

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CONCEPTS

MODULE 1



1.1 OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

What is Sustainable Tourism?
Is There a Demand for Sustainable Tourism?
Benefits and Threats of Tourism

1.2 UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

Who are the stakeholders?
Understanding the local community
Winning support and fostering partnership
Sustainable tourism and the local community

1.3 UNDERSTANDING OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The role of government
The role of local community
The role of the tourism industry
The role of the tourist

1.4 STATUS REPORTS FROM SOUTH CHINA SEA SITES

Participants will present status reports of their own sites.

1.5 DEVELOPING A VISION FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Tourism Destination Visioning

Acknowledgements

The majority of the following material is excerpted or modified from:

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OVERVIEW

Sustainable tourism is tourism that minimizes the costs and maximizes the benefits of tourism for natural environments and local communities, and can be carried out indefinitely without harming the resources on which it depends.

Tourism is one of the largest global industries, with much of the growing market focused around pristine natural environments such as coastal and marine protected areas. MPAs are increasingly attracting interest from foreign visitors, as well as local residents. Tourism can benefit local communities and MPAs through revenue generation and employment. However, tourism can also threaten MPA resources by destroying habitat, disturbing wildlife, impacting water quality, and threaten communities by over-development, crowding, and disruption of local culture. In addition, conventional tourism often does not benefit the local community when tourist revenue “leaks” to outside operators. As a result, tourism can destroy the very resources on which it depends. In contrast, sustainable tourism is deliberately planned to benefit local residents, respect local culture, conserve natural resources, direct more of the profits to the local community and MPA, and educate both tourists and local residents about the importance of conservation.

Stakeholders - those with an interest or stake in the decisions being made - should be involved at all stages of planning for any management endeavor in protected areas, including sustainable tourism in and around MPAs. Stakeholders include local community members, government, NGOs, as well as the tourism industry and the tourists, and many other groups. A first step in planning for sustainable tourism is to identify the stakeholders and open communications with them. Local communities, NGOs, and the tourism industry all need to collaborate to help produce sustainable tourism enterprises that are locally beneficial and also economically feasible.

A first step in the planning process is “visioning” - developing a vision of the best possible tourism situation for your community and your MPA.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Understand the distinctions between sustainable tourism and conventional tourism
- ✓ Understand the pros and cons of sustainable tourism for an MPA and the local community
- ✓ Understand the importance of stakeholder participation in tourism planning
- ✓ Understand the importance of engaging the community, and the key principles that will help build bridges and forge partnerships
- ✓ Consider the benefits and threats of tourism from the community’s point of view
- ✓ Know how to identify other important stakeholders of your own MPA
- ✓ Compare and contrast sustainable tourism in MPA’s.
- ✓ Develop a vision for sustainable tourism in your own MPA.



LESSON PLAN

1.1 OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

What is Sustainable Tourism?

In the previous modules, we discussed basic principles of marine protected area (MPA) management planning. We turn now to sustainable tourism planning itself. Over the next several days we will discuss the benefits and costs of sustainable tourism to MPAs and to communities, and the ways to involve local stakeholders and the tourism community. A constant theme will be learning to apply the general management principles presented earlier to the particular case of sustainable tourism. But first: what is sustainable tourism, and why should we care?

Sustainable tourism is:

Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) in a way that promotes conservation, has a low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.

(World Conservation Union, 1996)

Tourism has become an important economic activity in and around MPAs and other protected areas around the world. Well-planned sustainable tourism programs provide opportunities for the visitor to experience natural areas and human communities, and learn about the importance of marine conservation and local culture. Additionally, sustainable tourism activities can generate income for both local communities and MPAs. Sustainable tourism is particularly promising as a key mechanism for local communities to benefit from the environmental and biodiversity resources of the MPA, such that they may be motivated to preserve those resources.

How does sustainable tourism differ from conventional tourism?

Conventional tourism is not necessarily planned to enhance conservation or education, does not benefit the local community, and can rapidly damage a fragile environment. As a result it can destroy, or unrecognizably alter, the very resources and cultures on which it depends. In contrast, sustainable tourism is deliberately planned from the beginning to benefit local residents, respect local culture, conserve natural resources, and educate both tourists and local residents. Sustainable tourism can produce the same profits as conventional tourism, but more of the profits stay with the local community, and the region's natural resources and culture can be protected. In many cases, conventional tourism practices of the past have posed a major threat to marine conservation due to lack of management controls and effective planning mechanisms. In contrast, sustainable tourism deliberately seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism, while contributing to conservation and the well-being of the community, both economically and socially. Conventional tourism does not often provide sources of funding for both conservation programs and local communities, while providing incentives for protecting areas from practices and development that are harmful to the natural beauty of an area. Opportunities and threats can only be controlled through well-planned and managed sustainable tourism.



CONVENTIONAL TOURISM

1. Has one goal: profit
2. Often not planned in advance; “it just happens”
3. Tourist oriented
4. Controlled by outside parties
5. Focus on entertainment for tourists
6. Conservation not a priority
7. Communities not a priority
8. Much revenue goes to outside operators & investors

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. Planned with three goals: profit, environment, and community (triple bottom line)
2. Usually planned in advance with involvement of all stakeholders
3. Locally oriented
4. Locally controlled, at least in part
5. Focus on educational experiences
6. Conservation of natural resources a priority
7. Appreciation for local culture a priority
8. More revenue stays with local community and MPA

The triple bottom line of sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism has three key components, sometimes referred to as the “triple bottom line”:
(*International Ecotourism Society, 2004*):

1. Environmentally, sustainable tourism has a low impact on natural resources, particularly in protected areas. It minimizes damage to the environment (flora, fauna, habitats, water, living marine resources, energy use, contamination, etc.) and ideally tries to benefit the environment.

2. Socially and culturally, it does not harm the social structure or culture of the community where it is located. Instead it respects local cultures and traditions. It involves stakeholders (individuals, communities, tour operators, government institutions) in all phases of planning, development, and monitoring, and educates stakeholders about their roles.

3. Economically, it contributes to the economic well being of the community, generating sustainable and equitable income for local communities and as many other stakeholders as possible. It benefits owners, employees and neighbors. It does not simply begin and then rapidly die because of poor business practices.

A tourism enterprise that meets these three principles will “do well by doing good”. This means running a tourism business in such a way that it doesn’t destroy natural, cultural, or economic resources, but rather encourages an appreciation of the very resources that tourism is dependent on. A business that is run on these three principles can enhance conservation of natural resources, bring appreciation to cultural values, bring revenue into the community, AND be profitable.

Case study: Unplanned conventional tourism in Cancun, Mexico

Prior to its development as a tourist resort in the 1970s, only 12 families lived on the barrier island of Cancun. The entire area that now comprises the state of Quintana Roo was made up of relatively untouched rain forests and pristine beaches and was inhabited by an indigenous Maya



population of about 45,000. Today, Cancun has more than 2.6 million visitors a year and has more than 20,000 hotel rooms, with a permanent population of more than 300,000. Environmental and social impacts were given secondary importance in the development plan for Cancun. For instance, no provisions were made to house low-income migrants who now work and live in the area. As a result, a shantytown developed, in which the sewage of 75 percent of the population is untreated. The mangrove and inland forests were cut down, swamps and lagoons were filled, and dunes were removed. Many bird, marine, and other animal species vanished. (Sweeting et al. 1999)

Handout 1.1 - Questionnaire

Exercise: What attributes of sustainable tourism are important to a MPA?

Fill out the questionnaire (in the handout) on your own. Then gather into small groups and discuss the sustainable tourism concepts presented so far as they relate to your own experiences and opinions. What are the most important attributes of sustainable tourism for MPAs? Present your conclusions to the large group.

Is There a Demand for Sustainable Tourism?

Demand for tourism world-wide

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism and its related economic activities generate 11 percent of Global Domestic Product, employ 200 million people, and transport nearly 700 million international travelers per year. World tourism grew by an estimated 7.4% in 2000, its highest growth rate in nearly a decade, and almost double the increase of 1999. Over 698 million people traveled to a foreign country in 2000, spending more than US \$476 billion, an increase of 4.5% over the previous year. This figure is expected to double by 2020. However, these conclusions are based largely on arrivals statistics, which focus on international tourism and therefore hide the significance of *domestic* tourism. These statistics may also underestimate regional tourists traveling by land rather than air or sea. The WTO estimates that the ratio of domestic to international tourism is as high as 10:1—although this varies hugely from country to country.

