Latin America. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the accommodation facilities provided by those packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for their mitigation.

Facilities

Tourism accommodation facilities exist at all kinds of destinations and are associated with all kinds of attractions, such as mountain environments, forested and designated nature sites, rural and urban locations, river and beach areas, and others.

Such facilities include large hotels, eco-lodges, small ecological hotels, old monasteries or historical homes that have been converted into hotels, tent camp sites, and others.

No matter where the facilities are located, or what their characteristics are, they must be planned, constructed, and operated in a sustainable manner.





Activities and services

Activities, attractions, and services that may take place in and around lodging facilities include:

- ▶ Accommodation operations
- ▶ Architectural landmarks
- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Camping
- ▶ Cultural/historical sites and events
- ▶ General tourism facilities
- ▶ Information centers
- ▶ Sport events
- ▶ Swimming (in pools)
- ▶ Tasting of local food

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** Unfortunately, the tourist industry is a sector where labor conditions can sometimes be harsh. Some of the issues are long working hours, lack of job security or dependable income, seasonal labor, badly paid jobs, lack of health insurance, and limited career prospects.

These may affect vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrants.

2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. This way, foreign languages begin to prevail over the local language in the streets and other public areas of the destinations.
3. **Safety issues:** The most pertinent health risks in accommodations are unsafe water, Legionella infection, food poisoning, and risk of fire.

Suggested actions

1. **Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions**
If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practice. If they haven't, motivate them to adopt one. Also choose responsible suppliers of accommodation facilities and other goods and services. You can decide to avoid

restaurants, hotels and other businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Work with your local tour operator(s) and the management of accommodations in the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Declare your commitment to the ILO Conventions on basic human and labor rights (see codes of conduct).
- Offer fair wages, and sign formal labor contracts with all employees, preferably for the long term.
- Enable staff to take part in management training or other types of training which will enhance their career opportunities. Workers can be instructed by staff members who have received more advanced training.
- Establish policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of employees in the workplace.
- As a tour operator, one can address the issue local workers who are underpaid and/or treated in an inhumane manner. For example, avoid lodging where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Hotel managers should be informed of the problem, and asked to take corrective measures.

2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community, its culture and lifestyle**

When possible, work with tour operators and lodging enterprises at the destination that care about the local community, its culture and lifestyle.

Very often, such negative impact can be overcome with appropriate information on the background of local customs, along with practical suggestions (“do’s and don’ts”); tour operators increasingly distribute such information. In addition, the management of accommodations may take the following measures:

- Provide staff training on dealing with situations of conflicting cultural values.
- Provide (English) language classes for your staff.
- Provide information for guests on cultural and religious aspects by posting notices in guest rooms, and leaving folders and flyers wherever visitors, as well as posting signs near cultural objects, etc.
- Provide support to local schools.

Managers of tourist accommodations can also contribute to the prevention and/or mitigation of social problems, for example:

- Employ local people whenever possible.



- Support the local economy, e.g. the agricultural and fishery sector. Buy food that has been produced locally, provided that this does not negatively affect local food supplies and/or prices.
- Respect restricted access to resources such as farmland, coastal areas, fishing grounds, water or forests upon which local people depend. Use of these resources should always be in co-operation with the local population. Permission for access to areas on which local people depend for their income should be secured.
- Prevent the loss of cultural traditions by enabling local personnel to practice their religious beliefs and attend important religious festivities.
- Become a signatory of the international Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (www.thecode.org).
- Combat the exploitation of vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrant workers. For example, cooperate with other stakeholders in the tourist sector to raise awareness of customers about forced and poverty-driven prostitution. Develop and distribute information materials on the social and economic background of the exploitation of children and women, as well as the risks involved when using their services (www.ilo.org)
- Support renovation projects for local buildings.

A specific point of attention in the tourist industry is the physical exploitation of children and women. Accommodations can take several actions to combat these practices:

- Declare your commitment to the international guidelines to combat sexual exploitation of children.
- Combat practices of physical exploitation of children and women in your accommodation by doing the following:
 - ▶ Inform tourists about the legal prohibition of prostitution and possible consequences of breaking the law;
 - ▶ Oblige customers to always hand in the room key at the reception desk before leaving the premises.
 - ▶ Have the receptionist on night duty prevent customers from taking people to their room.
- Always remember that the local language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of this language to name tourist destinations and for signs that are posted. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as a complement, not as a substitute.
- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign languages, remind them of the importance of their own.



3. Safety issues

Tour operators are responsible for the safety of their customers and personnel while visiting a destination and they should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee safety. You can demand proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs if hotels have sufficient on safety measures such as fire escapes and hygienic bathrooms and that restaurants have a proven record of implementing hygienic standards. Important measures include:

- Warn tourists before their booking for health issues.
- Health guidelines and vaccinations are available at national and local health centres and specialized hospitals. Examples of these in the Netherlands are GGDs (regional health care services), Havenziekenhuis, Rotterdam and AMC, Amsterdam. An international website for health guidelines is the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC): www.cdc.gov/travel.
- Comply with national / local safety regulations. Tour operators can verify that hotels comply with national law on safety measures such as fire escapes, fire extinguishers, and sanitary bathrooms. Also make sure that guides and drivers have the proper education, licenses, permits, and first aid training when necessary.
- Support quality control in facility kitchens.
- Design and implement emergency protocols, including evacuation plans in case of fires, earthquakes and others.
- Train personnel in what to do in an emergency situation (first aid, emergency protocols).
- Adopt insurance to protect your customers and employees.
- Install a purification system for drinking water.
- Showers and plumbing should be regularly sterilized with water of 80 degrees Celsius to prevent survival of the Legionella bacteria. You may want to check with national authorities or tour operators to ensure that you have taken all precautionary measures to combat Legionella.
- Never cut vegetables with equipment that has been in contact with meat. Make sure that all food ingredients are fresh, and that hot meals are thoroughly cooked.
- Install fire extinguishers at a number of key sites throughout the facility, and provide staff with instructions for their use.
- Maintain up to date safety and first-aid equipment.
- Post emergency telephone numbers (ambulance, police and fire departments) in guest rooms and the reception area.



Planet Issues

Construction and operation of accommodation facilities may have different impacts on the environment. Uncontrolled expansion of tourist resorts is usually due to a lack of both land use planning and an integrated land management policy. In addition, tourist resorts are often built in natural areas or picturesque countryside. So, if not responsibly planned, the construction of such facilities may lead to environmental problems, degradation of ecosystems and cultural landscapes and loss of biodiversity.

Mass tourism can temporarily increase the number of people who reside in one area. This will increase the pressure on the existing public services that were originally only meant for the local people; thus, the amount of waste, sewage, energy use, and fresh water consumption all will increase. Inappropriate disposal of wastes may impact the natural environment as well as sites of cultural value.

1. **Inadequate land use planning:** Lack of planning affects the interaction between tourism activities and the natural surroundings, especially when business decisions take priority over environmental protection.
2. **Design and construction:** Lodging facilities may be designed in ways that cause impact on the surroundings, not only during their construction but also during operation. When designs are unsuitable in terms of

the characteristics of the physical, natural and cultural surroundings, negative visual impact is the result.

3. **Solid waste:** Waste is one of the biggest sources of annoyances of tourists, and causes management problems for entrepreneurs.
4. **Energy:** Lack of an energy policy results in excessive consumption and inefficient use.
5. **Water management:** Lack of water management leads to excessive water consumption and inefficient use.
6. **Wastewater:** Residual waters – sewage -- may contaminate the environment and affect human health.
7. **Swimming pools:** Sustainability issues include inefficient use of both water and energy, as well as inappropriate use of chemicals for cleaning and maintenance.
8. **Garden management:** Potential problems include the irresponsible use of pesticides and other chemicals, along with the introduction of foreign species.
9. **Lack of expertise in environmental management:** Unawareness of sustainability issues may be a problem in itself. This is usually due to a need to inform and train the accommodation's staff, management, and guests.

Suggested actions

Lodging plays an important role in your package tours. You should carefully choose which lodging companies you will include in your itineraries. Use a sustainability checklist to select the most environmentally friendly hotels. Consider the following aspects:

1. Land use planning

Governments and the tourism sector in general should consider the following policy measures in order to mitigate the effects of tourist facilities in cities, towns, and surrounding rural areas:

- Develop a land use planning policy which provides for the protection of areas of natural importance and high biodiversity, e.g. by the creation of natural parks or 'green belts.' Also include the preservation of countryside or urban landscapes of cultural value. The most basic approach in planning is to develop a regional or national land-use plan that integrates tourism with environmental and socioeconomic priorities. The plan should specify where tourism can be developed and to what degree, and assign appropriate types of tourism to appropriate places (see the CELB document, listed in the Certification section below, to find out more about this topic).
- Carry out environmental impact assessments before issuing building permits for new tourist accommodations;

- Consider the consequences of land conversion for tourist resorts in contrast with other, more traditional income-generating activities, such as agriculture, fishing, tree plantations, etc.
- Make sure that new tourist accommodations will only be built once a permit has been officially issued.
- Include environmental criteria in building permits in terms of permissible construction materials, the maximum allowable height of buildings, proper disposal of building waste, etc.
- Make sure that the land use planning policy is adhered to after construction, and enforce regulations as necessary.
- Use existing accommodations that support the nature reserves (national parks, private reserves etc.) in the best possible way. Depending on the local circumstances these can be jungle lodges and biological research stations or hotels in the periphery of the nature reserves.
- Avoid hotels that have endangered species on the menu: turtle soup, all kinds of bush meat, etc.

2. Design and construction

Impact of construction on physical and biological environments.



If you are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities within forests and nature areas, the following mitigating measures can be useful:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- When possible, ensure that facilities and activities are accessible for persons with physical disabilities.

3. Solid waste

Adopt measures to reduce, reuse, recycle, or adequately dispose of solid waste, including that which is generated during construction.

- Avoid buying products that generate waste, such as plastic bottles; purchase bulk goods for refill packaging; introduce refillable bottles.
- Use products that minimize waste and that are not toxic.
- When possible, reuse papers, containers and others.

- Participate in recycling programs when these are available.
- Sort collected waste for separate treatment and disposal (organic waste can be useful to local farmers).
- Make sure garbage is regularly collected (bins, containers, trucks).
- Inform and motivate visitors and employees so that they will contribute to waste management.

BETA (Belize Ecotourism Association) tip:

Minimize your contribution to the solid waste stream in Belize.

- Crush your cans.
- Don't use disposable dishes, cups, or silverware.
- Use coolers or paper bags for packed lunches instead of Styrofoam containers.
- Compost your kitchen garbage.
- Sell purified water refills, rather than making tourists repeatedly buy new bottles.
- Wash and then sell (or give away) empty food jars and liquor bottles rather than sending them to the landfill.

www.bzecotourism.org

4. Energy

Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption and to promote its efficient use:

- Explain the details of this energy saving program with customers and personnel.
- When possible, use renewable sources of energy.
- Install energy-efficient light bulbs.
- Replace air conditioning equipment with environmentally friendly alternatives, such as fans or traditional building techniques.
- Install solar power systems (both photo-electric and warm water).
- Take advantage of natural light.
- Urge customers and personnel to turn off equipment and lights when not in use.
- Periodically monitor the use and consumption of energy, and evaluate results.

5. Water management

Adopt measures to reduce water consumption and to promote its efficient use:

- Design a water saving program.
- Explain the details of this water saving program with customers and personnel.

- Control leaks.
- Install dual flush toilets.
- Install water saving showers.
- Provide practical instructions to tourists, for example, on reusing towels. Distribute the instructions with flyers, stickers placed in bathrooms, and posters.

6. Wastewater

- All wastewater –sewage– must be adequately managed and disposed of.
- Separate waste streams; if possible, recycle waste on a local scale.
- Wastewaters returned to the environment have to be periodically controlled.
- When possible, wastewater should be reused for gardening or cleaning, after being properly treated.
- When possible, purchase biodegradable cleaning products and personal care products.
- Develop an environmentally friendly sewage system (e.g., septic tanks).
- Implement measures for suitable collection and use of rainwater.



7. Swimming pools

Special attention should be paid to environmentally sound management of swimming pools, including the following measures:

- Efficient use of water and energy consumed by the pool. This is promoted by the use of solar heating boilers, re-use of wastewater (for example, to flush toilets).
- Environmentally friendly cleaning of pools by using of carbon filters and sand filters.
- Filtration of the water before discharge or re-use, depending on the amount of polluted water.
- Use of chemicals for swimming-pools:
 - ▶ Train staff on proper use of chemicals;
 - ▶ Make sure that instructions for use and information on the hazardous potential of chemical substances are printed in the local language. Any chemical supplier should be able to meet this demand;
 - ▶ Use precise measurement systems, or try to avoid the use of chemicals altogether;
 - ▶ The well-balanced combination of chlorine in combination with other chemicals can reduce the amount of chlorine needed. For example, using cyanuric acid in combination with chlorine can reduce the amount of chlorine with 70%.

8. Garden management

Environmentally responsible gardening may include the following:

- Don't water plants or lawns during sunny hours.
- Create a composting area for organic waste.
- Avoid application of chemicals; instead, use natural plant protection products. If you cannot eliminate the use of chemicals, be sure to:
 - ▶ Train staff in the proper use of chemicals;
 - ▶ Make sure that instructions for use and information on the hazardous potential of chemicals such as pesticides are printed in the local language.
- Plant a variety of native species of trees, plants and flowers.
- Inform guests about local nature conservation programs, the preservation of animal and plant species, and your company's efforts in this area.
- Learn as much as you can about sustainable gardening methods and nature conservation by talking to local farmers.

