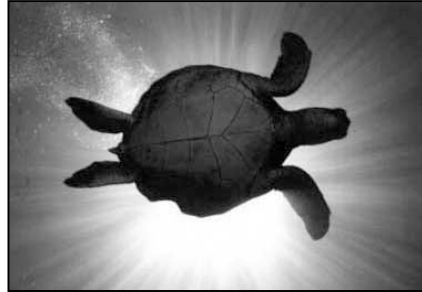# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CONCEPTS

3.1 OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Is There a Demand for Sustainable Tourism?

Benefits and Threats of Tourism

3.2 ROLES OF MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

Sustainable Tourism & Local Communities

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3.3 STATUS REPORTS FROM THE ETPS SITES

Cocos

Coiba

Malpelo

Gorgona

Las Baulas

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3.4 DEVELOPING A VISION FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Tourism Destination Visioning

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.

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 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 role of local communities, NGO's, and the tourism industry.
- ✓ Compare and contrast sustainable tourism in MPA's.
- ✓ Develop a vision for sustainable tourism in your own MPA.

LESSON PLAN

Game 1: The Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape Game

3.1 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.

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

1. Environmentally the activity 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 the activity 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.

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
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

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. On the other hand, sustainable tourism seeks to both minimize the negative impacts of tourism, while contributing to conservation and the well-being of the community, both economically and socially. 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.

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 3.1 - Questionnaire

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

Fill out the questionnaire 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 the Americas

Handout 3.2 - Tourism Growth in the Americas

Tourism in North America has grown only slightly in recent years, primarily due to Canada's loss of tourism revenue due to the strong Canadian dollar, and Hurricane Wilma's impact on the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico. However, in Central and South America, tourism has been growing strongly in 2004, 2005, and early 2006. Expanded low-cost air travel in this region is expected to encourage further tourism growth in 2006 and beyond. Among the four Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape Countries, Colombia in particular is showing very strong growth in tourism, likely due to increased security and safety throughout the country. Nearby Peru has also experienced enormous tourism growth, attributed to major marketing campaigns on the part of the Peruvian tourism industry and the winning of several international travel awards by Peruvian tour operators - a success story that other nearby countries can learn from.

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 <u>sustainable</u> 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. 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%. The patterns of growth are of particular concern 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. It is believed that nature tourism may comprise 40-60% of the tourism market, increasing at 10-30% annually. Some indicators of this growth are:

- More than 2/3 of tourists in Costa Rica visit protected areas and reserves. Arrivals in Costa Rica more than quadrupled from 246,737 in 1986 to 1,031,585 in 1991. Belize has seen more than a 600% visitor increase, from 51,740 in 1986 to 334,699 ten years later.
- A survey of US-based outbound ecotourism operators shows that the number of operators grew by 820% between 1970 and 1994, or an average of 34% a year.
- The global destinations of US-based outbound ecotourism operators' clients were: Central America 39%, South America 25%, North America 18%, Mexico and the Caribbean 5% and other regions 13%
- Ecotourism is growing at a rate of 10-15% annually, as estimated by the World Travel and Tourism Council

Why do travelers want sustainable tourism?

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 3.3 - 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 in module 7.

Handout 3.4 - 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 11.)

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 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 to South America for the following two years. Natural disasters can also affect tourism. Hurricanes in particular can easily destroy tourism infrastructure at marine sites. 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.

3.2 ROLES OF MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

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?

We will consider this issues only briefly now, to get a brief overview of the relevant stakeholders. We will return to the stakeholders' perspectives in module 7 and 8 for detailed discussion.

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.

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 additional, local or traditional knowledge is often a key component of visitors' experience and education.

Sustainable Tourism and NGO's

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; sustainable tourism associations; and other trade organizations that handle travel issues. 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".

Sustainable Tourism and the Tourism Industry

The tourism industry is massive. 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.

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.

3.3 STATUS REPORTS FROM THE ETPS SITES

Cocos Island, Costa Rica
Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around Cocos Island.

Coiba Island, Panama
Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around Coiba Island.

Malpelo Island, Colombia
Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around Malpelo.

Gorgona Island, Colombia
Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around Gorgona Island.

Las Baulas, Costa Rica
Participants will give a presentation on the status of tourism in and around Las Baulas.

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

Handout 3.5 - 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. 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 module 7). 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.

Discussion: Comparing the case studies

Compare and contrast the tourism case studies presented so far from the Eastern Tropical Seascape. 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?

3.4 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 for the present to the desired vision?

Handout 3.6 - Tourism Destination Visioning

Exercise: Tourism destination visioning for your MPA and the ETPS

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 Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape (30 minutes). 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 module 5.