It is interesting to note, especially in these times, that tourism has continued to expand rapidly during the past half century despite a steady succession of revolutions and wars. Tourism received perhaps its strongest test after September 11, 2001, with terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC; subsequent attacks in other locations such as Spain, England and Bali; the related wars and conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere; a serious global economic downturn; increased difficulty of air travel due to security procedures and high fuel costs; and disease outbreaks such as avian flu. As a result, global tourism declined by 0.5% in 2001, but in just one year the industry recovered and began to grow slightly. In 2004 global tourism bounced back further and began to grow rapidly again; in the first half of 2006, global tourism grew by 4.5%.

Thus, though the tourism industry can vary markedly from year to year (and local communities need to be prepared for this), tourism also has repeatedly shown itself to be an incredibly resilient industry that bounces back quickly from even difficult political and economic situations. People



love to explore the world and see interesting new places. As soon as people are given reasonable assurance of safety, and can afford to travel, they will travel.

Tourism represents one of the top five exports for 83 percent of all countries and is the main source of foreign currency for 38 percent of countries.

(Conservation International 2003)

The travel and tourism industry supports 200 million jobs worldwide - 1 in every 12.4 jobs. By 2010, this is estimated to grow to 250 million, or 1 in every 11 jobs.

(WTTC and WEFA, 2000)

Tourism demand in Asia

Handout 1.2 - Tourism Growth in Asia

International tourism grew by an extraordinary 21% in the South Asia region in the first half of 2006 as compared to 2005, well above the 4.5% worldwide increase. This strong growth is partly due to the recovery of tourism in the destinations hit by the tragic tsunami of December 2004, as well as a continued recovery from the SARS outbreak of 2003. For example, tourism in the Maldives increased by 97% in 2006, above the same period in 2005 (just after the tsunami), and foreign arrivals through the Bangkok airport in Thailand grew by 29% in the first three months of 2006. The region's strong tourism growth is also fueled by continued double-digit tourism growth in India (+15%), the continued liberalization of travel for tourists from mainland China, and an increase in low-cost air carriers throughout the region.

In southeast Asia, Cambodia (+19%), the Philippines (+13%), Singapore (+15%), and Vietnam (+12% through May) all maintained double-digit growth in international tourism arrivals in the first half of 2006, as they have for several years. Thus, tourism growth in the region is extraordinarily strong and shows no signs of decreasing.

Resource consumption of tourists world-wide

Using consumption averages from various countries, statistics from WTO, and estimates of national tourism in relation to international arrivals, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) proposed some estimates of the order of magnitude of resource consumption from tourism.

If the global tourism industry were represented as a country, it would consume resources on the scale of a northern developed country.

Over a year, international and national tourists worldwide:

- use as much energy as 80 percent of Japan's yearly primary energy supply (5,000 million kWh/year),
- produce the same amount of garbage as France (35 million tons per year),
- consume three times the amount of fresh water contained in Lake Superior, between Canada and the United States, in a year (10 million cubic meters).

Given the enormous scale of the resource use of global tourism, it is clear the environmental impacts are significant.



How much of tourism demand is for sustainable tourism?

Sustainable tourism appeals to many of the same tourists who enjoy “**nature tourism**”, “**adventure travel**”, or “**ecotourism**” - i.e., tourism that focuses on appreciation of wild areas, wildlife, and local cultures. The WTO estimates that nature tourism generates 7% of all international travel expenditure. If all nature-related travel is included (not just specialty nature-tourism tours), the fraction of total tourists who are interested in nature tourism may be as high as 40-60%. The World Resources Institute found that while tourism overall has been growing at an annual rate of 4%, nature travel is increasing at an annual rate of between 10% and 30%. These patterns of growth are of particular interest since a significant percentage of new tourism facilities in developing countries with high biodiversity will likely be built in coastal and natural areas that harbor threatened ecosystems. Some indicators of this growth are:

- Those countries whose tourism industry is predominantly "ecotourism" have experienced very high tourism growth. Examples are Costa Rica, with a 400% increase in tourism from 1986 to 1991, and Belize, with a 600% visitor increase from 1986 to 1996.
- A survey of US-based outbound ecotourism operators shows that the number of ecotourism operators grew by 820% between 1970 and 1994, or an average of 34% a year.

Where do tourists interested in sustainable tourism come from?

Tourists who express high interest in sustainability and nature-based travel come predominantly from these 12 countries:

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. Germany
4. Australia
5. France
6. Sweden
7. Netherlands
8. Denmark
9. Norway
10. Austria
11. Canada
12. New Zealand

These countries account for roughly one-quarter of all visitors to mainland Southeast Asia, and this share is increasing. Since 1995, growth from these countries has outpaced overall growth in visitors to the region. Among these twelve countries, the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and France represent the largest share of visitors to mainland Southeast Asia. Thus there is substantial opportunity in Southeast Asia to build a sustainable nature-based tourism industry. Note also that over 60% of the tourists from these twelve countries speak English, indicating a growing demand for guides and tour operators who know English.

Why do travelers want sustainable tourism?

The World Tourism Organization surveyed tourists from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and France to better understand their motivations for travel. The results indicated a clear preference for wildlife viewing in a wilderness environment. Other priorities included: viewing rare species, visiting indigenous people, archeology, and bird-watching. Ecotourists also strongly



preferred education and interpretation with high-quality guides, as well as the opportunity to visit remote, uncrowded areas.

Most likely this trend has followed the global increase in interest in the environment. As people hear about the fragility of the environment, they become more aware of conservation issues around the world. At home, they are willing to pay more for “green” products and services and are taking specific conservation actions such as recycling. For their own pleasure, they want to learn first-hand about endangered species and threatened habitats. They want to understand the complex challenges of conservation and want to experience them first hand.

Travelers are also seeking more remote destinations. They are looking for experiences off the beaten path, seeking wild and unspoiled areas. Culturally, many travelers want to escape the sameness of familiar tourism environments and instead want to experience the diversity and richness of local cultures. Many travelers then become activists. As they experience a threatened wilderness or local culture and learn about its plight, they want to help. International and national travelers are looking for environmental education, are willing to pay entrance fees, and are eager to buy local products and services that strengthen the local economy.

Beyond “nature tourism”: is there demand for true sustainability?

The above statistics are drawn from studies on “nature tourism” or “ecotourism” - tourism that focuses on appreciation of wild areas, including such activities as wildlife viewing, hiking, and snorkeling. But do such tourists really care if the tourism development in that community was carried out in a sustainable way?

Reassuringly, studies indicate that they do. In surveys, many British tourists say they would be willing to pay more for their vacations abroad if the extra money ensured good wages and working conditions for staff in resorts and hotels, as well as the preservation of the host environment. In a 2000 survey of 2,000 adults in the UK (conducted on behalf of Tearfund) nearly half of those questioned said they would be more willing to travel with a company that had a written ethical code for tourism, to ensure sustainability. More than half also said that they would pay an average of an **extra five percent** (i.e., \$25 on a \$500 vacation) to guarantee ethical standards such as fair wages and the reversal of environmental damage caused by tourism.

Handout 1.3 - Global Code of Ethics

According to another survey, conducted by MORI on behalf of the Association of British Travel Agencies (ABTA), **85 percent of British tourists believe that it is important not to damage the environment**. Of those surveyed in the 2000 study, 36 percent ‘deliberately’ saved water by showering instead of taking baths, 18 percent switched off air conditioning to save energy and 17 percent decided not to have their hotel towels washed on a daily basis. When asked how much more they would be willing to pay for environmental, social and charity guarantees, 31 percent said that they would be willing to pay 2 percent extra (\$20) on a holiday worth less than US \$1000 and 33 percent said they would pay 5 percent more (\$50) on a holiday worth more than US \$1000.

Surveys of other nationalities of tourists, primarily in Europe and the United States, have found similar results. For example, German tourists are particularly demanding for environmental quality in their destinations, according to the annual Reiseanalyse survey. In the 2002 survey, **65 percent of German respondents valued clean beaches and water, while 42 percent said they wanted to be able to find environmentally friendly accommodation**.