9. Lack of expertise in environmental management

Implementation of the following measures will contribute to the prevention of environmental problems:

- Create awareness among tourists and personnel by means of brochures, flyers, and posters placed in hotel rooms.
- Provide adequate environmental training and education for accommodations staff, such as by using the 'train the trainer' principle (one employee receives professional training and then shares his/her knowledge with the other employees).
- Provide practical instructions to tourists on environmentally responsible behavior, for example, on reusing towels, and reducing the use of air conditioning. Make your instructions known by means of flyers, stickers (in bathrooms) and posters.
- Have your accommodations assessed on their environmental performance by foreign and local students in the field of sustainable tourism, tour operators, or an environmental consultant. Use the results to develop a list or a plan for making improvements.
- Consider applying for an eco-label to certify your accommodation (see Certification section).
- Contribute to protection of the local biodiversity with the following actions:
 - ▶ Support projects for the conservation of nature and/or endangered species. Collaborate with local environmental protection organizations to

develop projects with support/involvement of tourists. Provide information about visits to local nature conservation projects in the lobby or at the reception area of your accommodations.

- ▶ Never offer meals made with endangered species (such as turtles) to your guests, even if they are considered a local delicacy.
- ▶ Inform tourists about the legal consequences of buying and exporting products made from endangered animals, such as turtle shells, seashells, armadillo shells, snakeskin, animal-based medicines, etc.

Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or



if goods and services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally. Also, foreign ownership of hotels can lead to the export of revenues generated by the tourist industry. As a result, there is little spin-off from the tourist sector to other economic sectors. Thus, foreign ownership and export of revenues do not contribute to sustainable development of the local economy.

- 3. Shortages of locally produced foods and basic goods:** Due to the influx of tourists, the supply of locally produced foods, basic goods, and building materials may not be sufficient to meet increased demand. This can lead to unacceptable price increases or the unavailability of these products for local people since most of these items are produced for the tourist industry.

Suggested actions

- 1. Insecurity of income, dependence on tourist flows**

- Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in marketing campaigns.
- Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Make an inventory of the tourist attractions available throughout the year and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Co-operate with a local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.

- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organisation from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool to travel agencies, tour operators and others.

- 2. No contribution made to the local community**

The operation of your company can be carried out in a way that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Patronize agrotourism destinations managed by local farmer cooperatives and associations, where benefits are more likely to reach most of the members and their families.
- Include visits on your sight-seeing tours to small-scale community projects, including demonstrations in crafts making.
- Hire local personnel, and make it possible for them develop skills, and get training and education.
- Respect labor legislation, and provide training and incentives to your employees.
- Purchase local products such as building materials, furniture, food, bed linens, etc. If these are not available, assess the possibility of investing in local companies that produce these materials, by means of offering capital, knowledge, and long-term contracts.

- Develop supply-chain management through “green” and sustainable purchasing policies.
- Promote sustainable destinations that are offered by local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Support local development initiatives and projects.
- Encourage joint ventures between foreign investors and national investors in the tourist industry.
- Employ local people whenever possible; this is especially important at hotels with foreign or non-regional owners.
- Cooperate with local companies to arrange transport, tours, etc.

3. Shortages of locally produced food and basic goods

Managers of tourist accommodations need to be aware of this possibility and take preventative measures accordingly:

- Include higher costs for food and other goods in accommodation fees. Tourists are usually in a better position to pay for increased prices of food products than local people.
- Create an organic vegetable garden in order to produce an additional food supply.
- Import products (last option).

Certification

- Green Globe 21 is an international, Australian-based eco-label for providers of tourist accommodations (including large hotels as well as ecotourism), tour operators, and travel agencies. The label includes social criteria as well as contribution to the local communities and economy. More information available at: www.greenglobe21.com.
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. The CST for hotels includes water saving, water quality, wastewater, energy saving, pollution, garden design, foods and drinks, waste reduction and management, human resource management and training, customer participation, quality control, socioeconomic benefits, among others. Information can be found at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr.



- ECOTEL is an international certification system for hotels, which is based on five aspects: Environmental Commitment, Solid Waste Management, Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation, Employee Environmental Education, and Community Involvement.



Guidelines and codes of conduct

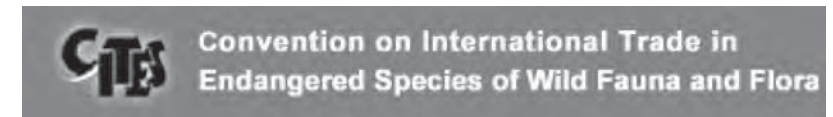
- A Practical Guide to Good Practice. Guide for managing environmental and social issues in the accommodations sector, including references to sources for more information: www.toinitiative.org.
- The Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business (www.celb.org) has published "The Green Host Effect," an informative guide that provides information, practical measures, and real examples about every possible aspect of sustainable development and management of tourist resorts. The book covers integrated land planning, but also deals with employing and educating local people, and contributing to the local economy. The book is useful to both policy-makers and managers of accommodations, and is downloadable free of charge at: www.celb.org/xp/CELB/publications-resources/.
- Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). This is a code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, to be adopted by tour operators, www.thecode.org.



- ILO Conventions; these include internationally recognized human and labor rights: www.ilo.org.



- The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.
- More information about endangered species is available at the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) website, including a species database, www.cites.org.



Examples

TUI

The destinations offered by the labels of TUI International are assessed in terms of environmental and health criteria -- prior to development of the holiday package. A checklist has been developed for this purpose, which covers topics such as spatial planning, energy and water management, quality of bathing water, participation in certification processes, and therefore provide insight into the sustainability performance of the destination. www.tuinderland.nl/tui/files/binaries/Milieujaarverslag_2001-2002.pdf



El Monte Lodge.

A good example of a sustainable ecolodge is the ‘El Monte’ sustainable lodge in Mindo, Ecuador (www.ecuadorcloudforest.com). The aim of the owners is to help protect the surrounding forest and to minimize the impact of tourism. A conscious decision was made to stay small, and to maintain a balanced ratio between guests received and amount of land owned in order to keep ecological impact to a minimum. El Monte owns 44 hectares of land; the lodge, garden and guesthouses take up about 1 hectare, and the rest is used for nature walks, bird watching, etc. At El Monte all activities are led by local Mindo guides. Part of the experience of El Monte are the meals. They serve no red meat due to the energy-inefficiency of beef production. The water comes from a gravity-powered spring. The cabañas are handmade. All the boards were cut by hand and pegged in hand drilled holes. Each cabaña is equipped with a flush toilet and an independent sewage treatment system that is comprised of an enclosed sand bed that has bamboo growing inside in order to remove nitrogenous build up.

To facilitate cloud forest research, El Monte Sustainable Lodge founded and now administrates the Mindo Biological Station (MBS). The biostation is located in a pristine cloud forest encompassing elevations that range from 1,400 meters to 2,600 meters.

With accommodations for groups of up to 22 visitors, the MBS welcomes researchers, student groups, and ecologically-minded tourists. The station itself protects 6,500 hectares of land within the 19,200 hectare Mindo-Nambillo Protected Forest.

Rara Avis Rainforest Lodge and Reserve

(www.rara-avis.com, raraavis@racsa.co.cr), bordered by Braulio Carrillo National Park in Costa Rica, is an innovative way for visitors to contribute to saving the rainforest while they learn about its wonders. Rara Avis was developed to show that rainforests can be made economically productive, and that they must be protected. The special design of the facilities demonstrates that the rainforest is a valuable resource that produces substantial benefits for surrounding communities. Rara Avis operates as both a comfortable lodge and biological station. The owners encourage responsible tourism, biological research, and the development of new ways to use the rainforest without damaging or destroying it.

Finca Rosa Blanca Country Inn

(www.finca-rblanca.co.cr) started in 1985, with one important goal in mind: to leave the least possible trace of their existence. Since the beginning the owners concentrated on an ambitious plan of recycling and regeneration, social consciousness, and education. Because of these efforts, they have been awarded the maximum five green leaves from the Costa Rican Tourist Board for their compliance with the CST (Certification for Sustainable Tourism). The Finca Rosa Blanca Country Inn is one of two hotels in Costa Rica that has this standard. The recycling activities include complete recycling of food waste to produce fertilizers by using two systems:

1. Fertilizing coffee plants and vegetable gardens directly.



2. Composting solid food wastes in drums invented for this purpose, a process that includes organic waste products from the kitchen, ashes from the fireplace, earth from the inn's property, and calcium as needed to neutralize acidity.

They also recycle all waste products that are non-organic, such as glass, cardboard, metal, and paper.

Yachane Lodge, Ecuador

"Yachana" means "a place for learning" in the indigenous Quichua language. FUNEDESIN, (Foundation for Integrated Education and Development), and is a non-profit organization that runs environmental, educational, medical, and agricultural programs for the Amazon's inhabitants. Its mission is to protect Ecuador's rainforest by educating and empowering its people. Yachana Lodge was constructed in 1995, and introduces tourists to the local ways of life. Visits are made to gold-panning families and to local medicine men. FUNEDESIN also purchases cacao from local farmers at prices that are nearly five times higher than the going rate. The cacao is used to produce chocolate that is sold in the United States. FUNEDESIN also supports a fully equipped medical clinic, and it supports a pilot project to replace environmentally destructive cattle herds with the endemic capybara. Yachane Lodge won the global Condé Nast EcoTourism Award of 2004. More information is available at: www.yachana.com.

Yachane Lodge is mentioned in this fact sheet because it won the global Condé Nast EcoTourism Award of 2004.

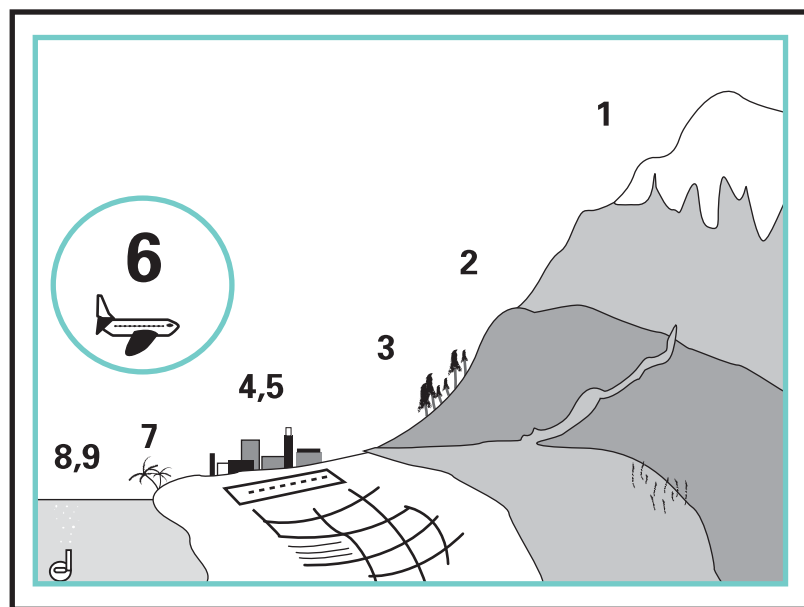
The TIWA Amazonas Eco Resort was set up in close consultation of Governor Eduardo Braga of the State of Amazonas, the Dutch touroperator KRAS and the local communities. Some aspects of the lodge are:

- The construction had very little impact on the environment. Impacts that occurred were restored.
- All the water from the swimming pool is being recycled.
- There are mainly palm leave roofs.
- No air-conditioning is being used.
- The restaurant serves food prepared with local ingredients, some originating from their own garden.
- The resort has its own water purifying-, and waste management system.
- A programme is being developed which will enable students from Brazil and the Netherlands to draw up the necessary inventories to use the knowledge gained for educational purposes.
- TIWA Amazonas Resort donates an annual amount to a fund that initiates and monitors sustainable projects.

www.tiwaamazone.nl (in Dutch, English and Portuguese language)

(sheet 6)

Transport



Introduction

Transportation plays an important part in the package tours provided by tour operators to Latin America. It involves transport to and from the tourism destination in Latin America, as well as transport at the destination (buses, taxis, rented cars). You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the transportation services provided by your packages, as well as possible measures that can be implemented for their mitigation.

Facilities

Transportation requires facilities such as airports, bus and train stations, and parking lots. No matter where these facilities are located, or what their specific features are, the important thing is that they be planned, constructed and operated in a sustainable manner.

Activities and services

Activities include:

- ▶ Air transportation
- ▶ Aquatic transportation
- ▶ Land transportation



People Issues

- 1. Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** These may occur among taxi/bus drivers and other personnel. Examples are long working hours, underpayment, and lack of insurance and medical care. Especially in the case of package tours, drivers sometimes work extremely long working hours, which may also cause accidents.
- 2. Safety of tourists:** The most pertinent safety risks in transportation involve accidents. Badly maintained airplanes and poor airport management, for example, can increase the risk of plane accidents.

Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also choose responsible suppliers of transportation services. Work with local tour operators in order to ensure the implementation of the following measures:

- 1. Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions**
 - Comply with national and international labor legislation.

- Make sure that the working conditions of drivers are acceptable (driving and resting time, wages, insurance policies, sleeping accommodations).
- Declare your commitment to the ILO (International Labor Organization) Conventions on basic human and labor rights (see codes of conduct).
- Pay fair wages and sign formal labor contracts with all employees, preferably long-term.
- Make it possible for staff to take part in management training or other types of training which enhance their career opportunities. Alternatively, have trained staff members provide training to newer employees.
- Establish policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of the employees in the workplace.

2. Safety of tourists

Western tour operators are responsible for the safety of their clients and personnel during visits to a destination, and they should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee their safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to apply the following measures:

- Check with the local airline companies to find out whether they have established safety regulations in accordance with international standards.

- Demand proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that vehicles are properly maintained that drivers have the proper training and licenses.
- Hire drivers with proven driving skills and knowledge of traffic rules.
- Provide training for drivers on safe driving methods.
- Inform your customers about unsafe transport practices at the destination (e.g. traveling to remote urban areas, or after dark).

Planet Issues

1. **Impact of transportation on the physical and biological environments:** Transportation by air, water, and land all produce CO₂, which pollutes the air and affects climatic change.

Suggested actions

- Assess the annual exhaust produced of greenhouse gasses, and compensate for this by supporting forest service payments.
- When booking package tours to Latin America, urge clients to compensate for CO₂ emissions associated with flying by participating in a CO₂ compensation program.
- Choose airlines that use modern planes with fuel-efficient engines and that have operating procedures for fuel-efficient take-off and landing.
- Consider the possibility of compensating for CO₂ emissions produced during your entire tour's road transport, by participating in CO₂ compensation programmes.
- Assess the occupancy rate of the vehicles you use. Consider combining transport, e.g. to/from airports, with other travel agencies, tour operators, or accommodations.
- Use vehicles with fuel-efficient engines that reduce emissions.
- Use vegetable-based oils for engines if available and applicable.
- Make sure that vehicles are periodically checked and well maintained.
- Encourage customers to use safe modes of public transport such as trains, especially for long distances.
- Provide information at the destination on public transport services (time-tables, ticket sales offices, etc.).



Here are a few CO2 compensation programmes:

- Future Forests at www.futureforests.com. Programme to compensate for CO2 emissions by planting forests.
- Trees for Travel, programme to compensate for CO2 emissions by tree planting programmes (both companies and individual clients can participate), www.treesfortravel.nl.
- Business for Climate, program for businesses to compensate for CO2 emissions by means of tree planting programs, www.bfclimate.nl.
- Cool Flying, program to compensate for CO2 emissions by tree planting, www.coolflying.nl.
- Cool Driving. Website to compensate for the emissions caused by road transport. www.cooldriving.nl.

Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:**

When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector in an area, this may suppress other productive activities in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Since most tourist destinations have peak and low seasons, income for businesses and local people will fluctuate accordingly. During periods of

extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.

2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise might not be contributing to local development if its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if services necessary for the operation are not acquired locally. Also, foreign ownership of services can lead to the export of revenues generated by the tourist industry. As a result, there is little spin-off from the tourist sector to other economic sectors. Thus, foreign ownership and export of revenues will not contribute to sustainable development of the local economy.

Suggested actions

1. **Unstable or irregular income and dependence on tourist flow**

- Promote your sustainable packages during low seasons.
- Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
- Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Make an inventory of the tourist attractions available throughout the year and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Collaborate with local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.

- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organisation from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool with travel agencies, tour operators, and others.

2. No contribution made to the local community

The operation of your tour packages can be carried out in a way that spreads money throughout community. Some suggestions are:

- Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- When possible, make sure that your suppliers at the destinations hire local workers, respect labor legislation, and provide training and incentives for employees.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Communicate with local authorities on the most urgent needs for the community, e.g. improvement of social services and education.

Certification

- Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies in Costa

Rica according to the degree to which their operations comply with a model of sustainability. CST focuses on hotels and tour operators. CST for tour operators includes aspects related to local transportation, especially vehicles. Information can be found at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr.

- The Federal Aviation Administration has developed certification standards for pilots, aircraft, and airports (F.A.A. regulations). More info at: www.faa.gov.

Guidelines and codes of conduct

No specific guidelines or codes of conduct regarding transport for tourism were identified, but a Canadian initiative called “Focus on Driving” (www.focusondriving.ca/home.cfm?lang=e), is intended to raise awareness about the role that distracted driving plays in road safety. It focuses on the responsibility that individual drivers must assume when operating vehicles, and offers useful guidelines for the general public, many of which could be useful to drivers of tourism companies.

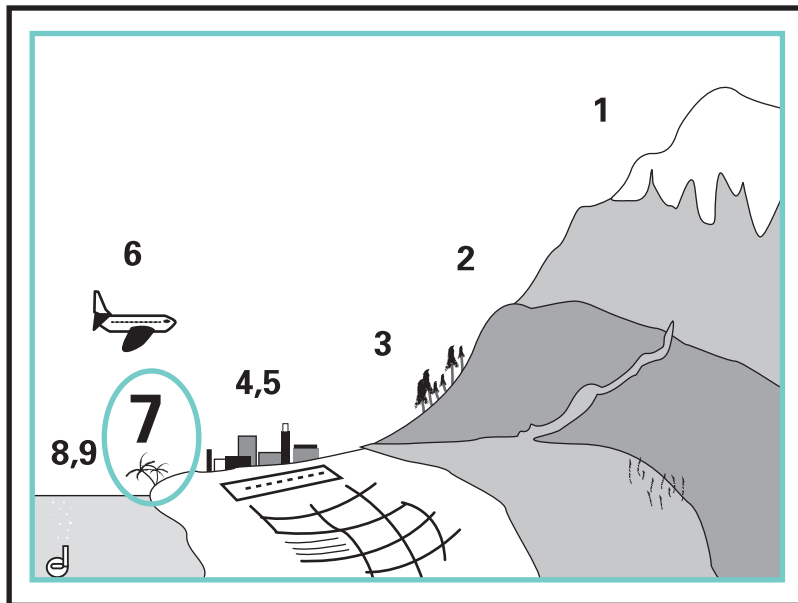
Examples

Multatuli Travel (www.multatuli.nl) and Sawadee (www.sawadee.nl) both recommend that their customers compensate for CO2 emissions produced during tour transportation. Their websites list CO2 compensation programs.



(sheet 7)

Marine and beach-based activities without engine use



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to marine and beach environments in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

Marine and beach attractions for activities without engine use include beaches, coastal waters, bay areas, and diverse and valuable ecosystems such as coral reefs, estuaries, and swamps. Biodiversity attractions include mangrove trees, beach vegetation, fish, crabs, mollusks, marine turtles, and aquatic birds, among others. Some of these attractions might be within coastal or marine protected areas and protected wetlands.

Facilities

Practicing tourism activities in marine and beach environments without engine use requires almost no facilities on site. Supporting facilities on the mainland include restrooms and changing rooms, lodging, tour operators’ offices, and shops that rent equipment. These facilities must be constructed and

operated to minimize their impact on the physical and biological environments. Depending on the specific features of tour destinations, Fact Sheet No. 3 (Forests and protected nature areas) and Fact Sheet No. 4 (Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas), and No. 5 (Accommodations) will provide you with ideas on how to mitigate the impact of construction.

Activities

Imperative to this worksheet is that no combustion engines are used in connection with the following activities:

- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Body boarding
- ▶ Boogie boarding
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Canoeing
- ▶ Catamaran (sail powered)
- ▶ Hiking/walking
- ▶ Hiking/walking with guides
- ▶ Horseback riding (along the beach)
- ▶ Kite surfing
- ▶ Ocean rafting
- ▶ Sailing
- ▶ Sea kayaking
- ▶ Swimming

- ▶ Turtle watching
- ▶ Wave surfing
- ▶ Wildlife watching
- ▶ Wind surfing

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** Unfortunately, the tourist industry is a sector where labor conditions can sometimes be harsh. Some of the issues are long working hours, lack of job security or dependable income, seasonal labor, badly paid jobs, lack of health insurance, and limited career prospects. These may affect vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrants.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. This way, foreign languages begin to prevail over the local language in the streets and other public areas of the destinations.



- 3. Safety issues:** Visitors may be at risk of drowning, sunstroke, dehydration, animal attacks, or other dangers.

Suggested actions

- 1. Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions**

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practice. If they haven't, motivate them to adopt one. Also choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with your local tour operator(s) in the implementation of the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Declare your commitment to the ILO Conventions on basic human and labor rights (see codes of conduct).
- Offer fair wages, and sign formal labor contracts with all employees, preferably for the long term.
- Enable staff to take part in management training or other types of training which will enhance their career opportunities. Workers can be instructed by staff members who have received more advanced training.

- Establish policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of employees in the workplace.
- As a tour operator, one can address the issue local workers who are underpaid and/or treated in an inhumane manner. For example, avoid lodging where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Hotel managers should be informed of the problem, and asked to take corrective measures.

- 2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community, its culture, and lifestyle:**

Very often, such negative impact can be overcome with appropriate information on the background of local customs, along with practical suggestions ("do's and don'ts"); tour operators increasingly distribute such information. In addition, the management of accommodations may take the following measures:

- Provide staff training on dealing with situations of conflicting cultural values.
- Provide (English) language classes for your staff.
- Provide information for guests on cultural and religious aspects by posting notices in guest rooms, and leaving folders and flyers wherever visitors, as well as posting signs near cultural objects, etc.
- Provide support to local schools.

Managers of tourist accommodations can also contribute to the prevention and/or mitigation of social problems, for example:

- Employ local people whenever possible.
- Support the local economy, e.g. the agricultural and fishery sector. Buy food that has been produced locally, provided that this does not negatively affect local food supplies and/or prices.
- Respect restricted access to resources such as farmland, coastal areas, fishing grounds, water or forests upon which local people depend. Use of these resources should always be in co-operation with the local population. Permission for access to areas on which local people depend for their income should be secured.
- Prevent the loss of cultural traditions by enabling local personnel to practice their religious beliefs and attend important religious festivities.
- Become a signatory of the international Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (www.thecode.org).
- Combat the exploitation of vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrant workers. For example, cooperate with other stakeholders in the tourist sector to raise awareness of customers about forced and poverty-driven prostitution. Develop and distribute information

materials on the social and economic background of the exploitation of children and women, as well as the risks involved when using their services (www.ilo.org)

- Support renovation projects for local buildings.

A specific point of attention in the tourist industry is the physical exploitation of children and women. Accommodations can take several actions to combat these practices:

- Declare your commitment to the international guidelines to combat sexual exploitation of children.
- Combat practices of physical exploitation of children and women in your accommodation by doing the following:
 - ▶ Inform tourists about the legal prohibition of prostitution and possible consequences of breaking the law;
 - ▶ Oblige customers to always hand in the room key at the reception desk before leaving the premises.
 - ▶ Have the receptionist on night duty prevent customers from taking people to their room.
- Always remember that the local language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of this language to name tourist destinations and for signs that are posted. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as a complement, not as a substitute.



- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign languages, remind them of the importance of their own.

3. Safety issues

Western tour operators are responsible for the safety of their clients and personnel during visits to a destination, and they should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee their safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can demand proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that activities are carried out in order to avoid any potential risks, and that they are prepared to deal with emergencies if they take arise. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to apply the following measures:

- Comply with official safety regulations, and discuss the following options with local authorities in order to guarantee the safety of beach guests.
- Place information boards that display beach regulations (e.g. prohibition of dogs, camping, driving on the beach, etc.), safety notices, a map of the beach area, etc.
- Presence of a first aid station and/or trained beach guards during the bathing season.

- Adequate safety provisions, including lifesaving equipment with directions for its use, along with immediate access to a telephone.
- Flags at several key spots to indicate whether the water is safe for swimming.
- A secure, shielded source of drinking water.
- Access ramps and toilet facilities for people with disabilities.
- An emergency plan that includes procedures for issuing public warnings if beach areas threaten to become grossly polluted or otherwise unsafe.
- Safety signs about dangerous animals such as sharks, scorpion fish, poisonous jellyfish, and sea urchins, and other threats such as riptides.

Other important procedures include:

- Recommend that tourists carry sunscreen, bottled water, sun glasses, hats, and any other item that might make the experience more enjoyable by avoiding potential health risks.
- Make sure that tourists are well instructed in safety measures.

Planet Issues

1. **Disturbance of wildlife:** There can be many kinds of disturbances. For example, when walking on rocky shores, people might inadvertently step on small mollusks attached to the rocks. While canoeing in a mangrove swamp, one might encounter birds, monkeys, raccoons and many other animals. A common bad habit is to offer food as a way to attract them, thus changing their natural behavior. When visiting a turtle nesting area at night, one could inadvertently distract and disturb turtles.
2. **Pollution and degradation of marine and coastal environments:** Recreational activities can impact sea, beaches and surrounding areas through trampling damage to shoreline vegetation and bird nests, soil erosion and compaction, littering, and other harmful effects.
3. **Impact of construction on physical and biological environments:** Practicing tourism activities in marine and beach environments without engine use requires supporting facilities on the mainland: restrooms and changing rooms, parking lots, lodging, tour operators' offices, shops that rent out equipment, and others. They can have impact not only during their construction but also during operations, including removing materials, water and energy consumption, generation of waste and discarded waste in or near the water. Modification of a shoreline to suit the purposes of an enterprise can also have impact on the scenery and on local biodiversity.

Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practice. Also choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with your local tour operator(s) in the implementation of the following measures:

1. Disturbance of wildlife

Distribute information to your customers about existing guidelines for activities such as bird and turtle watching. Examples of the latter have been developed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (see certification section below).

Guidelines can differ according to specific location, and should be checked with local NGOs or institutes on turtle research. An example of a code of conduct for turtle watching is given below:

- Keep the use of lighting to a minimum. Hint: put a red cloth or cellophane over flashlights.
- Flashlights should be handheld, and no more than a three-volt, two-cell type.
- Do not approach turtles leaving the water and moving up the beach.



- Do not shine lights directly on turtles that are leaving the water, moving up the beach, building nests, or laying eggs.
- Avoid loud noises and sudden movements near turtles while they are laying their eggs.
- Do not touch the turtles, hatchlings, or eggs.
- Keep dogs away from the area.
- Do not light campfires on turtle nesting beaches.
- Report sick, injured, stranded, or dead turtles to a local animal care center.
- Learn about the habits and needs of turtles in order to increase your appreciation of them.

Adopt impact assessments on biodiversity as a regular company activity. A useful methodology is the “Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment-Tourism Activities” (IBISTA) which can be obtained through the Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).