The results of these surveys are encouraging. They indicate that not only do travelers support the concept of sustainability, but also they are even willing to pay a little more for it. ***In summary, demand for tourism in general is strong, and demand for sustainable tourism in particular appears to be growing.***

We turn next to the critical question of: Is tourism good for the MPA and its community?

Tourism Benefits and Threats for MPA's

Tourism can bring benefits to an MPA and its local community, but also can cause problems. The challenge of sustainable tourism is to maximize the benefits while minimizing the costs. In this section we will consider the benefits and threats from the MPA's point of view; we will consider the community's point of view in more detail later today.

Handout 1.4 - Impacts from Tourism

Discussion: Your experience with tourism

List on a piece of paper and then share with the entire group writing on flip chart pages or chalk board:

- 1. What are the ways tourism has benefited your MPA or your business?*
- 2. What are the ways tourism has had negative impacts?*
- 3. Has tourism overall been a positive or negative experience for you?*

BENEFITS TO MPAs FROM TOURISM

1. Revenue for Protected Areas

Funding protected areas is a major concern for MPA managers. Governmental funding of MPAs is often not sufficient for conservation needs, and many important natural areas will not survive without new and additional sources of revenue. Tourism offers opportunities to generate income in diverse ways, allowing MPA managers to better protect sensitive areas. (We will discuss tourism revenue in more detail in later modules.)

Entrance fees or visitor use fees can be charged directly to visitors who visit an MPA. Visitor fees may be collected at an entry point to a MPA; for specific activities or for the use of equipment; on a boat, as an add-on to the price of an excursion; or as a use fee for scuba divers or snorkelers. Typically, foreign visitors are charged more than local visitors.

Private sector concessions can include gift shops, boat rentals, food stands and tours. Usually these are privately owned and/or managed, with a portion of the profits going to the MPA. Many MPAs do not have authority over activities (or concessions) on the land, so agreements for securing portions of proceeds for land-based activities can be difficult. For boats and user groups such as scuba divers, who are actually conducting their activities in the MPA, a use fee agreement is easier to secure.



Donations may be solicited to support a special campaign, such as to raise funds for a visitor's center, an "adopt-a-species" type program, or solicited on an on-going basis to support general management activities. A great time to solicit donations is after the visitor has experienced the unique natural qualities of a MPA and feels moved to contribute to marine conservation efforts.

2. Employment

Tourism can bring new jobs to an area, considered one of the greatest benefits to local communities. To meet the demands of tourism in and around a MPA, residents may find employment driving taxis, as lodge owners, concession stand owners or tour guides. An increase in visitation to a MPA also increases the need for rangers, enforcement personnel, researchers and educators. Local residents are in a good position for tourism and MPA-related jobs because they are familiar with the natural and cultural resources of the area. However, they may need training in skills such as language and interpretation, handling of groups, food preparation, first aid, and motorboat maintenance. Tourism also increases the demand for indirectly related employment including service sector jobs, construction jobs and purveyors of goods such as food supplies.

3. Political justification for MPA's

The potential of sustainable tourism may sway government officials to provide protected status to an area or to strengthen the protective status of an existing protected area or reserve, particularly if it can generate income and provide other national benefits. And, as government officials begin to think more about the importance of managing natural areas, visitors are more likely to visit and support a natural area if it is protected, which in turn adds justification to the existence of protected areas.

4. Environmental Education

Sustainable tourism provides an ideal audience for environmental education. Once visitors have seen coral reefs and marine mammals, they want to learn about animal behavior and coral reef ecology, as well as the challenges of conserving these resources. Many also will want to know the economic, political and social issues that surround conservation. (We will discuss education in more detail in module 5.)

Nature guides are a critical source of environmental education. Visitor surveys show that good guides are a key factor in a trip's success. For example, in 1996, the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation asked 60 conservation groups in Latin America to identify their most urgent obstacle to developing ecotourism (an important component of sustainable tourism); the lack of well-trained nature guides ranked second in their concerns.

Visitor centers with displays, printed materials and videos are also an excellent means of environmental education. On-shore signs can convey important biological information and conservation messages. Interpretation for visitors is becoming increasingly creative and interactive.

Environmental education is an equally important opportunity to reach national visitors. Whether they are local school children learning about the resources that are valuable in their daily lives, or travelers from neighboring areas learning about the significance of their national protected areas, citizens are a key audience. Conservation messages have a special urgency for them. Sustainable tourism can raise local community awareness of the MPA's value, and the need for conservation, often resulting in greater local conservation efforts such as reducing litter. Awareness often increases at the national level also, resulting in such improved conservation efforts as mandating and supporting marine protected areas. Even at the international level,



sustainable tourism may engender an international constituency for improved conservation efforts and support for particular protected areas.

Environmental education for visitors is most effective when *pre and post-trip information* is made available. Preparation encourages visitors to think about appropriate behavior, thereby minimizing negative impacts, and the use of follow-up materials continues the environmental education process.

THREATS TO MPAs FROM TOURISM

1. Environmental impacts

Improper or heavy visitor use can cause trampling on sensitive intertidal habitats, mangroves or seagrass beds; disturbance to wildlife such as seabirds or marine mammals; damage to coral reefs from scuba or snorkel fins; and impacts to water quality from the increase in wastewater discharge or depositing of marine debris in coastal and marine areas. In addition to the immediate local damage, these impacts can cause longer-lasting subtle changes and problems, including the alteration of such animal behaviors as eating habits, migration and reproduction. Many changes are difficult to detect, but all are important indicators of the health of natural resources. We will discuss ways to assess and monitor these effects in later modules.

2. Economic instability

Tourism revenue may not be retained by the local community but instead land in the pockets of outside investors. This is called **leakage** of revenue. If leakage is high, there will be little local support for the MPA or marine conservation. Even if some residents are able to generate revenue from tourism, if income benefits to the community are small, or not sufficiently linked to conservation efforts, residents may re-invest those funds in high-impact activities with greater economic returns, such as illegal fishing or mariculture. For those who do find stable jobs in tourism, if the jobs do not provide management or ownership opportunities, local employees will not be motivated to commit to sustainable tourism as a career.

Additionally, sustainable tourism, like other forms of tourism, can be an unstable source of income. **Tourism demand fluctuates with external factors that are outside the control of tourist destinations.** For example, political conflict, or rumors of unsafe conditions within a region or country, can discourage international visitors for years. Changes in currencies can also affect tourist travel. For example, the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, along with the simultaneous decline in value of the US dollar, resulted in a steep reduction in US tourists traveling abroad for the following two years. As another example, in Komodo National Park in Indonesia, tourism dropped from over 30,000 visits per year to 11,000 in the wake of the bombings in nearby Bali, which had been the source of most foreign tourists visiting the park. Natural disasters, such as typhoons, and most dramatically the tragic tsunami of 2004, can also affect tourism for years, particularly if beachfront hotels and transportation routes are seriously damaged. These unpredictable declines in tourism can mean disaster if an MPA has become too dependent on the volatile tourism industry. In other words,

Sustainable tourism should be encouraged, but not relied on as the sole source of revenue and employment.

3. Crowding in and near the MPA



A sense of crowding can be a problem within both the communities and the MPAs. Many local communities find themselves giving up traditionally used coastal areas to tourism, including infrastructure development such as roads, hotels, restaurants, docks and piers. Tourists may start to compete with residents for remaining open spaces. These are the places the locals knew while growing up, before the places became international attractions. If access to these treasured spots becomes difficult, tensions often grow and locals may start to resent tourists. Crowds can also be a nuisance for the tourists themselves, many of whom are seeking a quiet nature trip. International tourists may be disappointed to have traveled long distances and spent years of savings only to be overwhelmed by other tourists.

4. Excessive Development

When a location becomes a popular tourist destination, local entrepreneurs will create lodging, restaurant and other services to cater to visitors' needs. In some cases where tourism demand is strong, people from other parts of the country will move to a community to take advantage of the increased economic opportunity. With the increased need for tourism services comes an increased infrastructure demand: hotels, restaurants and homes for recently arrived employees or entrepreneurs. These demands place pressure on basic services such as water supplies, wastewater treatment, electricity, etc. In addition to the burden put on municipal services, increased development typically occurs with minimal planning and can become an aesthetic problem as well as an ecological problem for both the community and the protected area.