2. **Pollution and degradation of marine and coastal environments**

- Adopt a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices, defining what your company, personnel, and customers can and cannot do during expeditions to coastal and marine environments. Make sure that all your personnel know and abide by the code.
- Keep updated regulations for all the coastal and marine destinations visited by your company.
- Work whenever possible with small groups of visitors, especially in fragile areas.
- Stay strictly within zones established for public use. Do not enter restricted areas.
- Verify that the trash and waste generated by your operation is suitably disposed of.
- Gather information on the bathing water quality to make sure it is safe for customers and personnel.
- Work with local authorities; emphasize the need for a clean beach environment, and jointly develop and implement a beach-cleaning program. Here are a number of measures to promote a clean beach environment:
 - ▶ placement of a sufficient number of garbage bins which are regularly emptied;

- ▶ organization of voluntary beach clean-up activities;
 - ▶ environmentally friendly beach maintenance instead of using motor vehicles, such as tractors.
- Check whether you can initiate the following actions in collaboration with other stakeholders in the local tourist sector:
 - ▶ Development of guidelines for beach visitors on environmentally responsible behavior; these guidelines would cover proper disposal of waste, prohibition on camping or driving on the beach, etc.
 - ▶ Distribution of guidelines in information materials handed out to visitors.
 - ▶ Organization of environmental education activities.
 - ▶ Establishing a marine environmental education center.
 - ▶ Starting a Blue Flag campaign (see Certification section below).
- Visit the website of the World Tourism Organisation for information on projects, international networks, and initiatives in the area of sustainable coastal management and tourism: www.world-tourism.org (also see examples below). The website provides links to other relevant sites, such as the International Network on the Sustainable Development of Coastal Tourism Destinations: www.omt.uned.es.

3. **Impact of constructions on the physical and biological environments**

Impact of construction on physical and biological environments

If you are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities near the coastline, the following mitigating measures can be useful:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.
- Make sure that residual waters – sewage - will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Ensure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.



Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** Your enterprise may be highly affected by low tourist seasons and by strong domestic competition from other service suppliers. This can cause a shortage of financial resources and affect your enterprise's operation. Also, during periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise will not be contributing to the development of communities located near coastal and marine destinations if all its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if the goods and services necessary for the enterprise's operation are acquired somewhere else.



Suggested actions

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow**
 - Seek collaboration with tour operators to promote your sustainable products during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.
 - Inventory the tourist attractions that are available in your region throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
 - Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators and others.
 - If you are linked to an NGO which is managing a protected area, you might want to adopt a fundraising strategy.
 - Make an inventory of the tourist attractions in your region that are available throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
 - Seek collaboration with tour operators in order to promote your sustainable products during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in marketing campaigns.

- Create a network of sustainable operating businesses at destinations, and jointly develop a marketing strategy.
- Get local media interested in covering your sustainable service as a new item.
- Find new tour operators.
- Implement cross-selling.
- If you do not have the means to develop your own commercial website, make sure that your company is listed on other websites in the field of sustainable tourism.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool with travel agencies, tour operators etc.

2. **No contribution made to the local community**

The operation of your company can be carried out in ways that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.
- Obtain basic products and services (repairs, maintenance) from small and medium-sized local farms and enterprises, except if these are short in supply.

- Promote sustainable destinations offered by local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Establish an official association for professionally educated guides at cultural sites, and develop a standard training program. Make sure that official guides can be easily recognized by tourists by wearing a badge or uniform.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Communicate with local authorities on the most appropriate destinations, e.g. improvement of social services and education.

Certification

- NEAP (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp) and Green Globe 21 (www.greenglobe21.org) include requirements for contribution to the local economy.
- Blue Flag is an eco-label for beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag Campaign is owned and run by the Foundation for Environmental Education, which is an independent non-profit organization. The Blue Flag criteria include environmental standards as well as sanitary and safety facilities at beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag Campaign includes environmental education and



information for the public, decision-makers, and tourism operators in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. In order for a country to start up the Blue Flag Campaign, a suitable organization must be identified in order to carry out the task of national Blue Flag operator. The organization must be non-profit, non-governmental, as well as independent, and environmental education and protection have to be among its most important objectives. In Latin America, at least two countries, Panama and Costa Rica, have developed the “Programa Bandera Azul Ecológica,” or Blue Flag Ecology Program, which is carried out at beaches, communities and schools. Some helpful documents in this respect are the Country Form and Feasibility Kit -- a stakeholder questionnaire to be downloaded from www.blueflag.org.

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- Coastview developed a Code of Conduct for sea kayakers in sensitive coastal environments: Minimal Impact Sea Kayaking or MISK. The full text can be found at: www.coastview.com.au/misk/misk.htm



- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has established a number of guidelines related to water sports (downloadable at www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

- Camping
- Collecting
- Island Visits
- Fishing
- Reef Walking
- Spear Fishing
- Waste Disposal

Fundación PROMAR is a Costa Rican non-profit organization that, among other things, promotes Marine Tourism as an extension of Ecological Tourism, which is defined as the planned, respectful and non-invasive observation of marine ecosystems and organisms in their natural habitats, which are used as classrooms for marine education and awareness. PROMAR also promotes the use of services provided by coastal communities, as a way to benefit the local economy. PROMAR organizes sustainable marine excursions in Costa Rica. They are based on the following general guidelines:

- Respect carrying capacity of environments where the activities take place.
- Follow behavior guidelines that are suitable for the ecosystems and species to be viewed.
- Learn about ecology and behavior of animals; this can be helpful in identifying signs of disturbance.
- Use marine transportation services that are in excellent condition in order to avoid pollution.

For more information about PROMAR, visit www.promar.or.cr.

Examples

No examples of foreign tour operators were identified to fit this fact sheet. Nevertheless, the following could be examples of potential partners and suppliers:

Gandoca Beach, situated on the southeastern Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, serves as a nesting site for four species of Sea Turtle. Until around 1980, the sea turtle nesting population at Gandoca remained largely unknown. Turtle eggs were harvested by the local population at levels that were probably sustainable. However, with the reemergence of the banana companies and the improved road system in the area, poaching became a serious threat to the Sea Turtles.

Asociación ANAI (www.anaicr.org) helped to establish the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge in 1985, and since that time has been running the Sea Turtle Conservation Project. Their aim has been to conserve the nesting colonies through a collaborative process that would also contribute to an improvement in the quality of human life in Gandoca. By 1990, poaching was fairly well controlled, with up to 90% of nests being protected. In the same year, the volunteer program was started along with research activities.

Volunteers working on the project stay in the homes of local families, and provide income for the local community which far exceeds the income they would receive if all the eggs laid at Gandoca beach were sold on the black market. Guide and

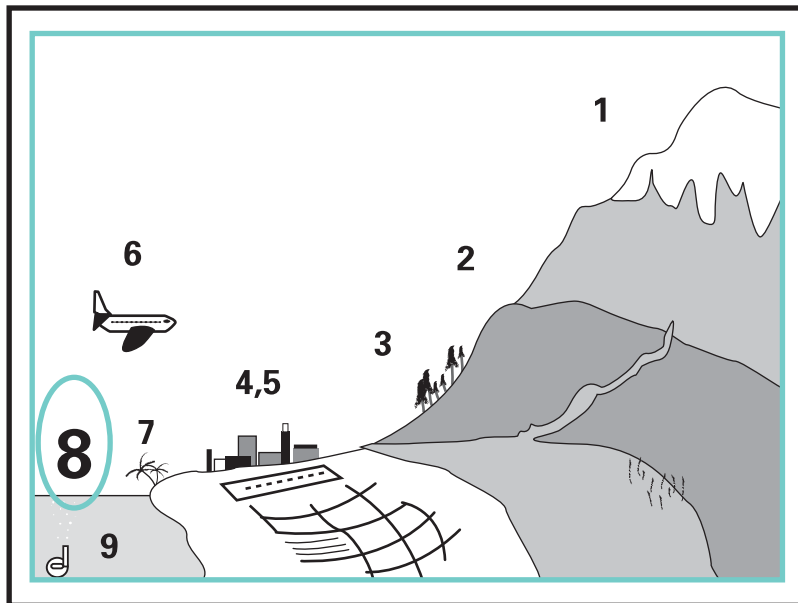
transport services for volunteers and tourists generate further income, and providing economic benefits for families living on the coast.





(sheet 8)

Marine and coastal-based activities with engine use



Introduction

Package tours provided by tour operators to marine and beach environments in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services, and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

Marine and beach attractions for activities without engine use include beaches, coastal waters, bay areas, and diverse and valuable ecosystems such as coral reefs, estuaries, and swamps. Biodiversity attractions include mangrove trees, beach vegetation, fish, crabs, mollusks, marine turtles, and aquatic birds, among others. Some of these attractions might be within coastal or marine protected areas and protected wetlands.

Facilities

Practicing tourism activities with engine use in marine and beach environments requires supporting facilities. These facilities include marinas to berth, maintain, and dock boats, which could cause impact on the surroundings if they are not carefully designed and constructed. Facilities on the

mainland include restrooms and changing rooms, lodging, tour operators' offices, and shops that sell and rent gear and equipment. These mainland facilities must also be constructed and operated to minimize their impact on the physical and biological environments. Depending on the specific features of tour destinations, Fact Sheet No. 3 (Forests and protected nature areas) and Fact Sheet No. 4 (Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas), and No. 5 (Accommodations) will provide you with ideas on how to mitigate the impact of construction.

Activities

All activities in this fact sheet involve the use of engines:

- ▶ Banana boat rides
- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Buying souvenirs
- ▶ Catamaran (motor-powered)
- ▶ General boat trips
- ▶ Glass bottom boat trips
- ▶ Jet skiing
- ▶ Para-sailing
- ▶ Sightseeing
- ▶ Sport fishing
- ▶ Water-skiing
- ▶ Whale and dolphin watching
- ▶ Wildlife watching
- ▶ Yachting

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** Unfortunately, the tourist industry is a sector where labor conditions can sometimes be harsh. Some of the issues are long working hours, lack of job security or dependable income, seasonal labor, badly paid jobs, lack of health insurance, and limited career prospects. These may affect vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, women and immigrants.
2. **Negative impact of tourism on the local community and its lifestyle:** Unwanted cultural changes take place as a direct result of interaction with tourists: xenophobia, theft, prostitution, drugs, cultural erosion, and others. These may occur due to tourists' lack of awareness or respect for local culture, heritage and authenticity. Another cultural impact is the adoption of the language of the tourists (e.g. English, German) for naming local attractions and facilities, to the exclusion of the local language. This way, foreign languages begin to prevail over the local language in the streets and other public areas of the destinations.
3. **Safety issues:** Visitors may be at risk of drowning, sunstroke, dehydration, animal attacks, and boats could sink, among other dangers.



Suggested actions

1. Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Collaborate with your local tour operators on improving the working conditions of their personnel (e.g. captains, crew members, guides, etc.) by taking the following measures:

- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Declare your commitment to the ILO Conventions on basic human and labor rights (see codes of conduct).
- Offer fair wages, and sign formal labor contracts with all employees, preferably for the long term.
- Enable staff to take part in management training or other types of training which will enhance their career opportunities. Workers can be instructed by staff members who have received more advanced training.
- Establish policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of employees in the workplace.

- As a tour operator, one can address the issue of local workers who are underpaid and/or treated in an inhumane manner. For example, avoid lodging where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Hotel managers should be informed of the problem, and asked to take corrective measures.

2. Negative impact of tourism on the local community, its culture, and lifestyle

Very often, such negative impact can be overcome with appropriate information on the background of local customs, along with practical suggestions ("do's and don'ts"); tour operators increasingly distribute such information. In addition, the management of accommodations may take the following measures:

- Provide staff training on dealing with situations of conflicting cultural values.
- Provide (English) language classes for your staff.
- Always remember that the local language should be part of the cultural value of the destination. Promote the use of this language to name tourist destinations and for signs that are posted. In public areas, use tourists' languages (e.g. English, German) as a complement, not as a substitute.
- When training the local personnel in the use of English or other foreign languages, remind them of the importance of their own.

3. Safety issues

Western tour operators are responsible for the safety of their clients and personnel during visits to a destination, and they should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee their safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can demand proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that activities are carried out in order to avoid any potential risks, and that they are prepared to deal with emergencies if they take arise. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to apply the following measures:

- Comply with official safety regulations, and discuss the following options with local authorities in order to guarantee the safety of beach guests.
- Select providers who have certified boats, adhere to international safety standards, and have all necessary licenses and permits.
- Make sure that lifevests and sufficient drinking water are always available on board boats.
- Display safety signs about dangerous animals (sharks, poisonous fishes such as scorpion fish, stinging jellyfish, sea urchins) and other dangers such as riptides.
- Develop and distribute guidelines or “do’s & don’ts” for beach visitors, and display these rules on information boards at/near the beach.
- A first aid station and/or trained beach guards are needed near bathing areas.
- Adequate safety provisions should include lifesaving equipment with directions for its use, along with immediate access to a telephone.
- Flags at several key spots should indicate whether the water is safe for swimming.
- Provide a secure, shielded source of drinking water.
- Access ramps and toilet facilities are needed for people with disabilities.
- An emergency plan should include procedures for issuing public warnings if beach areas threaten to become grossly polluted or otherwise unsafe.
- Safety signs about dangerous animals such as sharks, scorpion fish, poisonous jellyfish, and sea urchins, and other threats such as riptides must be posted.
- Recommend that tourists carry sunscreen, bottled water, sun glasses, hats, and any other item that might make the experience more enjoyable by avoiding potential health risks.
- Make sure that tourists are carefully instructed in safety measures.



Planet Issues

- 1. Disturbance of wildlife:** There can be many kinds of disturbances. For example, when walking on rocky shores, people might inadvertently step on small mollusks attached to the rocks. Also, the presence of humans can cause constant disturbance in such a manner that animals get scared and eventually move to other places. This often occurs during dolphin and whale watching. Humans can also disturb breeding and predacious activities, thus changing natural behaviour of animals.
- 2. Pollution and degradation of marine and coastal environments:** Practicing activities can impact the sea, beaches, and surrounding areas through damage to shoreline vegetation and bird nests, soil erosion and compaction, littering, and pollution of the marine environment by discarded effluvia and fuel emissions from boats.
- 3. Impact of construction on the physical and biological environments:** Practicing tourism activities with engine use in marine and beach environments requires almost no facilities to carry out the activities themselves. Nevertheless, such activities require supporting facilities on the mainland: restrooms and changing rooms, parking lots, lodging, tour operators' offices, shops that rent out equipment, and others. These facilities can have impact not only during their construction but also during operations, including removing materials, water and

energy consumption, generation of waste and discarded waste in or near the water. Modification of a shoreline to suit the purposes of an enterprise can also have impact on the scenery and on local biodiversity.

- 4. Diminished populations of fish and other harvested wildlife:** Certain activities such as sport fishing can change the number of specific species that live in one location. Fishing for food (for example, lobster) can also have an impact on the natural population.

Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. Also choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with local tour operators for the implementation of the following measures:

- 1. Disturbance of wildlife**

Whale and dolphin watchers, tourism operators, and wildlife managers alike are anxious to guarantee that tourism activities focussing on whales and dolphins do not harm the animals involved. Clearly defined standards for all human activities around these animals are needed to ensure that people are aware that their actions may



disturb the animals. Visitors must be aware of these standards in order to understand how to minimize any effect they may have. Guidelines for whale and dolphin observation cover interactions between people and animals in the wild during recreational observation activities. These guidelines have two main aims:

- Minimize harmful impacts on cetacean populations by ensuring that the normal daily and seasonal activity patterns of whales and dolphins are maintained in both the short and long-term.
- Ensure that visitors have the very best opportunity to enjoy and learn about the animals through observation that is successful for people while completely harmless to cetaceans.

Several organizations worldwide have developed guidelines for dolphin and whale watching. In this toolkit we present a set of ground rules from the WCDS (Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, www.wdcs.org). The WCDS has established some guidelines for watching marine mammals, and distributes boat stickers for providers who like to show to their customers that they live up to these guidelines:

- Keep your distance. Never go closer than 100m (200m if another boat is present).
- Never head directly toward, move between, scatter, or separate dolphins. If unsure of their movements, simply stop and put the engine into neutral.

- Do not spend longer than 15 minutes near the animals.
- Special care must be taken with mothers and young.
- Maintain a steady direction and slow 'no wake' speed.
- Never try to swim with whales and dolphins --- for both your safety and theirs.
- Do not discard any rubbish or contaminants at sea.

Adopt impact assessments on biodiversity as a regular company activity. A useful methodology is the "Integral Biodiversity Impact Assessment-Tourism Activities," IBISTA, which can be obtained through the Rainforest Alliance office in San José, Costa Rica (www.rainforest-alliance.org).

2. **Pollution and degradation of marine and coastal environments**

- Assess the environmental performance of your packages. Evaluate the results, and identify measures for improvement.
- Urge authorities, NGOs, and other entrepreneurs to establish a monitoring program for coastal areas in order to determine the impact of motorized tourist activities on water pollution and bathing water quality. The program should involve:



- ▶ Define maximum pollution levels and capacity of motorised water sports activities.
- ▶ Promote water sports and activities that have the least impact on the natural environment: surfing, snorkeling, canoeing, and others.
- ▶ When possible, establish zones for public use, where privately owned boats are not allowed, with closure of certain areas for public access, etc.
- ▶ Designate specific areas for jet skiing and water skiing. These areas must be separated from bathing areas and may not be environmentally sensitive.
- ▶ Discuss measures for responsible disposal of waste oil.
- ▶ Use vegetable-based oils for engines if available and applicable.
- Assess the annual exhaust of greenhouse gasses, and compensate for these emissions by supporting forest plantations.
- Collaborate with non-governmental organizations to carry out projects for conservation of the marine environment and protection of endangered marine species.
- Research the possibilities of setting up a Blue Flag campaign.
- Promote awareness on environmentally responsible behaviour by providing information to guests on

sensitive wilderness areas in the coastal zone, including its flora and fauna. Also include guidelines on responsible behaviour in such areas (do's & don'ts). Boat crews can remind guests on the guidelines prior to the tour.

- Adopt and implement sustainability guidelines for environmentally sound operation of boats, including training requirements for boat crew and boat guides, for example SmartVoyager label criteria.

3. Impact of construction on physical and biological environments

If you are involved in the construction and/or operation of facilities near the coastline, the following mitigating measures can be useful:

- Comply with the country's legislation and permits for building tourism facilities; these requirements might include presenting an environmental impact assessment.
- Create designs that are in harmony with the surroundings, and that are in scale, that is, in proportion with them. When available, use environmentally friendly local construction techniques and materials.
- Adopt measures to reduce water and energy consumption and to promote their proper and efficient use.

- Make sure that residual waters – sewage - will not contaminate the environment or affect human health.
- Ensure that soil, water and air are not contaminated by fuels, fuel residues, toxic substances, or any potential pollutant.
- Provide information to users of facilities in order to get their support in the implementation of all of the above.

4. **Diminished populations of fish and other harvested wildlife:**

It is important that tourists comply with a code of conduct for sport fishing. The following Code of Conduct has been developed and endorsed by the Sport Fishing Advisory Board of British Columbia, Canada:

- Handle all fish with care.
- Limit your catch to ensure fish for the future.
- Leave your fishing spot cleaner than you found it.
- Respect the rights of property owners.
- Use the proper, legal fishing gear and equipment.
- Report all illegal fishing activities to the proper authorities.
- Respect the space of others; leave enough room for everyone to fish.

- Learn the fishing and boating laws -- and abide by them.

Profit Issues

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow:** Your enterprise may be highly affected by low tourist seasons and by strong domestic competition from other service suppliers. This can cause a shortage of financial resources and affect your enterprise's operation. Also, during periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of business.
2. **No contribution made to the local community:** A tourism enterprise will not be contributing to the development of communities located near coastal and marine destinations if all its personnel are hired from outside the community, or if the goods and services necessary for the enterprise's operation are acquired somewhere else.

Suggested actions

1. **Unstable or irregular income, and dependence on tourist flow**
 - Seek collaboration with tour operators to promote your sustainable products during low season.



Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in your marketing campaigns.

- Inventory the tourist attractions that are available in your region throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organization from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool for travel agencies, tour operators and others.
- If you are linked to an NGO which is managing a protected area, you might want to adopt a fundraising strategy.
- Make an inventory of the tourist attractions in your region that are available throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Seek collaboration with local tour operators in order to promote your sustainable products during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in marketing campaigns.

2. **No contribution made to the local community**

The operation of your company can be carried out in ways that spreads money and benefits throughout the community. Some suggestions are:

- Hire local personnel, respect labor legislation and provide training and incentives for your employees.
- Promote sustainable destinations offered by local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community. Consult with local authorities on the most urgent needs, e.g. improvement of social services and education.
- Discuss your activities with other local businesses in the marine sector, and make sure that your activities do not interfere with other marine income-generating or recreational activities such as fishing, diving etc.

Certification

- Blue Flag is an eco-label for beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag Campaign is owned and run by the Foundation for Environmental Education, which is an independent non-profit organization. The Blue Flag criteria include environmental standards as well as sanitary and safety facilities at beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag Campaign includes environmental education and information for the public, decision-makers, and tourism operators in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. In order

for a country to start up the Blue Flag Campaign, a suitable organization must be identified in order to carry out the task of national Blue Flag operator. The organization must be non-profit, non-governmental, as well as independent, and environmental education and protection have to be among its most important objectives. In Latin America, at least two countries, Panama and Costa Rica, have developed the “Programa Bandera Azul Ecológica,” or Blue Flag Ecology Program, which is carried out at beaches, communities and schools. Some helpful documents in this respect are the Country Form and Feasibility Kit -- a stakeholder questionnaire to be downloaded from www.blueflag.org.

- SmartVoyager is a label certifying touring boats used for small cruises and island tours in Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands. SmartVoyager minimizes the impact of tour boats by improving the social and environmental conditions of boat operations. More information at: www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/tourism/smartvoyager/index.html
- Green Globe 21 provides criteria on contributions made to the local economy by private enterprises: www.greenglobe21.org

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has established a number of guidelines with respect to wildlife watching in a marine environment and motorized boat operations. Topics include bird, turtle, and dugong watching; island visits and motorised water sports; anchoring, boating, moorings, and yachting. All these guidelines and more are downloadable at: www.gbrmpa.gov.au
- Within the framework of Canada’s “Clean Marine Green Leaf Eco-rating Program,” stakeholders in the marine sector have developed a set of environmental standards. These are explained in the Clean Marine Manual, which covers more than 200 environmental practices on all aspects of marine operations, from refueling to handling waste oil and even recycling paper. More information at: www.omoa.com/clean_marine_faq.asp.
- The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) has also established some simple guidelines for watching marine mammals; these guidelines and more information can be found at: www.wdcs.org.





- Stakeholders of the marine tourist sector in Canada, including the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB), are presently developing a checklist to be used by tour operators for identification of environmentally sound operating marine recreation providers (see example below). An in-progress draft version of the checklist is available at: www.celb.org (www.celb.org/xp/CELB/programs/travel-leisure/tour_operators.xml).

Examples

Identifying responsibly operating marine recreation providers

In Canada, the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) and the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) have partnered with the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB) and the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) to start the "Responsible Marine Tourism Initiative."

Tour operators, hotels and cruise lines are the most important contractors of marine recreation services, including operators that handle snorkeling, diving, glass bottom boat trips, boat rentals, sport fishing, etc. They have expressed their need for

a common supply chain management tool, which helps them to identify marine recreation providers that operate with fair and environmentally sound practices. In response to this need, the partners listed above are now developing an assessment checklist.

The assessment checklist, structured as a set of questions addressing major environmental and social issues and recommended good practices for marine recreation providers, can be used by hoteliers, tour operators, and cruise lines throughout their supply chain management processes.

In addition, the checklist will serve as a central reference and as an educational and practical guide to good practices for marine recreation providers themselves. A draft version of the checklist (which has taken relevant and previously developed guidelines as its point of departure) is available at www.celb.org (www.celb.org/xp/CELB/programs/travel-leisure/tour_operators.xml).

EuroSites

EuroSites, a leading campsite holiday specialist, supports the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS). Eurosites has adopted "Danni" the dolphin, and is working closely with WDCS on a number of projects for the protection of endangered species. Source: www.wdcs.org.au

(sheet 9)

Diving and snorkelling

Introduction

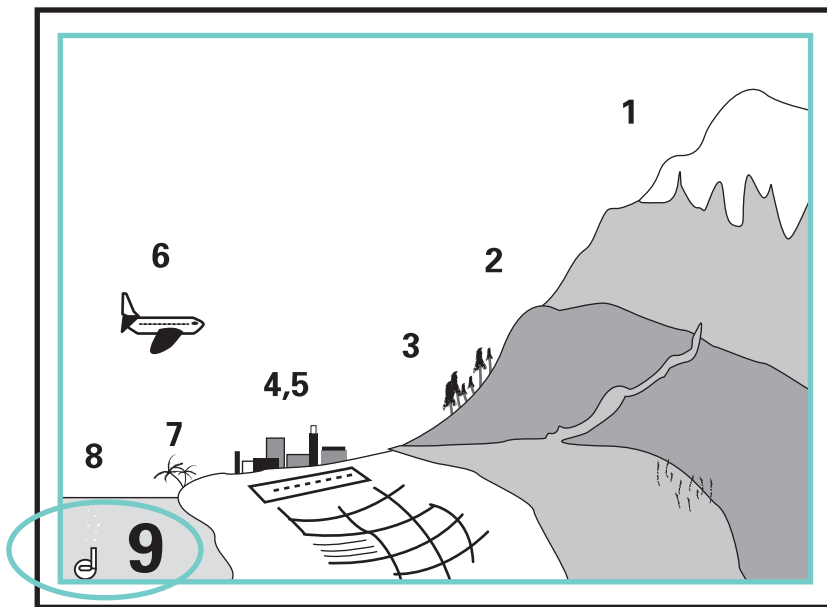
Diving and snorkelling package tours provided by tour operators to marine environments in Latin America are composed of attractions, activities, services and facilities which allow visitors to enjoy their travel experiences. You can use this fact sheet to identify sustainability issues related to the operation of your packages, as well as to note possible measures that can be implemented for the mitigation of sustainability problems.

Related attractions

Marine attractions for diving and snorkelling include coastal waters, islands and islets, and coral reefs. Biodiversity attractions include fish, mollusks, dolphins and whales, and marine turtles, among others. Some of these attractions might be within coastal or marine protected areas.

Facilities

Practicing diving and snorkeling requires supporting facilities. These include marinas to dock and berth boats, which could cause impact on the surroundings if they are not carefully designed and constructed. Facilities on the mainland include restrooms and changing rooms, lodging, tour operators' offices, and shops that rent or sell equipment and gear. These mainland facilities must also be constructed and operated to minimize





their impact on the physical and biological environments. Depending on the specific features of tour destinations, Fact Sheet No. 3 (Forests and protected nature areas) and Fact Sheet No. 4 (Cities, villages, and surrounding rural areas), and No. 5 (Accommodations) will provide you with ideas on how to mitigate the impact of construction.

Activities

These are all activities related to diving and snorkeling, including the boat trip to diving spots:

- ▶ Diving
- ▶ General boat trips
- ▶ Snorkeling
- ▶ Wildlife watching

People Issues

1. **Unacceptable labor practices and working conditions:** Unfortunately, the tourist industry is a sector where labor conditions can sometimes be harsh. Some of the issues are long working hours, lack of job security or dependable income, seasonal labor, badly paid jobs, lack of health insurance, and limited career prospects.
2. **Safety issues:** Tourists and crew are exposed to dangers. Boats can sink, people can drown, suffer from sunstroke or dehydration.

Suggested actions

1. Unacceptable labour practices and working conditions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. If they haven't, urge them to do so. Also, be sure to choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. You can decide to avoid businesses where there are doubts about the treatment of personnel. Collaborate with your local tour operators on improving the working conditions of their personnel (e.g. captains, crew members, guides, etc.) by taking the following measures:

- Declare your commitment to the ILO (International Labor Organization) conventions on basic human and labour rights.
- Comply with national and international labor legislation.
- Offer fair wages, and sign formal labor contracts with all employees, preferably for the long term.
- Enable staff to take part in management training or other types of training which will enhance their career opportunities. Workers can be instructed by staff members who have received more advanced training. Provide fair wages and sign formal labor contracts with all of your employees, preferably for a long period.