Balancing the Benefits and Costs

Sustainable tourism has the potential to reduce the threats posed by conventional tourism to natural areas and to the people who live in and around them. However, successful sustainable tourism requires rigorous planning and management to realize its potential. Balancing the costs and benefits is not easy. In some cases, minor negative impacts need to be accepted in order to gain greater benefits. For example, tourism may result in trampled shoreline areas along trails but also allow for hiring of more MPA staff. Hiring the additional staff may be more important to the overall conservation of the MPA, and worth the sacrifice of intact vegetation by trails.

Whatever the mix of costs and benefits, the key question should be “*Is tourism advancing the long-term conservation agenda of the MPA, and benefiting the local community?*” If so, it is likely sustainable.

Deciding whether or not to pursue development of a sustainable tourism program is not an easy task. We will spend most of the next week discussing this important decision, and gathering the information that you will need to make this decision. A major step is gathering information about what, exactly, the MPA has to offer to the tourist, and what its vulnerabilities are as well; this will be the focus of our work tomorrow. Another critical step is to understand the major stakeholders and their motivations, and how to involve them in the planning process. We turn now to a brief introduction of the major stakeholders.

1.2 UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY



Effective planning of sustainable tourism seeks to maximize the local benefits of tourism and minimize the local costs, while still remaining economically feasible. **Any such planning must include all relevant stakeholders. Most importantly, it *must* include the local community and it *must* include experienced tourism operators.** In addition, it should include as many other stakeholders as possible. Who are the stakeholders and how does sustainable tourism affect them?

Who Are The Stakeholders?

“Stakeholders” are any people or groups who have an interest (or stake) in decisions being made by a management agency. In MPA decision-making, stakeholders include any individuals or groups involved, interested in, or affected (positively or negatively) by coastal and marine resources and their uses. In coastal communities, stakeholders include local residents and fisher people, as well as members of other groups such as:

- MPA management
- Members of the local municipality
- The tourism industry (tour operators, hotels, restaurants, etc.)
- The fishing industry (local and non-local)
- Local biodiversity conservation organizations
- Community development organizations
- Indigenous people’s organizations
- Coastal farming communities
- Transportation authorities
- The scientific community

It is imperative that stakeholders be involved in all stages of planning. With stakeholder support, sustainable tourism plans are more likely to succeed.

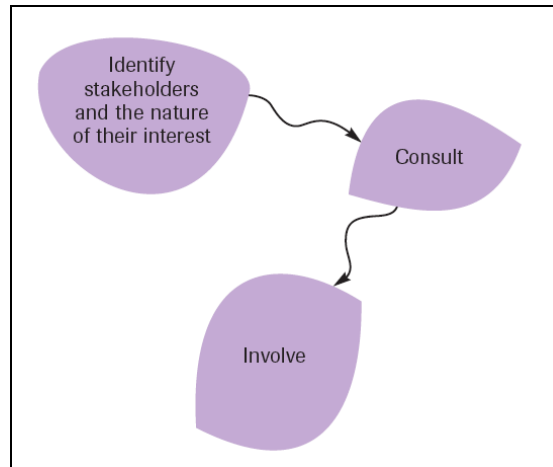
There are more than political advantages to be gained by involving stakeholders. When a community has management responsibility, feels involved, and understands the benefits that will come to them from responsible MPA management and from sustainable tourism, there is a good chance that they will use more care in using the MPA’s resources and in supporting responsible tourism practices. For example, the quantity of fish and shellfish removed may be controlled, less destructive fishing methods may be used, or dive operators may take more care in protecting coral reefs. Communities may begin self-policing and self-enforcing, to help support the goals and aims of the MPA and of sustainable tourism.

Identifying the Stakeholders

Stakeholders can only be involved once you know who they are. They must be identified, and then approached and queried as to their interests and opinions. As an initial step, the MPA tourism planning team can brainstorm with local contacts about who to specifically invite or consult with, and how to engage those individuals or groups. Once the key stakeholders have been identified, the team should determine the best means of engaging different stakeholders, based on their level of input and potential involvement in future tourism development. For example, it may be necessary to hold individual consultations or workshops with local business and conservation groups, while explaining the overall process to the general public might be more

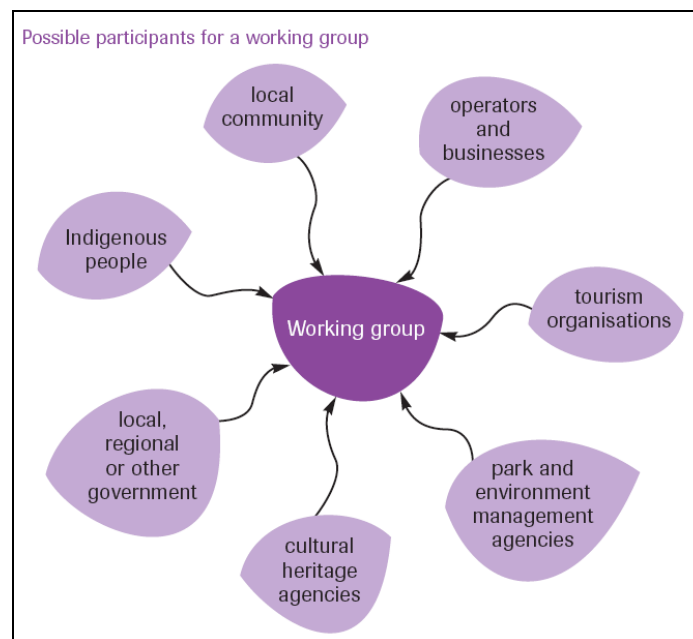


easily achieved with a large public meeting.



Source: *Steps to Sustainable Tourism*, 2004

Ideally, representatives of major stakeholder groups should eventually be involved with MPA managers in a **working group** that will, together, help develop the plan for sustainable tourism. (This working group will often consist of the same team that was assembled for the assessment process, but augmented with other stakeholders as well.)



Source: *Steps to Sustainable Tourism*, 2004



The process of identifying stakeholders also helps to identify which individuals and groups will be affected – and how – by both MPA management and sustainable tourism. It is a process of trying to discover who is likely to gain from tourism development and who is likely to lose, and by how much. Understanding the different groups in your area can allow MPA managers to understand who needs to be involved in sustainable tourism planning. Not all stakeholders have the same “stake” or level of interest in coastal and marine resources and may be less active or not active at all. Understanding the stakeholders can also help to predict

changes in social behavior, local culture, traditions, and quality of life issues that might result from tourism development.

A critical aspect of sustainable tourism planning, therefore, is to identify and understand the major stakeholders, and to understand their point of view, goals, and motivations. We will start with the most important stakeholder, the local community. Later we will explore some other major stakeholders such as local government and NGOs. The information here is only a starting point; to really begin to understand stakeholders in your area, it will be essential to actually meet and talk with them.

Sustainable Tourism and Local Communities

For local residents, tourism not only has an economic impact but also touches their personal lives. ***Tourism affects their lifestyles, traditions, and cultures, as well as their livelihood.*** Unlike other players in the tourism industry, local communities must deal with tourism whether or not they choose to. Some rural communities that were once quiet and peaceful are finding themselves invaded by international tourists, most of whom are just passing through and not staying to meet local residents. Residents have mixed reactions to the intrusion. Some want nothing to do with tourists; others are intrigued by the employment opportunities. Whatever their initial reaction, local residents are often unprepared for tourism’s demands. They often cannot compete with the powerful tourism industry and do not understand the desires and behavior of fiercely independent travelers who want to discover new areas.

Community members play an essential role in tourism. They may play many direct roles in the tourism industry, including:

- Renting land for development
- Working as occasional, part-time, or full-time staff for private tour operators
- Providing services to private operators such as food, guides, transportation, lodging
- Forming joint ventures with private tour operators, who usually provide marketing, logistics, and bilingual guides, while the community provides most services
- Operating independent community-based tourism programs

In addition, even if they are not directly involved in the tourist industry, they play many indirect roles that affect the success of any sustainable tourism enterprise. Local residents’ informal interactions with tourists play a large role in making the tourists’ experience a positive or a negative one, i.e. whether the tourists feel welcome, safe, and comfortable. Local landowners also play a crucial role in the ecological health of the area, especially in buffer zones of core protected areas, near beaches, around river mouths, etc. And, of course, coastal communities themselves will be enormously affected by tourism. Their homes, towns, families and lives will be changed if tourism becomes a major part of their area. To make the tourist-resident interaction a mutually beneficial one, and to make sustainable tourism a success, it is of paramount importance to understand the benefits and threats of tourism for local communities.