- Establish policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of employees in the workplace (enough time between dives, no dives when flying the next day etc.)
- Even in high season, make sure that employees get enough rest, especially in the case of night dives.

2. Safety of divers and dive instructors

Western tour operators are responsible for the safety of their clients and personnel during visits to a destination, and they should adopt all necessary measures to guarantee their safety during recreational or tourist activities, especially when using services provided by different suppliers. You can demand proof from agencies and local tourism entrepreneurs that activities are carried out in order to avoid any potential risks, and that they are prepared to deal with emergencies if they take arise. Work with responsible entrepreneurs to apply the following measures:

- An essential part of the education of divers is that they be made familiar with the international diver rules and communication signs. Diving schools that display the official label of an international diving association will include these rules in their training program. Recommend or collaborate with diving schools that (1) are affiliated with one of the international diving associations (PADI (www.padi.com),

CMAS (www.cmas2000.org) or IADS (www.iads.nl) and that (2) employ dive instructors with officially recognized certificates granted by one of these international diving associations.

- Ask diving schools about the safety measures taken to protect divers and dive instructors' health and safety, e.g.:
 - ▶ Staff policy
 - ▶ Maintenance of equipment
 - ▶ First aid and medical care, association to the Divers' Alert Network (see below)
 - ▶ Communication with marine authorities on safety measures.
- Training for divers on the rules on proper treatment of air bottles (e.g., to not leave them in upright position); penalties have to be issued when the rules are breached.

Planet Issues

1. **Disturbance of wildlife:** The presence of humans can cause constant disturbance in such a manner that animals get scared and eventually move to other places. Humans can also disturb breeding and predatory activities, thus changing their natural behaviour.



2. **Pollution and degradation of marine and coastal environments:** Practicing diving and snorkelling can cause the degradation of coral reefs.

Suggested actions

If possible, when designing your packages to Latin America, select tour operators that have adopted a code for environmentally and socially responsible practices. Also choose responsible suppliers of other goods and services. Work with local tour operators to ensure the implementation of the following measures:

- Co-operate with diving schools that are affiliated with an international divers organization: PADI (www.padi.com), CMAS (www.cmas2000.org) or IADS (www.iads.nl), and make sure that this is clearly visible to tour operators and tourists.
- The most important cause of degradation of coral reefs is the lack of awareness of divers about environmentally responsible behaviour. Communicate with diving schools about awareness raising measures. For example, ask dive instructors to train future divers on environmentally responsible diving practices, and to give pre-dive “refresher” briefings on this topic to experienced divers. Make dive instructors aware that they have to be good models. Environmentally responsible diving includes teaching divers to do the following:
 - Maintain good buoyancy control (be neutrally buoyant at all times);
 - Practice good finning and body control in order to avoid contact with the bottom.
 - To not touch, handle or feed marine life.
 - To not take anything – alive or otherwise – out of the water, except recently discarded garbage.
 - Make sure all equipment is secured so that it cannot drag or snag on anything.
 - Avoid wearing gloves or kneepads in coral environments.
- Ask diving schools to provide information material on the local natural environment (e.g., local plant and animal species) and any existing nature conservation projects.
- Suggest that diving schools ask for customer feedback and that they hand out evaluation forms after a dive or diving course. This will give customers the opportunity to rate the service provided, make additional comments, and offer suggestions for improvement of the service.
- Discuss environmentally responsible boat operations with diving schools. Make sure that boat operations are carried out in an environmentally sound manner:
 - Boats used for diving may not discharge any solid waste or oil into the water; waste bags are present on board.
 - Boats used for diving may not cast anchor during pauses; instead, their crew uses moorings.
- Support diving schools that take part in projects for the protection of coral reefs.

Profit Issues

1. Unstable income and dependence on tourist flow

When the tourist industry becomes the dominant economic sector, this may suppress other economic sectors in terms of investments and availability of skilled labor. Due to the fact that most tourist industries have peak and low seasons, income earned by the businesses and the local people fluctuates accordingly. During periods of extreme competition and price dumping, small tourist enterprises may be pushed out of the market.

- 2. No contribution made to the local community:** A tour operator might not be contributing to development of communities located near coastal and marine destinations, if all the enterprise's personnel are hired from outside the community, or if goods and services necessary for the operation are acquired somewhere else.

Suggested actions

1. Unstable income and dependence on tourist flow

- Promote your sustainable packages during low season. Highlight the advantages of quieter periods in marketing campaigns.
- Advertise in divers' magazines, and emphasize the advantages of a low season visit.

- Develop seasonal destinations in year-round destinations. Make an inventory of the tourist attractions available throughout the year, and design products that you can offer in different seasons.
- Collaborate with a local tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourist visits to nature conservation areas.
- Consider obtaining a sustainability label in order to distinguish your organisation from competitors. Use the label as a marketing tool with travel agencies, tour operators and others.

2. No contribution made to the local community

- Incorporate tourist destinations in the package tour that will benefit local organizations or local private entrepreneurs.
- When possible, make sure that suppliers at the destinations hire local workers, respect labour legislation, and provide training and incentives for employees.
- Support local development initiatives.
- Reserve a part of your revenues for reinvestment in the local community by collaboration with local hotels, tour operators etc. Communicate with local authorities on the most appropriate destinations, e.g., improvement of social services and education.



- Communicate with local authorities and representatives on contributions of your diving school to the local community (see example below).
- Use the contributions you make to the local community can be used as a marketing tool with tour operators and tourists.

Certification

There are several labels that include criteria on contribution to the local community, such as the NEAP label (www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp).

Guidelines and codes of conduct

- ILO (International Labor Organization) Conventions on fair working conditions and human treatment of employees (www.ilo.org).
- Divers Alert Network (DAN) is a non-profit medical and research organization dedicated to the safety and health of recreational scuba divers. DAN serves as a lifeline for the scuba industry by operating a 24-hour emergency hotline for injured divers. DAN also operates a diving medical information line and provides a number of educational programs from beginning divers to medical

professionals. To learn more about membership, visit www.diversalertnetwork.org.

- The Coral Reef Alliance has established Coral Friendly Diving Guidelines and Coral Friendly Snorkelling Guidelines for responsible behaviour of divers and snorkelling enthusiasts. The guidelines are also meant for diving operators, marine park managers, etc. and can also serve as education material as well. They are available in English and Spanish at www.coral.org.
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has also devised diving guidelines: www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

Examples

Project AWARE Foundation

The international divers' association, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) initiated Project AWARE, which is dedicated to the protection of coral reefs around the world. Diving schools supporting and participating in Project AWARE, have diving instructors who are educated on environmentally responsible diving behaviour, and who pass this knowledge on to clients. International Cleanup Day is a one-day volunteer effort to clean the aquatic environment. Every year, thousands of divers, snorkelling enthusiast, and shoreline volunteers come out to inspire communities with their commitment to clean waterways. Project AWARE Foundation,

in cooperation with the Ocean Conservancy, has organized the underwater portion of global cleanups and continues to tabulate incoming data collected during these events. Volunteers are sure to collect a few million pounds of the infamous “Top 10” items, including cigarettes, food wrappers, bags, beverage bottles and cans. Without diving volunteers, thousands of pounds of trash would remain “out of sight, out of mind.” Participating in International Cleanup Day is a great way for divers to give back to the dive site they enjoy. Data collected during International Cleanup Day conserves aquatic ecosystems by educating the public on debris issues and by gathering data for resource managers. For details, addresses of diving organisations and how to organize or get involved in a clean up visit www.projectaware.org.

Bonaire Marine Park

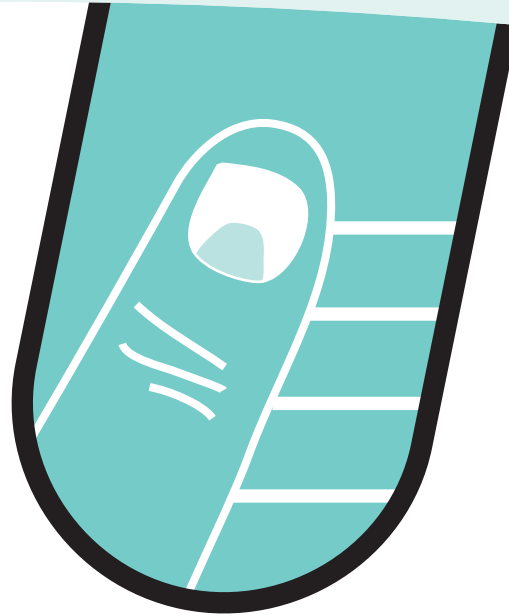
The isle of Bonaire has designated its entire coastal zone a ‘marine park.’ Every diving tourist pays a fee, which is directed to a special fund. The fund is destined to finance activities that are needed to preserve the natural coastal environment; these measures include monitoring efforts, and distribution of moorings etc. Thus, the fund seeks to guarantee both the conservation of nature and the revenue generated from dive tourism. Source: www.bmp.org.

The Curacao Ports Authority has issued a prohibition on diving near a local shipwreck, which is a popular diving place, when cruise ships are nearby. This is an official prohibition, which was established in agreement with local authorities. The port

authorities have implemented this measure for safety reasons and as a precautionary measure to prevent terrorist attacks. If divers ignore the prohibition, officials will issue fines.

Tour operator TUI has developed its own standards for “eco diving” (www.tuinederland.nl/duurzaamtoerisme). Furthermore, the tour operator is closely involved in a project for sustainable tourism in the Dutch Antilles. Part of the project has been environmental certification of diving schools. TUI now only includes “green” diving schools in their vacation packages to the Dutch Antilles (www.natuurlijkeantillen.info/ (Please note that this site is in Dutch, but related links are also in English)).

MODULE 3:



Sustainability Directory

Sustainability Directory

This module provides an overview and additional information of all guidelines, certification labels, names of organisations etc. that have been mentioned in Module 1 (Practical Guide) and Module 2 (Fact Sheets). Module 3 is divided in the following sections:

1. Guidelines, Codes of Conduct and Certification labels for sustainable tourism in Latin America. Overview and brief information of all guidelines, Codes of Conduct, labels, etc. relevant to sustainable tourism in Latin America that have been mentioned in Module 2 (Fact Sheets) of the Toolkit
2. Names and addresses of organisations. Details for contacting organisations working in the area of sustainable tourism.
3. Sources for more information. Further reading: a selection of guides, brochures and books on sustainable tourism, containing practical information on measures and best practices.
4. Index.



Guidelines, Codes of Conduct and Certification labels for sustainable tourism

Index (in alphabetical order)

Guidelines, Codes of Conduct

- BETA
- CITES
- Code of Conduct against CSEC
- Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL)
- DAN -- Divers Alert Network
- Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
- Global Reporting Initiative, Tour Operators' Supplement
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- ILO (International Labor Organization) Conventions
- International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI)
- International Porter's Protection Guidelines (IPPG)
- International Standard for Cruise Ships (ICCL)
- International Union of Alpinist Associations (UIAA)
- Mohonk Agreement
- PAN Parks

- PATA Green Leaf Program
- Practical Guide to Good Practices
- Red List of International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Responsible Marine Tourism Initiative
- WWF Souvenirs

CO₂ compensation programmes

- Business for Climate
- Future Forests
- Trees for Travel

Certification labels for sustainable tourism

- Blue Flag
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)
- Green Deal
- Green Globe 21
- ECOTEL

- Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP)
- SmartVoyager
- TUI destination and accommodation criteria

Guidelines, Codes of Conduct

BETA

The purpose of BETA (Belize Ecotourism Association: www.bzecotourism.org) is to promote environmentally responsible tourism, to be sensitive to the impact of tourism, to promote pollution prevention and environmental concerns, to continually observe the effects of all the above and to promote education for locals and visitors. BETA recognizes that an important part of sustainable tourism is community involvement and benefit. BETA is committed to helping Belizeans learn ways to benefit from tourism without adversely affecting their cultures and lifestyles. Encouragement of the arts, crafts, and traditional healing industries can help to achieve these objectives. To achieve this, BETA has a code of conduct for their members:

- Support economic and social sustainability by encouraging small scale tourist developments, providing employment for local workers, purchasing products made locally from sustainable resources and providing guidance to all guests to be environmentally and culturally responsible.

- Provide education in Belizean geography, customs and culture, creating opportunities for cultural, historical, environmental, and archaeological learning for visitors to Belize.
- Maintain and conserve flora and fauna habitats in Belize by giving appropriate information to visitors, teaching them to avoid disturbing wildlife and flora, discouraging the sale of products or species on the endangered species list, helping to implement carrying capacities, and preventing the introduction of non-indigenous species.
- Promote the sustainability of all resources, both renewable and non-renewable; conserving water and energy, and increasing awareness of the need for energy and water conservation.
- Reduce the amount of solid waste and climatic contaminants which pose a threat to the ecosystem. Durable, biodegradable, and renewable products are used instead of aluminum and Styrofoam; Dispose of all waste in a manner that is environmentally and aesthetically acceptable; vehicles are maintained for maximum efficiency in order to decrease emissions and reduce fuel consumption.

CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement,



which aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES helps with the protection of more than 30,000 species of animals and plants and is the largest conservation agreement in existence, with over 160 signatories. It is prohibited to use the species listed on the CITES for the production of souvenirs or other types of consumption. www.cites.org/eng/disc/species.html

Code of Conduct Against CSEC

A Code of Conduct for tour operators, in order to act against the sexual exploitation of children at tourism destinations. Suppliers of tourism services adopting the CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) code commit themselves, among other things, to establish a policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children, and to introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children. www.thecode.org.

Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL)

Checklists devised by The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), which has developed guidelines for responsible diving, are available at www.coralreefalliance.org/.

DAN -- Divers Alert Network

DAN is an international organization to promote safe diving practices and to provide medical assistance in case of diving accidents. www.diversalertnetwork.org/.

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

Code to promote responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. Organizations which are setting sustainable tourism standards should map out their standards against the Global Code of Ethics for tourism and transfer its guidelines into certification criteria and measurable indicators. www.world-tourism.org.