One of sustainable tourism's greatest contributions is the degree to which it can shift tourism's impacts on a local community from "threats" to "benefits". Local residents play an important role in sustainable tourism for two main reasons. First, it is their homelands and workplaces that are attracting nature travelers. Second, the support of local residents are essential for the success of any conservation effort, including sustainable tourism. In addition, local or traditional knowledge is often a key component of visitors' experience and education.

The negative environmental, cultural, and social impacts of unsustainable tourism development have affected local people most acutely. Traditional communities and indigenous people can play a major role in conserving biodiversity, but this has been acknowledged only recently, and important issues relating to participation, land and resource use, and democracy still need to be addressed in the context of tourism development. Local authorities have an essential role as moderators and facilitators of empowerment for local communities. Experience with top-down approaches to protected area management has demonstrated that, ***if they are excluded, local people can undermine biodiversity conservation efforts*** (for example, the Maasai spearing of wildlife in Kenya's Amboseli National Park to protest removal of their grazing and watering rights within the park). Likewise, approaches to tourism development that do not take local people's priorities into account can be undermined by civil unrest, hostility toward tourists, and decreased safety for tourists.

The local community is not an undifferentiated mass, but comprises people of different economic classes, clans or family groups, ethnic groups, both genders, and various special interest groups. Every community is different and includes many groups involved directly or indirectly with coastal resources, such as subsistence-level fisher people, commercial fisher people, farmers, and those involved in transportation and tourism. Efforts to involve the community should recognize and respect these different groups and the diversity of groupings within the community. In addition, MPA staff should consider and address two different definitions of community in promoting the MPA planning process:

- **Geographical community** — a group of people who live in the same area.
- **Functional community** — a group of people who may not live in the same area but who share significant aspects of common life, such as customs, manners, traditions, language, or profession. Examples are: fisher people, farmers, members of religious groups, members of a tribe.

Winning Support and Fostering Partnerships

Securing the support of local communities requires more than simply raising their awareness of issues. In fact, if/when they are asked, they are likely to demonstrate a very profound awareness of the issues and to have some good ideas for the resolution of problems (often to the surprise of management officers and consultant advisers). But the communities will also need confidence that the management authority and protected area are there to help them - not just to place restrictions on them or to extract more license fees, taxes, or bribes from them. They also need confidence that the risks involved with change are manageable and worthwhile in the time context of their needs (which may be very immediate). Communities need to know that their efforts will be rewarded by support from MPA managers, by provision of exclusive rights to resources under their management, and by formal recognition of their role in resource management and harvest.

Communities may benefit from organizing a village-based system to plan and manage their coastal activities in a sustainable way. They also may benefit from information on effective means to control outside groups that exploit resources unsustainably, for example, outside dive



operators, outside fishers, etc. Communities also will benefit from assistance on switching to alternative resources or practices. For example, fisher people can display considerable knowledge and awareness of the state of health of their coastal resources, but they often lack suitable alternatives to their harmful practices.

Communities should participate in all stages of planning, including resource assessments, identifying problems, and defining actions to resolve them. It is important to verify their perceptions of resources with independent observations, since occasionally opinions may be based on inaccurate impressions. Communities should be also involved in final review and approval of the protected area management plan (including location of zones, boundaries and controls). The protected area should be integrated into the existing village institutional structure wherever possible, with clear definitions of community and management roles and responsibilities, and avoidance of parallel structures wherever possible. As a gesture of respect, community representatives should always be placed in the forefront of any public activities related to the planning or management - workshops, meetings with donors, media events, etc.

Generally, involvement of the community often follows these four steps:

1. **Identifying stakeholders and forming partnerships.** The first step in community-based or co-management approaches is for MPA staff to identify key stakeholders and potential participants.
2. **Community organization.** An NGO or local government unit can assist the community in identifying an appropriately trained community organizer. Stakeholders are more accessible and have more opportunities to be involved if they are organized, such as with a small pool of representatives who can attend meetings and relay information to and from the rest of the community. The community organizers can also help local community members increase their level of participation.
3. **Involve the community in the planning process.** Community participation in the early stages of planning of any activity (sustainable tourism or any other management activity) will keep the activity focused on community-defined goals and benefits, and will make the community feel engaged from the beginning. Later, ongoing monitoring/evaluation ensures that the plan continues to meet community-defined goals.
4. **Ongoing information, education and communication.** To keep a community involved and aware of what is going on the MPA and how it benefits their community, the MPA needs to have ongoing information, education and communication outreach projects to members of the local community. It is also necessary to remember that stakeholders may change, and new stakeholders will eventually arrive who were not involved in the initial planning process. For example, a new hotel may open, a new tour operator may begin business the area, or the local or national government may reorganize. These stakeholders, too, need to be brought on board.

Key considerations during the process of community involvement

Reorientation of MPA staff may be important in helping them to build rapport with communities. Training management authority staff in participatory rural appraisal techniques, so that they can conduct socioeconomic studies, is a very useful step in improving relations between them and the community. By learning from and with villagers, they develop respect for the knowledge of the villagers, who will in turn be encouraged that management authority staff want to listen and learn from them.



A good foundation is to perform **participatory socio-economic and resource assessments** at the very beginning of sustainable tourism planning. In other words, include local residents when performing the types of assessments that we will be discussing tomorrow. This helps people to clarify the critical issues and priorities. Participatory **surveys of local residents** are a very useful initial step; we will discuss surveys in fuller detail later. Community members who participate in the surveys can advise other local residents and village committees on resource status during the planning process.

Be aware of differences in “**social dominance**” at meetings, which often can mask the needs and priorities of the poorer residents. The structure of any community can be quite complex, and can be masked by those whose livelihood is more secure, because they may have more time to participate in meetings, easier access to communication methods (such as email, telephones, or even transportation to meeting locations), or may be more confident to speak out. The priority issues of those who are very poor may differ from those who are better off. Careful attention to wealth and poverty profiles in the community can help identify the poorest and their priorities.

Socioeconomic and resource assessments also need to be **gender sensitive**. The resources uses and activities of men and women differ, as do their access to and control over resources, and their abilities and vulnerabilities. Resident assessments should profile these differences. Resident survey data should always be identified as to the gender of the respondent; this will allow identification of the differential opinions and impact of MPA actions on men and women.

Rapid assessments produce critical and sufficient information for immediate management decisions, but must always be calibrated and cross-checked with longer-term studies.

Whenever using rapid assessment techniques, try to validate findings by “**triangulation**” or “**cross-checking**”, i.e., using several different methods to corroborate findings. Secondary sources of information, statistics, and direct observations are valuable sources of information that are independent of villager perceptions.

Useful tools for stakeholder identification and understanding include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participatory mapping, surveys, and ranking. We will discuss several of these tools in detail tomorrow. It is necessary to continuously monitor and modify these tools during assessments, to verify that they are yielding the necessary information in an accurate and unbiased way.

Community boundaries often correspond to resource (forest or reef) use boundaries. Therefore, conflicts with community boundaries need to be resolved early when attempting to establish protected area management responsibilities.

Interestingly, **management issues that are identified in community meetings usually do not differ markedly from those identified by MPA managers**. This is a reflection of the fact that local residents are usually quite knowledgeable about conditions in and around a nearby MPA, and that residents’ actions and MPA ecosystem health are inextricably intertwined. Consequently, community-perceived issues, and their causes and solutions, can be used to define overall objectives, results, and activities for management planning.

Case Study: Lessons Learned from Tanga

(Salm et al., 2000)

In the Tanga region of Tanzania, coral reefs have often deteriorated from among the finest in Tanzania in 1968 to wastelands of broken coral with few fishes. Overfishing, accompanied by the



use of increasingly destructive fishing methods (including dynamite) destroyed these reefs and left fisher people increasingly desperate. The fishers knew the problem, but were reluctant to address it because of their need for food and income, no matter how little, on a daily basis. Shifting to alternative livelihoods carries too large a burden of risk for these people whose needs are immediate and who live at or below the poverty level.

A program to address the needs of the local people as well as the environment was designed and implemented with the assistance of IUCN at the request of local government authorities. Once the government workers and communities had overcome their mutual suspicions and perceptions, and were able to work effectively together, the communities demonstrated a willingness and capacity to invest time and effort into dealing with difficult issues of enforcement and management.

The villagers have developed their own management plans for areas of sea and mangrove that include restrictions on harvest and closure of certain areas to establish community-based protected areas. In return, these areas and the related bylaws have been officially recognized by local and central government, thereby securing exclusive access for members of the community implementing management according to prescriptions they have imposed upon themselves.

This concept of user or access rights in return for management responsibility is a strong incentive for community participation in protected area management.

A participatory approach to management of marine and coastal reserves may require reducing the negative perceptions held by communities of management authorities, and vice versa. The communities may view the management authority staff as tax collectors, police, useless, corrupt, and indolent; while the management authority officers may view the communities as self-indulgent, ignorant and greedy. It takes time to change these perceptions and create a good relationship of mutual trust and collaboration. Creating this relationship in Tanga, Tanzania, took eighteen months and was time well-invested.

The need to build a realistic time frame to build trust and bring communities on board is a major lesson learned.

Other lessons learned through the Tanga program are listed on the accompanying handout.

Handout 1.5 - Lessons Learned from Tanga

Discussion: Benefits & costs of tourism for communities

- 1. In a large group, brainstorm all the benefits and threats that tourism brings, or could bring, to local communities. Write the benefits and threats on a large poster board at the front of the room so that all participants can see them. Some benefits/threats may be generalizable to all communities; others may be specific to certain areas only.*
- 2. Discuss your findings in a large group discussion. How can the benefits be maximized and the threats minimized?*
- 3. Compare these to the benefits and threats for your MPA that you discussed earlier. What are the similarities and differences between the MPA's point of view and the community's point of*



view? Are there areas where MPA managers, tour operators, and local communities will disagree about whether a certain effect of tourism is a benefit or a cost? If so, how can these different viewpoints be reconciled?

Handout 1.6 - Benefits & Threats of Tourism to Communities

(The handout may be passed around after the discussion so that people can then add the additional ideas that arose during the discussion.)

Key Considerations for Sustainable Tourism Development in Communities

Create partnerships. Sustainable tourism organized by local communities requires assistance and cooperation from tourism operators, who usually will have much better links to the market, better understanding of tourists' needs, and better language skills and communications.

Avoid putting all eggs in the tourism basket. Relying solely on tourism is unwise, because tourism demand fluctuates unpredictably, and because tourism alone cannot provide enough jobs to sustain an entire community. Sustainable tourism must be seen as one of several strategies in a community's development. Other important elements are: education, access to information, protected area management, and increasing economic opportunities in other (non-tourism) fields.

Link sustainable tourism benefits to conservation goals. For sustainable tourism to promote conservation, local people must clearly benefit from sustainable tourism, and must understand the link between the benefits they are receiving and the existence of the protected area. For example, many locals do not recognize that some of their income is linked to tourism at a nearby protected area.

Case study: Job-seekers in Bahia, Brazil

Christ et al. 2003

An important side effect of tourism employment is that it may draw more people to move to the region. This is particularly likely to occur in areas of large resorts that create a great number of jobs. If the job-seekers moving to the area overwhelm the existing infrastructure, the influx can cause environmental and social damage - uncontrolled building of slums that can encroach on environmentally sensitive areas, strains on water and sewage outflow facilities, and social tensions and poverty from the resulting crowding and poor living conditions.

For example, the Brazilian state of Bahia harbors a highly threatened conservation hotspot, the Amazon rainforest. A US\$400 million PRODETUR 1 project, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank from 1994-2001, focused on improving infrastructure to support tourism. 800 kilometers of highways and roads were improved, water and sewage infrastructure was improved, and over US\$4 billion in tourism investment was the result. However, the project did not take into account the movement of people to the area seeking jobs in the growing tourism industry. Uncontrolled settlement of job-seekers caused private building in environmentally sensitive areas, encroachment on rain forests and mangroves, and impacts on coral reefs and other coastal ecosystems. After intense pressure from local and international NGOs and community groups, investor groups and development-oriented government officers allocated funds for conservation, particularly to focus private construction in certain areas and protect other areas. The result was conservation of 22 historical heritage sites and the beginning of efforts to conserve over 70,000 hectares of coastal ecosystems and other protected areas, including the creation of the new Serra



do Conduru State Park. These lessons are being applied to new IDB projects. The overall lesson is to remember that tourism can cause unanticipated environmental and community changes that may extend well beyond the planned tourist facilities.

Case Study: Local communities in partnership with hotels in Tanzania

A recurring theme in community involvement in sustainable tourism is the utility of developing productive partnerships between community members and other stakeholders. On Chole Island, Mafia District (Tanzania), the local village has developed a strong relationship with the owners of a small, eco-tourist hotel. In exchange for permission to build and operate the hotel, the owners agreed to contribute financial resources to priority village development projects. To date, the village has been able to construct a new market, health clinic and primary school. Other initiatives developed include English classes, a library, an oral history project, and research on the archaeological ruins of the island. The community has also developed a fee scheme to collect money from visitors to the island. The revenues from this initiative are channeled into a community development fund under the auspices of two annually elected committees. Indeed, both the hotel and local community are benefiting from this strong relationship that has been growing over the past eight years.

In Ushongo, Pangani District (Tanzania), the three beach hotels have entered into an agreement with the local village. Two of the three hotels formally agreed, when acquiring land titles and building permits, to channel a percentage of their revenue to the village for priority projects. The third hotel, while not required as part of a formal agreement, has agreed to participate in this scheme as well. It was agreed between the village and hotels that the money would be used for the improvement of school facilities in the village. However, the money is provided to the village in cash and therefore it is difficult to monitor its end uses. A few minor obstacles still need to be overcome in order for this partnership to be a success, such as the issue of providing revenue during the low season, the investment in road maintenance by the hotels, and the exclusion of the District authorities in this arrangement.

From these two mini-case studies, it can be concluded that building and maintaining strong relationships can take many years and require continuous efforts from both sides. It is important that as many details as possible, both large and small, are dealt with as early and as openly as possible to avoid potential pitfalls in the future. Last, building and maintaining a strong relationship between hotels and local communities is a long and continuous process, but one that can be greatly beneficial to both parties.

Source: Tanzania Coastal Tourism Situation Analysis, 2001.

1.3 UNDERSTANDING OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The local community is an essential stakeholder, but it is not the only one. We will briefly consider here several other major stakeholders. You may think of more types of stakeholders that apply to your own area.

The Role of Government in Sustainable Tourism

Although tourism may be driven by the private sector, government policy instruments, such as requirements for environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and management plans, can be



extraordinarily effective in ensuring that development takes place in an appropriate manner. In many biodiversity hotspot countries, tourism destinations are under the influence of various governmental agencies, whose mandates include culture, historical heritage, parks, coastal protection, economic development, fisheries management, and forestry. Smooth coordination among these departments and coherence between tourism policy and other government policies, including biodiversity conservation, are not always the rule, and therefore different policies may undermine rather than support each other.

National governments usually set the framework for tourism development and biodiversity conservation through policy and legislation. Some examples of these include

- **Laws and regulations** defining standards for tourism facilities, access to biodiversity resources, and land-use regulation and zoning. This may include requirements for environmental impact statements (EIS's) before development.
- **Infrastructure** design, development, and regulation (water, energy, roads, airports, etc.).
- **Economic instruments** defined in policy, such as incentives for sustainable tourism investment and the creation of private reserves.
- **Standards for health and safety**, including quality controls and regulation of business activities; these are aimed at protecting consumers and at meeting the needs of residents—including traditional communities and indigenous people—and protecting their lifestyles.
- **Establishment and maintenance of protected areas** and conservation corridors of interest to tourism. Managers of public protected areas often are the most effective players for conservation benefits from tourism development.
- **Allocation of tax revenues** for the protection of biodiversity-based tourism attractions, such as national parks and reserves.

At the destination level, **local authorities** are often responsible for implementing policies regarding tourism and biodiversity conservation. Local authorities are well placed to negotiate between the various interests of local and outside entrepreneurs, civil society, and national government agencies, and they hold essential regulatory and zoning mandates that allow for the enforcement of guidelines and standards. On the other hand, the capacity of local authorities to manage this complex and fragmented industry effectively, and to ensure its positive contribution to local strategies for sustainable development, is dependent on whether local policymaking is coherent with national policy instruments and agencies.

In many transitional and developing countries, governments may also play a direct role of tour operators and hotel managers. either to try to jump-start quality standards or to generate revenue. For example, Suriname has a government-run tour operator (METS) and there are similar state-run tour operators in China and Vietnam.

Case study: Pressure on government in Cancun, Mexico

Governments do not always enforce their own regulations, of course. For example, the Mexican government was criticized for “overlooking” zoning regulations and other developmental control mechanisms in the massive tourist developments at Cancun. Recently, however, with considerable pressure from outside sources, the government halted construction of a resort complex on land owned by the developer because of its proximity to a sea turtle nesting area.



The Role of the Tourism Industry in Sustainable Tourism

The tourism industry is massive. It is considered to be the biggest industry in the world. It consists of an enormous number of small and medium-sized enterprises, and also includes large multinational corporations that control an increasing percentage of the overall market. In Europe, for example, five companies control over 60% of organized outbound travel (i.e. tourists who travel on pre-planned tours). It involves a huge variety of people, including tour operators and travel agents who assemble trips; airline and cruise ship employees; minivan drivers; staff of big hotels and small family lodges; handicraft makers; restaurant owners; tour guides; and all the other people who independently offer goods and services to tourists. The complexity of this sector indicates how challenging it can be for protected-area staff and local communities to learn about and form partnerships with the tourism industry.

Members of the tourism industry are valuable to sustainable tourism for many reasons. First, they understand travel trends. They know how travelers act and what they want. Second, the tourism industry can influence travelers by encouraging good behavior and limiting negative impacts in protected areas. Third, the tourism industry plays a key role in promoting and actually carrying out sustainable tourism. Its members know how to reach travelers through publications, the Internet, the media and other means of promotion, thus providing a link between sustainable tourism destinations and consumers.

Who is the tourism industry?

The mechanics of international tourism require a complex set of arrangements to enable tourists to choose a destination and then to actually get there. Travelers may interact with a chain of businesses including: travel agents, who contract with outbound operators (in the tourist's country), who contract with inbound operators (in the destination country), who in turn may contract with local service providers. Traditionally, local service providers only enter this chain at the end, when the trip is already underway. However, adventurous travelers often now connect with local service providers directly via the internet, particularly if the local providers are featured in travel guides (such as Rough Guide, Lonely Planet, etc.).

Outbound operators play a critical role - they can ensure a steady flow of tourists and can influence consumer choices, often even determining how much tourists will pay. However, outbound operators do not live or work locally, and do not have a stake in sustainability in any particular area. This is particularly true of the multinational corporations - if poorly planned tourism causes environmental conditions to worsen in a particular area, they can simply shift to another area. Many also remain unaware of the environmental and cultural impacts of their activities. However, some major travel companies have recognized that promoting conservation and sustainable development can maintain the cultural and biological integrity of the places they visit, enhancing the quality of the product they are selling and improve their reputation and their repeat business.

A significant recent development has been voluntary environmental initiatives by hotel chains, tour operators, etc., including green certification systems, conservation awards, and "ecolabels". Thus the tourism industry itself is taking matters into its own hands to improve sustainability. (We will discuss this further in later modules.) Connecting with these networks of tour operators can put MPA managers in direct contact with members of the tourism industry who are already interested in sustainability, and who may be enthusiastic about working with your MPA in a sustainable manner.

Including tour operators and tour developers in your planning



Implementing sustainable tourism is a very costly and challenging venture. Success is more likely if the tourism industry is part of this process from the beginning. Therefore, tour operators should be considered as key stakeholders who can be essential to the success of the whole project. The experience of a private tour operator or tour developer is invaluable and can provide essential information such as:

- Information about the potential market
- Advice on visitor preferences for attractions, lodging, food and transport
- Marketing
- Providing services to facilitate visitor access to & appreciation of the site
- Training of local guides and entrepreneurs
- Investing in a local sustainable tourism operation
- Operating a sustainable tourism operation

How the tourism industry traditionally develops a tourism destination

It is useful for MPA managers to understand how conventional tourism moves into a new area, since some of the same steps can be co-opted for use in sustainable tourism development. In 2001, UNEP reviewed 12 case studies of tourism resort development in various ecosystems in order to investigate how decision-making affects biodiversity. On the basis of this analysis, the process tends to unfold as follows:

- 1. Local team formation.** A group of local investors, often owning biodiversity-rich land, team up with potential resort builders and hire professional intermediaries called developers, whose role it is to bring together all resources and players that will determine the feasibility of the resort.
- 2. Seeking outside investors.** The developers look for outside private investors and examine the interest of partners such as tour operators and air and cruise carriers, based on perceived market potentials.
- 3. Seeking support of local & national government.** The group contacts local and national government, looking for support such as:
 - infrastructure (free land, airports, roads, water supply, sewage/waste management, etc.);
 - flexible land-use regulations (appropriate for clusters of resorts);
 - tax breaks and incentives; such as soft and subsidized loans; and
 - attractive public land or parks that could be the base for tour products.
- 4. Constructing facilities.** Once funding is in place, the resort is built. This can occur with or without an environmental impact assessment, depending on local regulations. Unfortunately, the UNEP report points out that decisions about siting, design, technology, and product development are often made only from the perspective of corporate efficiency and customer relations; community expectations and conservation of local and regional biodiversity are not usually considered.

This process is also sometimes initiated by local politicians and/or investors who pressure the government to offer support and then attract outside investors. Trade associations (representing tour operators, hotel chains, and air carriers, etc.) are often partners in lobbying government, whose driving interests are often purely job generation and future tax revenue, but without a sustainability focus. In some cases, tourism development is financed by multi- and bilateral development agencies, under subsidized development aid loans. The terms of these loans may or may not be supportive of biodiversity conservation, however.



Understanding this process can allow MPA managers to communicate better with members of the tourism industry, and to use some of the same steps in MPA sustainable tourism planning - but with more emphasis on conservation and involvement of the local community.

The Role of the Tourist in Sustainable Tourism

The tourist is the ultimate actor in making sustainable tourism a reality. If tourists do not choose to come to the MPA, or are not willing to pay fees to support sustainable tourism, the project will fail.

Attracting tourists to sustainable tourism at MPAs usually involves two factors.

1. Communicating to the tourist that the MPA exists and what its attractions are. This is where the marketing experience of experienced tour operators will be essential. Getting the MPA listed in major travel guides such as Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, etc. is also helpful, as these guides can help attract independent travellers (those not on pre-planned tours) to the MPA.

2. Encouraging the tourist to patronize sustainable tourism rather than conventional tourism. The tourist may need to be willing to pay higher fees to visit a site that is sustainable, rather than attending a similar tourism experience elsewhere that is less environmentally friendly. Fortunately, surveys of tourists have shown that, in general, though tourists primarily want to relax when on vacation, they do *not* wish to do this at the expense of local people or their environment. As we saw yesterday, several European surveys indicate that tourists are willing to pay up to 5% more (of their entire trip budget), e.g. for such extra costs as MPA entrance fees, if they know that the extra money will support the local environment and the community. However, tourists, like everybody, have limited budgets, and there does come a point past which an excessively high fee will turn tourists away.

Travel guides, magazines, and newspapers can make huge contributions to raising consumer awareness about critical issues facing the tourism industry and help to stimulate a demand for change. For example, *National Geographic Traveler* magazine routinely highlights issues of sustainable tourism and profiles tourism businesses that are leading the way in implementing sustainable tourism practices. Audubon magazine has developed a "Tread Lightly" code of conduct for travel in natural areas. Reaching out to particular market segments of tourists who are interested in sustainable tourism may be more beneficial than advertising widely to a mass market.

The Role of NGO's in Sustainable Tourism

Many **conservation-oriented NGOs** ("non-governmental organizations", such as Conservation International, Rainforest Alliance, etc.) embrace sustainable tourism because of its direct link to conservation. Conservation NGOs frequently act as:

- Facilitators between other players, e.g. communities and the tourism industry
- Partners with sustainable tourism companies, whether locally owned or not
- Trainers and sources of technical information and expertise
- Partners with protected area administrators, often helping obtain funding or carrying out some activity, e.g. an environmental education or interpretation program
- Managers of their own private protected areas or, sometimes, of government-administered protected areas



- Rarely, NGOs may directly provide tourism services, such as promotion, lodging, transportation and food. However, this can distract an NGO from its primary mission and can remove opportunities for community-based enterprises or the private sector.

Non-conservation-oriented NGOs

NGOs that are not primarily conservation-oriented also play a role in sustainable tourism. These NGOs fall into two major groups: NGOs that promote economic development, and trade NGOs of certain industries such as associations of private tour operators, airlines and hoteliers. These NGOs are valuable players because they provide a forum for discussion, offering a means of communications with great numbers of interested individuals. They often have regular conventions or meetings, and communicate industry concerns through publications such as newsletters. Members are often asked to subscribe to certain principles or “codes of ethics”.

Other Stakeholders

We have briefly discussed tourism’s effects on MPAs, local communities, NGO’s, and the tourism industry itself. This is not a complete list of stakeholders who are affected by tourism. Throughout the rest of this module, continue to think of other organizations, economic sectors, governmental divisions, etc., that could be affected by tourism in your area and that may play a role in the development of sustainable tourism.

Exercise: Identify stakeholders

Above we have discussed local communities, and briefly reviewed some other major categories of stakeholders. Let’s now discuss and identify the specific stakeholders in your own area.

- *Discuss and identify the threatened resource(s) in your MPA, and review the tourism vision developed in module 3.*
- *Identify as many “stakeholder” groups or individuals for your project as you can, and list them on your worksheets. Also discuss the role each stakeholder might play based on his/her interests.*
- *Use the colored circles provided by your instructor to represent different stakeholders or stakeholder groups. Match circle size to the relative interest of the stakeholder. The larger the circle, the greater the interest.*
- *Glue circles to the flip chart paper provided by your instructor.*
- *Present your findings to the whole group. Each group will have 10-15 minutes to present.*

Case study: Galapagos, Ecuador

Handout 1.7 - Galapagos Visitor User Fees

(The following is an excerpt from the Galapagos Visitor Use Fee handout:)

The Galapagos National Park is located in the Galapagos Islands and lies on the equator about 1000 kilometers off the coast of Ecuador. Both the terrestrial national park and the Galapagos Marine Reserve are internationally recognized for their extraordinary ecosystems, their



remarkable state of conservation, their easily observable evolutionary processes, their rich biodiversity and the high level of endemism of their plant and animal species.

Although the national park was created in 1959, active park administration and organized tourism did not begin until 1968. Both park administrators and tourism industry representatives quickly realized that if they did not work together to ensure that tourism was carried out responsibly, the unique characteristics of the Galapagos ecosystem could be greatly deteriorated. A comprehensive management plan for the park was prepared in 1974, which included a list of approved visitor sites and a zoning system that determined where tourism (and other activities) would occur.

The park services, together with the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS), instituted a naturalist guide system in 1975. All tour groups are required to travel with a guide, and all guides are required to pass a training course in order to receive a license to work in the park. This requirement has encouraged many local residents to become involved with tourism and, via the training course and their experiences in the park, to increasingly value conservation of the resources of the park and the reserve. The guide system has also helped to enforce park regulations and to increase the park management's presence throughout its 7000 sq. km. of territory. Guides have also been instrumental in ensuring that visitors become educated about the incredible conservation value that the Galapagos Islands represent.

The first management plan established a maximum capacity of 12,000 visitors per year for the park, a figure that was rapidly surpassed as tourism mushroomed to its present level of approximately 100,000 visitors annually. While several efforts have been made over the years to establish a carrying capacity for the park, it has been difficult to enforce the limits due to the complexity and number of factors that contribute to tourism in the Galapagos National Park. It has gradually become evident that managing the individual visitor sites for their individual capacities as well as aggressively monitoring visitor impacts are more effective ways to manage tourism numbers. There is currently no limit on the overall number of visitors to the Galapagos Islands; instead, there is a limit on the number of visitors to each specific terrestrial site. The park authorities adjust boat itineraries to ensure that visitor numbers are kept within established site visitation limits.

The original entrance fee of US\$6 has now reached US\$100. This has not reduced the flow of visitors to the islands, but it has allowed the Ecuadorian government to capture a greater share of tourist expenditure there. For many years, all of the income generated by the Galapagos National Park returned to the national treasury. With the creation of the Marine Reserve and the consequent greater responsibility of protecting the marine portions of the Galapagos Islands, which could not be achieved without the support and participation of several government entities, the entrance fee receipts are currently divided between the national park, local municipalities, the CDRS and other government agencies. It is expected that this funding distribution will generate a more holistic approach to environmental protection in the Galapagos Islands.

Recent illegal fishing in the marine reserve has created a great deal of conflict between conservationists and resource exploitation interests. The various stakeholders, led by the park and the CDRS, have established a process of conflict resolution and participatory planning for the marine ecosystem called Participatory Management (we will discuss this further in a later module). The principal stakeholders sit down at the same table and reach conclusions about catch size, locations for fishing and other related matters. Their first efforts led to a Special Law for the Galapagos in 1998, which has helped settle many issues, related to the marine reserve as well as tourism in the islands. Many conflicts could have been avoided if Participatory Management had been in place when tourism was beginning.



Tourism in the Galapagos Islands began when “ecotourism” and “sustainable tourism” did not exist. Yet, through trial and error, park managers and tourism industry representatives have gradually created a situation which closely approximates what ecotourism represents: benefits to the community, the private sector and resource conservation; visitor education; economic sustainability for the national park; and visitor impact management. It has not been easy nor is the present situation perfect. Yet an important group of diverse interests has been created which will ensure that the unique qualities of the Galapagos Islands will continue to be protected.

1.4 STATUS REPORTS FROM SOUTH CHINA SEA SITES

Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around their MPAs.

Discussion: Comparing the case studies

Compare and contrast the tourism case studies presented by your colleagues. What are the similarities and differences? How does the scale of, and demand for, tourism affect the possible management strategies? What difficulties arose in each case, and how do you think they could have been avoided?

1.5 DEVELOPING A VISION FOR TOURISM

An essential element in planning for tourism is “visioning” - picturing the ideal situation for sustainable tourism in your area. Visioning is a process for imagining the best possible outcomes of sustainable tourism, and defining the tourism goals that you want your MPA and community to move toward.

A visioning session is centered on three questions:

1. **Where are we now?** Discuss the current tourism situation in your MPA and community, and anything related (including economic, social, and political factors)
2. **Where do we want to be?** Ask all participants to “dream” about what the ideal situation would be for tourism development in their community of MPA. If funding, politics, market access, etc., weren’t an issue, what would the best-case scenario for tourism be in the future? This is your vision.
3. **How do we get there?** Compare the present situation and the desired future situation. What steps are needed to get from the present to the desired vision?

Handout 1.8 - Tourism Destination Visioning



Case Study: A Vision of Sustainable Tourism for Komodo National Park

Komodo National Park encompasses several large and small islands in the Lesser Sunda Islands of Indonesia. The park was originally established a reserve for komodo dragons (the world's largest reptile) in the 1980's. In the first years of its establishment, it attracted only about 150 visitors per year. The park has become increasingly popular with tourists in search of wildlife viewing, diving and snorkelling experiences. Visitors exceeded 30,000 per year in the late 1990's, and now (in the wake of the Bali bombings) are approximately 11,000 per year. 80% of tourists come with the expectation of seeing wild komodo dragons, but increasingly are interested in the park's exceptional diving and snorkelling sites. The park also attracts film and movie teams per year who are in search of tropical settings to film in, and a handful of scientific researchers who stay for many months. The increasing diversity of tourists, and of the tourists' interests, prompted the management of Komodo National Park to develop a comprehensive and detailed vision for sustainable tourism at the park. See the accompanying handout for details.

Handout 1.9 - A Vision for Komodo National Park

Exercise: Tourism destination visioning for your MPA and the region

Break into small groups by MPA, and develop a tourism vision for each area. In thirty minutes, small groups present to each other. Next, develop a vision for the entire South China Sea region. Start by identifying some common visions among the sites.

Now that you have a vision for the MPA, it is time to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, and unique aspects of each MPA and its local community. What exactly do they have to offer to a tourist? Why should a tourist come and visit the MPA? This will be the focus of the next module.