Global Reporting Initiative, Tour Operators' Sector Supplement

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is an independent organisation which' objective is to develop and disseminate globally applicable Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. These Guidelines are for voluntary use by organisations in order to be able to report on the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of their activities, products, and services. GRI has developed a sector supplement to the basic GRI guidelines specifically for tour operators, the "Tour Operators' Sector Supplement." www.globalreporting.org.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Guidelines for several environmentally sensitive activities in a marine park, such as bird, dugong, turtle, whale, and dolphin watching; fishing & spearfishing, boating, yachting, anchoring, collecting, island visits, moorings, and reef walking. www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

ILO Conventions

The ILO (International Labor Organization) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work aims to ensure that social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development. The Declaration commits the signatory states to respect and promote the ILO principles and rights of workers. www.ilo.org.

International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI)

IHEI focuses exclusively on hotels and how to improve their environmental management. Over the years, this has been done through the development of industry specific tools such as Benchmark Hotel (www.benchmarkhotel.com), publications and a quarterly magazine called Green Hotelier (www.greenhotelier.com).

International Porter's Protection Guidelines (IPPG)

The International Porter's Protection Guidelines aim to improve the health and safety of trekking porters at work in the mountains and reduce the incidence of avoidable illness injury and fatalities. www.ippg.net/guidelines.

International Standard for Cruise Ships (ICCL)

Environmental standards for cruise ships, including the Cruise Industry Waste Management Practices and Procedures: www.iccl.org/policies/environmentalstandards.pdf.

International Union of Alpinist Associations (UIAA)

The Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA) has established standards for environmentally responsible climbing expeditions. www.uiaa.ch.

Mohonk Agreement

A framework of principles and elements for certification programmes in the area of sustainable tourism. The Mohonk Agreement defines 'sustainable tourism' in the following way: "Tourism that seeks to minimize ecological and socio-cultural impacts while providing economic benefits to local communities and host countries". <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/tourism/certification/mohonk.html>

PAN Parks

PAN Parks is a European initiative for the promotion of the conservation of nature supported by responsible tourism. PAN Parks initiatives are based on collaboration between e.g. nature conservation organisations, national parks, tourism businesses and local communities. The PAN Parks formula and the eco-tourism standards developed can also be useful to stakeholders in the tourist sector outside Europe. www.panparks.org.

PATA Green Leaf Program

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Office of the Environment and Culture focuses on business practices for



sustainable global tourism. PATA's Green Leaf program for tourist accommodations was created to encourage the Pacific/Asia travel industry to adhere to the principles established by PATA's code for responsible tourism. PATA's Green Leafs program has formed an alliance with Green Globe 21. www.pata.org.

Red List of International Union for the Conservation of Nature

The Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has developed a Red List of globally threatened species. The species listed on the Red List must not be used for the production of souvenirs. www.redlist.org.

Responsible Marine Tourism Initiative

The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB), the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI), and the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) have formed a partnership to develop a supply chain management tool. The tool will serve as a commonly used reference and assessment checklist in order to identify environmentally and socially responsible marine recreation providers. This tool also serves as an educational, practical guide to good practice for marine recreation providers. www.celb.org.

WWF Souvenirs

The World Wide Fund for Nature is raising consumer awareness on unsustainable souvenirs, with the help of tour operators and travel agencies. www.panda.org/.

Programmes for compensation of CO₂ emissions

Engines that burn fossil fuels such as engines from cars, planes, boats etc. contributes to the worldwide emissions of CO₂. This is a problem because the growing emission of CO₂ is one of the reasons of global warming (greenhouse effect). One way of mitigating the effects of the emission of CO₂ by cars and planes is to compensate for the effect by planting trees (trees sequester CO₂). There are several initiatives that calculate how many trees one needs to plant to compensate for the distance traveled. They also take care of the planting by means of tree planting programs. Examples of these organizations are:

Business for Climate

Tree planting programme to compensate for CO₂ emissions caused by air travel and road travel. The programme is open to companies and other organisations, and is operated through the website of Cool Flying, www.bfclimate.nl/ (website in English and Dutch).

Future Forests

Tree planting programme to compensate for the CO₂ emissions caused by air travel, road travel, domestic heating and consumption, www.futureforests.com (website in English).

Trees for Travel

Tree planting programme to compensate for the CO₂ emissions caused by air travel. Both companies and individuals can participate in the Trees for Travel programme, www.treesfortravel.nl (website in English and Dutch).



Certification labels for sustainable tourism

Blue Flag

International standard for beaches and bathing water quality. The award of a Blue Flag beach is based on compliance with 27 criteria covering the aspects: water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety and services. More information at: www.blueflag.org.

Certification for Sustainable Tourism

Certification for Sustainable Tourism, or CST, is a program that categorizes and certifies tourism companies according to the degree to which their operations comply to a model of sustainability. To this effect, four fundamental aspects are evaluated:

1. **Physical-biological parameters.** Evaluates the interaction between the company and its surrounding natural habitat.
2. **Infrastructure and services.** Evaluates the management policies and the operational systems within the company and its infrastructure.
3. **External clients.** Evaluates the interaction of the company with its clients in terms of the extent to which it allows and invites the client to be an active contributor to the company's policies of sustainability.

4. **Socio-economic environment.** Evaluates the interaction of the company with the local communities and the population in general.

For each of these items, a list of specific questions is designed to help evaluate how thoroughly the firm complies with a series of standards previously established for the social, environmental and economics fields. Every question refers to an element of sustainability with which the firm should comply in order to qualify in any one of the different stages or levels of compliance.

To measure and set these different levels, the CST program provides a system of "sustainability levels", on a scale of 0 to 5, in which each number indicates the relative position of the firm in terms of sustainability. This scheme provides a way to classify the tourist firms in terms of "levels" in a system very similar to the commercial categorization of hotels by means of the well known stars system.

If the first level of a category is achieved (level 1), this means that the firm has taken the first step toward sustainability. The higher levels correspond to stages that are each one more advanced than the previous one, peaking at level 5, which means that the company is considered outstanding in terms of sustainability. The level assigned to any firm will always correspond to the lowest score achieved in any area.

CST is developed for all kind of tourism companies, but is in its initial phase, and so mainly focuses on hotels. A list of all hotels

in Costa Rica that are participating with CST can be found at: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr.

Green Deal Guatemala

Green Deal is a voluntary, independent sustainable tourism certification program for the Peten zone of Guatemala. It was initiated by Asociación Alianza Verde® in association with other stakeholders such as conservation NGO's, private companies, community organizations and government representatives.

It focuses on:

- Quality of tourism services
- Environmental impact
- Respect for national heritage and social development.

and is applicable to all kinds of tourism entities:

- Tour operators
- Tourist guides (agencies)
- Communities (community tourism)
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Transportation services

More information can be obtained at: www.greendeal.org

Green Globe 21

Green Globe 21 is an international benchmarking and certification programme, which facilitates sustainable travel and tourism for consumers, companies and communities. It is based on Agenda 21 and on the principles for Sustainable Development endorsed by 182 governments at the United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. There are 4 Green Globe 21 Standards (more information is available at: www.greenglobe21.com):

1. The Green Globe 21 Company Standard is available to organisations in 20 different sectors of the travel and tourism industry (listed in the table below). The principal objective of the Green Globe 21 Standard is to facilitate environmentally sustainable travel & tourism operations.

Accommodation	Convention Centres	Restaurants
Administration Offices	Cruise Boats	Tour Companies
Aerial Cableways	Exhibition Halls	Tour Operators
Airlines	Farmstays	Trailer Parks
Airports	Golf Courses	Vineyards
Bus Companies	Marinas	Visitor Centres
Car Hire	Railways	

2. Green Globe 21 Ecotourism: this standard is based on the Australian NEAP Standard combined with elements of the most recent Green Globe 21 Benchmarking performance system. Both the Standard and Certification



Program incorporate the fundamental principles for sound ecotourism certification identified in the Mohonk Agreement.

3. **Green Globe 21 communities:** the principal objective is to facilitate responsible and sustainable environmental and social outcomes for Communities; it provides communities with a framework to benchmark their environmental and social performance, to certify their performance, and to continuously improve their performance. The Standard addresses key environmental issues facing the planet. It deals with environmental regeneration and environmental improvement, as well as the conservation of heritage assets. The Standard also targets important social issues, which include improved community services and improved local socio-economic benefits including direct poverty relief in less developed countries.
4. **Green Globe 21 Design and Construct:** the draft Green Globe 21 Design and Construct Standard is available for developers, project managers, architects and other related professionals. The principal objective of the Standard is to facilitate environmentally sustainable design and the construction of travel and tourism infrastructure. It documents the requirements for facilitating and assessing the environmental, social and economic performance of the design. It is aimed at assisting developers to: assess their performance; encourage continual improvement; and to improve profitability by reducing waste and increasing eco-efficiency.

ECOTEL

The ECOTEL® inspection is based on five separate inspections each with a three-tiered numerical scoring system. The five inspections correspond to the five globe awards:

1. Environmental Commitment
2. Solid Waste Management
3. Energy Efficiency
4. Water Conservation
5. Employee Environmental Education & Community Involvement

Within each globe inspection there are three criteria and scoring: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary scores. All hotels applying for certification must satisfy all of the primary criteria before an inspection will be scheduled. The hotel must prepare an application including descriptions of how the primary criteria are achieved, along with other environmental efforts and programs that are in place at the hotel.

More information at: www.concepthospitality.com/ecotel/ECOTEL.htm

NEAP

The Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) is an Australian label for ecotourism standards. NEAP certifies tourist products (not organisations) including accommodations, activities and tours. The NEAP label is increasingly being promoted as the International Ecotourism Standard. More information at: www.ecotourism.org.au/neap.asp.

SmartVoyager

The Ecuadoran label for tour boats (small cruises, island tours) SmartVoyager minimizes the impact of tour boats in the Galapagos Islands by improving social and environmental conditions of boat operations. SmartVoyager is a certification program with standards for the maintenance and operation of the tour boats in the Galapagos Islands. Tour companies that wish to participate invite a team of specialists aboard their boats to evaluate the vessels according to the standards. The standards cover wastewater and fuels, and set rules for the management of everything from the docks to the small craft that ferry visitors ashore. Procurement and supply management guidelines are designed to minimize the chances of introducing non-native species. The label includes criteria for working conditions and advanced training for the boat crew and guides. Passengers must be given maximum opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the islands and the close encounters with wildlife while leaving no trace of their visit. More information at: www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/tourism/smartvoyager/index.html

TUI Health and Environment Destination Criteria

The destinations offered by the labels of TUI International are assessed in terms of environmental and health criteria -- prior to development of the holiday package. A checklist has been developed for this purpose, which covers topics such as spatial planning, energy and water management, quality of bathing water, participation in certification processes, etc. www.tui.nl

TUI Health and Environment Accommodation Audit

Tour operator TUI International is working on standardization of the purchasing process and contracts with accommodations. This standardization effort will take a number of years. For the time being, TUI Netherlands uses its own comprehensive checklist in order to assess the environmental performance of hotels (in English) www.tui.nl



Names and addresses of organisations

This section provides contact details and brief information about a selection of organisations involved in sustainable tourism. Please note that the organisations listed here are international governmental or non-governmental organisations. Organisations that have developed eco-labels, codes of conduct or guidelines are listed in section 1 of this module.

Index

- Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business Conservation International (CELB)
- Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)
- Conservation International
- The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)
- IUCN - The World Conservation Union
- Rainforest Alliance
- The Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas.
- The Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Development (TOI)
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre

- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Tourism Programme
- World Tourism Organisation
- WWF International

Addresses

Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business Conservation International (CELB)

The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business Conservation International
1919 M Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036, USA
Telephone: 202-912-1000
Fax: 202-912-1047
E-mail: info@celb.org

The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business provides a new forum for collaboration between the private sector (including the tourist sector) and the environmental community. The Center promotes business practices that reduce industry's ecological footprint, contribute to conservation, and add value to the companies that adopt them. The objective of these efforts is to create a net benefit for the global environment and for participating companies. CELB regularly publishes documents for the promotion of sustainable tourism.

Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)

www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr

Telephone:

+(506) 299-5800

+(506) 291-5740

Fax: +(506) 231-0311

PO Box: 777-1000, San José, Costa Rica

Conservation International (main office)

1919 M Street, NW Suite 600

Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: (202) 912-1000

Homepage: www.conservation.org

Conservation International's (CI) mission is to conserve the Earth's living natural heritage —global biodiversity— and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live in harmony with nature. CI has developed a Conservation Program on ecotourism, including Latin America. The program is based on the creation of direct links between the economic benefits of ecotourism and the protection of biodiversity.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)

733 15th St., NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20005 USA

Tel.: (++1) 202-347-9203

Fax: (++1) 202-387-7915

www.ecotourism.org

Founded in 1990, TIES is the largest and oldest ecotourism organization in the world dedicated to generating and disseminating information about ecotourism. It currently has members in more than 70 countries. The organization's membership includes academics, consultants, conservation professionals and organizations, governments, architects, tour operators, lodge owners and managers, general development experts, and ecologically concerned tourists. TIES provides guidelines and standards, training, technical assistance, research and publications in order to foster sound ecotourism development

IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Headquarters:

Rue Mauverney 28

Gland 1196, Switzerland

Phone: +41 (22) 999-0000

Fax: +41 (22) 999-0002

mail@iucn.org

www.iucn.org

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 natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. Through its projects, IUCN works to apply sound ecosystem management to demonstrate that this is the only way to sustainable livelihoods for those directly dependent on natural resources. IUCN has been actively engaged in restoring ecosystems and regenerating



people's lives, economies and societies. IUCN also develops sources of information in reference to the environment, such as databases, assessments, guidelines and case studies.

Rainforest Alliance

665 Broadway, Suite 500
New York, NY 10012 USA
(212) 677 1900
P.O. Box 11029 - 1000
San Jose, Costa Rica
Tel/fax: (506) 234-8916
www.rainforest-alliance.org

The mission of the Rainforest Alliance is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices, and consumer behavior. Companies, cooperatives, and landowners that participate in our programs meet rigorous standards that conserve biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods. Based in New York City, with offices throughout the United States and worldwide, the Rainforest Alliance is working in 53 countries with farmers, foresters, lodge owners, and tour operators.

The Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas.

This network constitutes one of the components of an international partnership effort being led by the Rainforest Alliance, the World Tourism Organization, The International Ecotourism Society and the United Nations Environment

Program to promote integration of sustainability into tourism policies and higher environmental and social standards for tourism.

The first network for the Americas was launched in Bahía, Brazil in September, 2003. The mission of this network is to promote sustainable tourism in the region through the strengthening of tourism initiatives based on mutual respect and recognition, joint efforts, harmony (balancing) of systems, and the sharing of information and experience. Network objectives include the establishment of common work tools among network members and a joint marketing strategy, the generation of a set of "best management practices" for sustainable tourism based on existing regionally and nationally accepted standards, and the definition of strategies to promote the participation of tourism operations, focused on small-scale operations, in order to implement best practices and certification processes.

Representatives from the following organizations and institutions participated in launching of the network:

- Asociación Alianza Verde, Guatemala.
- Programa Green Deal, Guatemala.
- Asociación Ecuatoriana de Ecoturismo (ASEC), Ecuador.
- Conservación & Desarrollo, SmartVoyager, Ecuador.
- Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), Puerto Rico.

- Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola para la Certificación Turística en el Perú (CSTP), Peru.
- Conservation International (CI).
- EkoSupport, Chile.
- Expoecoturismo, Venezuela.
- Instituto Costarricense de Turismo, Certificado para la Sostenibilidad Turística (CST), Costa Rica.
- Instituto de Hospitalidade (IH), Programa de Certificação em Turismo Sustentável (PCTS), Brazil.
- Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE), México.
- International Indian Treaty Council and Indigenous Tourism Rights International.
- Kiskeya Alternativa Certificación Program (Fundación Taigüey), Dominican Republic.
- Plan 21, Argentina.
- Programme for Belize, Belize.
- Programa Ambiental Regional para Centroamérica (PROARCA/APM).
- Rainforest Alliance.
- Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), Mexico.
- Sistema Arrecifal Mesoamericano (SAM).
- Sustainable Travel International (STI), USA.

- The International Ecotourism Society (TIES).
- Turismo & Conservación Consultores, Costa Rica.
- World Tourism Organization, Section on Sustainable Development of Tourism.
- WWF-Brazil and SOS Mata Atlantica representing the Sustainable Tourism Brazilian Council (Conselho Brasileiro de Turismo Sustentável)
- CBTS, Brazil.

The Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Development (TOI)

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
Production and Consumption Branch

Tour Mirabeau - 39-43, quai André Citroën
75739 Paris Cedex 15 - France

Tel: +33-1-44371468 / www.uneptie.org and www.toinitiative.org.

Most tour operators recognise that a clean and safe environment is critical to their success. Fewer have the management tools or experience to design and conduct tours that minimise their negative environmental, social and economic impacts while optimising their benefits. To develop and implement these tools in their own operations, and encourage other tour operators to do the same, a group of tour operators from different parts of the world have joined forces to create the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development. The Initiative is voluntary, non-profit, and open to all tour operators, regardless of their size or geographical location.



With this Initiative, tour operators are moving towards sustainable tourism by committing themselves to the concepts of sustainable development as the core of their business activity and to work together through common activities to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development.

The Initiative has been developed by tour operators for tour operators, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), who are also full members of the Initiative.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

UNESCO

7, Place de Fontenoy

75352 PARIS 07 SP, France

Fax: +33 (0)1 4568-5570

General Queries: wh-info@unesco.org

<http://whc.unesco.org/nwhc/pages/doc/main.htm>

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, based in Paris, France, was established in 1992 to assure the day-to-day management of the World Heritage Convention. It provides advice to States Parties in the preparation of site nominations; organizes technical assistance upon request; and coordinates both reporting on the condition of sites. Other tasks of the Centre include updating the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger, developing teaching materials to raise awareness of the World Heritage conservation and keeping the public informed of World Heritage issues. UNESCO's World Heritage mission is to encourage countries to sign the Convention and ensure the protection of their own natural and cultural heritage; as well as to encourage States Parties to the Convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Tourism Programme

UNEP DTIE

Tourism Programme

39-43, Quai André Citroën

75739 Paris Cedex 15

FRANCE

Tel: +33 1 44 37 14 41

Fax: +33 1 44 37 14 74

E-MAIL: unep.tie@unep.fr

www.uneptie.org/tourism

The UNEP Tourism Programme website provides information on sustainable tourism, government and policy support, the tourism industry, sensitive areas, ecotourism and links to UNEP Tourism Publications. UNEP has been appointed as the lead agency responsible for implementation of Agenda 21 issues on tourism. Together with the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), UNEP is the main focal point on sustainable tourism for CSD and the Convention on Biological Diversity. UNEP has developed strategies for sustainable tourism development which address the following objectives:

- Promoting sustainable tourism among government agencies and the industry;
- Developing sustainable tourism tools for protected/sensitive area management;
- Supporting implementation of multilateral environmental agreements related to tourism.

World Tourism Organization

Section of Sustainable Development of Tourism
Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, SPAIN
www.world-tourism.org

The World Tourism Organization is the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source

of tourism know-how and statistics. Its membership includes 142 countries, 7 territories and some 350 Affiliate Members representing regional and local promotion boards, tourism trade associations, educational institutions and private sector companies. The latter include airlines, hotel groups and tour operators.

WWF International

www.panda.org

WWF (formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund) is a global organization acting locally through a network of family offices. WWF works to conserve nature and ecological processes through a combination of action on the ground, national and international advocacy work in order to establish appropriate policies, and international campaigns to highlight and demonstrate solutions to crucial environmental problems. WWF is taking action to reduce negative impacts, and to encourage responsible tourism that enhances not only the quality of life, but also natural and cultural resources in destinations. WWF has developed a variety of activities in the area of sustainable tourism, such as awareness campaigns about souvenirs made from endangered species, and development of ecotourism package tours. WWF has offices in a large number of countries all over the world. Consult the WWF International homepage for details on regional WWF offices.



Sources of information

Sources documents for further reading on sustainable tourism, containing practical information on measures and best practices, have been categorized as follows:

- accommodations
- sustainability labels
- governments and sustainable tourism
- tour operators and sustainability
- websites

Accommodations

“A Practical Guide to Good Practices”. A guide with practical measures for accommodations in the areas of water and energy management, waste management, use of chemicals, green purchasing, contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation, contribution to community development, social issues in the workplace and Environmental Management systems. Published by ToInitiative and downloadable free of charge at www.toinitiative.org.

“Hotels: Care, Community Action & Responsibility for the Environment.” Report based on an international survey of

consumer attitudes towards the role of hotels in environmental sustainability. International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI), July 2002, www.reefball.com/map/fourseasons/HotelsCare.pdf

“Benchmarkhotel” is a website to provide hotel managers with a practical tool with which to make “rule of thumb” comparisons of your hotel’s environmental performance against that of other similar hotels. This tool has been designed specifically to help hotels improve environmental performance and save cost in the areas of energy management, fresh water consumption, waste minimization, waste water quality and purchasing programs. Sponsored by IHEI and WWF. Homepage at www.benchmarkhotel.com.

Sustainability labels

“Tourism Certification, An analysis of Green Globe 21 and other tourism certification programmes”. Analysis of the merits of some prominent tourism certification programmes and assessment of the potential contribution of certification to sustainable tourism. Published by WWF-UK, August 2000, 78 pages, available at www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/tcr.pdf.

“Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism: Worldwide Inventory and Comparative

Analysis of 104 Eco-labels, Awards And Self-commitments.” WTO world-wide analysis of 104 voluntary initiatives such

as eco-labels and certification schemes, prizes and awards, environmental management systems, codes of conduct, etc. The book provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of existing schemes, identifying similarities and differences among voluntary initiatives and outlining the factors that make them successful in terms of sustainable tourism development. Based on the results, guidelines are made available to tourism companies that wish to adopt any of these voluntary schemes, as well as to organizations that run these initiatives, as well as for governments and NGOs. World Tourism Organization, May 2002, 200 pages, US\$49.94, including CD-ROM. More information and ordering details at www.world-tourism.org/cgi-bin/infoshop.storefront/EN/product/1232-1

Governments and sustainable tourism

“The Green Host Effect.”. Published by the Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business, 112 pages, 1999, downloadable at www.celb.org.

“Recommendations to governments for supporting and/or establishing national certification systems for sustainable tourism”. Based on the idea that certification systems for sustainable tourism play an increasing role in regulating, the WTO Committee on Sustainable Development of Tourism recommended the preparation of a set of guidelines for Governments on certification systems for sustainable tourism. This document aims at enhancing awareness among

governments about the opportunities that certification systems may provide as part of their sustainable development policy goals, and it provides basic recommendations for supporting and/or establishing such systems at the national level. World Tourism Organization, 12 pages, www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/certification-gov-recomm.pdf.

Tour operators and sustainability

“Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development”. WWF International, July 2001, This WWF publication presents twelve guidelines in order to identify general principles and highlight practical considerations for community-based ecotourism. The guidelines have been grouped into four sections that relate to different stages of community-based ecotourism initiatives:

- Considering whether ecotourism is an appropriate option;
- Planning ecotourism with communities and other stakeholders;
- Developing viable community-based ecotourism projects;
- Strengthening benefits for the community and the environment.



The guidelines are based on experience obtained from WWF projects and may be of value to organisations and agencies that are involved in the development of eco-tourism. The explanation of the guidelines is illustrated with case studies (also in Latin America). A list of helpful reference sources has also been included. The 28-page document is available at WWF UK or downloadable at www.arcbc.org/arcbcweb/interactive/trd/trd_detail.asp?recnum=194

“Tourism: putting ethics into practice.” Report on the responsible business practices of 65 UK-based tour operators, collated and published by Tear Fund.

www.zoo.co.uk/~z0007842/Tour%20Operators%20Initiatives/Putting%20ethics%20into%20practice.pdf

“The UK Outbound Tour Operating Industry and Implications for Pro-Poor Tourism.” Working paper on the role of the tour operators in relation to developing country destinations. It describes the structure of the UK outbound tourism industry and describes implications for Pro-Poor Tourism’, written by D. Meyer, September, 2003, 72 pages, www.propoortourism.org.uk/17_industry.pdf (More publications on tourism in developing countries available at the www.propoortourism.org.uk website).

“Sustainable Development of Tourism - A Compilation of Good Practices”. This publication contains around 50 examples of good practices in sustainable development and management of tourism, collected from 31 countries (incl. India, Malaysia, Philippines). A variety of projects are presented; these range

from local to regional and national levels, including activities of the public, private and NGO sectors, covering aspects of eco-, rural- and cultural tourism, accommodations, tour operations, transportation, protected area management, regulatory and voluntary frameworks, among others. The publication may be of value to tourism officials, managers, researchers, and other stakeholders in the tourism industry. World Tourism Organization, 2000, 200 pages, 43.69 US\$. More information and ordering details at www.world-tourism.org/cgi-bin/infoshop.storefront/EN/product/1232-1.

Websites

“The International Centre for Responsible Tourism.” A virtual center for sharing best practices in all aspects of Responsible Tourism, intended to promote initiatives in the area of Responsible Tourism and to share information and publications related to this topic. This is a forum for business managers working in the destination countries and the originating markets. The centre provides reports, working papers and information about projects and initiatives around the world
Homepage: www.zoo.co.uk/~z0007842/index.htm. Related to the www.responsibletravel.com website on responsible travel tips for consumers.

“Sociotourism” website for European travellers that want to compose their own sustainable travel itinerary. Latin American

tourist providers who operate sustainable can present their organisation on the website. Homepage at www.sociotourism.org.

“National Geographic Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre”
A comprehensive listing of sustainable tourism related links. The site divides in to three sections: for tourism professionals, for travellers and for residents. Each listing has a brief description of the site it links to. www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/travelers.html

“Planeta.com” Planeta.com is a clearinghouse for ecotourism information around the world. The site includes resources for travellers and educators, with comprehensive links, bibliographies and regular book reviews. The site is an essential resource and networking tool for anyone with an interest in sustainable travel. www.planeta.com.

“Tearfund tourism resources.” Tearfund is campaigning for tourism to bring a greater contribution towards development, particularly in developing countries where our partners work. We have been focusing on tour operators and on tourists – helping both parties to take their responsibilities more seriously. Visit the website to find out more: www.tearfund.org/acting/page.asp?id=6667.

“Tourism Concern” This UK based organisation works with communities in destinations and industry in the UK to reduce social and environmental problems that are connected to tourism. The site details campaigns and produces online bulletins on fair trade and corporate social responsibility in

tourism. The site’s resources page is a useful guide to books and reports on these subjects. www.tourismconcern.org.uk.

“TravelMole Sustainable Travel News.” TravelMole is a UK-based site for travel professionals, with industry news, discussion forums and links to resources. The sustainable travel section contains global news about responsible/sustainable travel events, resources and debates. An email bulletin of sustainable travel news is also available. www.travelmole.com/news/sustainable/index.html.

“EcoClub conference calenda.” Listing of conferences on tourism and sustainability www.ecoclub.com/cgi-bin/calendar/long_calendar.cgi.

“Natourdata.” This website provides relevant nature information to the Dutch tourism sector and tourists about a large number of destinations. For NGO’s it offers a platform to showcase their mission and activities, as well as a chance to provide the right information to the tourists. www.natourdata.net/eng/index.html.

“Eldis Gateway to Development Information.” ELDIS is a gateway to information on development issues including tourism, providing free access to a wide range of online resources. ELDIS provides summaries and links to online documents, and also offers a directory of websites, databases, library catalogues, and email discussion lists. www.eldis.org/csr/tourism.htm.



Financed by:

