

CBD GUIDELINES

# GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



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Secretariat of the  
Convention on  
Biological Diversity

# **GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

**International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism  
development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal  
ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity  
and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain  
ecosystems**



**CBD**

**Secretariat of the  
Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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The cover photo of the Guidelines finds its inspiration in the origins of the term “ecotourism.” Mexican architect Hector Ceballos Lascurain coined the term in 1983 when lobbying for the conservation of Yucatan wetlands as a habitat for the American Flamingo. His definition was officially adopted by IUCN in 1996. Though many definitions and models of ecotourism and sustainable tourism abound, all should meet the following criteria: provide for conservation of biological and cultural diversity, include meaningful community participation and be economically sustainable.

## Foreword

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries. It is also a source of increasing stress on fragile ecosystems. Its social, economic and environmental impacts are immense and complex, not least because tourism concentrates on vulnerable natural and cultural sites. Short-term gains may take precedence over long-term environmental considerations, such as the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. However, natural ecosystems and biological resources that may be threatened by tourism development provide the very goods and services that underpin the tourism industry.

The challenge is therefore to ensure that tourism is developed in harmony with environmental considerations. Sustainable tourism can generate employment and income, thus providing a strong incentive for conservation. It can also raise public awareness of the many goods and services provided by biological diversity, and of the needs to respect traditional knowledge and practices. Sustainable tourism has the potential to reconcile economic and environmental concerns and give a practical meaning to sustainable development.

In order to promote sustainable tourism, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2000 accepted the invitation to participate, with regard to biological diversity, in the international work programme on sustainable tourism development under the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, with a view to contributing to the development of a set of international guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable ecosystems.

The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development are the result of a lengthy consultative process involving Parties, competent organizations, and indigenous and local communities. They were initially developed by experts at a Workshop held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in June 2001, and subsequently improved and refined by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention. Finally, they were adopted by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2004.

The Guidelines are a tangible tool in keeping with the commitment of Parties to focus on the practical implementation of the Convention and the target to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss, which is at the heart of the Convention's strategic plan.

I urge all concerned to apply the Guidelines for any tourism development and activity taking place in, or likely to impact on, vulnerable ecosystems. Recalling the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, I also invite all Governments to integrate the Guidelines in the development or review of their strategies and plans for tourism development, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and other related sectoral strategies, in consultation with interested stakeholders including tourism operators and all members of the tourism sector.

Hamdallah Zedan  
*Executive Secretary*  
*Convention on Biological Diversity*

# **Introduction**

The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development are a comprehensive instrument developed by the international community to achieve more sustainable tourism development.

The Guidelines aim at making tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive, engaging the private sector and local and indigenous communities, and promoting infrastructure and land-use planning based on the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. They provide a framework addressing what the proponent of a new tourism investment or activity should do to seek approval, how the authorities should manage the approval process, and how to sustain the transition to sustainable tourism through education and capacity-building.

The Guidelines are conceived as a practical tool providing technical guidance to policy makers, decision makers and managers with responsibilities covering tourism and/or biodiversity, whether in national or local government, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations and other organizations, on ways of working together with key stakeholders involved in tourism and biodiversity.

The main thrust of the guidelines is that tourism management should be based on a consultative process involving multi-stakeholder participation and should consist of ten steps, including: the development of an overall vision for the sustainable development of tourism activities; the setting of short-term objectives to implement the vision; the review and building of regulations and tourism standards; the assessment of the potential impacts of tourism projects; the monitoring of impacts and compliance; and the implementation of adaptive management in relation to tourism and biodiversity.

To ensure their effective implementation, the Guidelines should be supported by long-term public education and awareness-raising campaigns to inform both professionals and the general public about the impacts of tourism on biological diversity and about good practices in this area, and capacity building activities.

The Guidelines have already been applied in a number of field projects as a basis for the conception and implementation of their work. Experience shows that they should be an evolving tool and their development and further refinement an ongoing process; they should be adapted to different realities and ecosystems. To

this end, the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties invited Parties, Governments, and relevant organizations to implement pilot projects to test the applicability of the Guidelines, understand their practical implications and report on their effectiveness.

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## **GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

### **International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain ecosystems**

#### **A. SCOPE**

1. The present Guidelines are voluntary and represent a range of opportunities for local, regional, national governments, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders to manage tourism activities in an ecological, economic and socially sustainable manner. They can be flexibly applied to suit different circumstances and domestic institutional and legal settings.
2. The Guidelines will assist Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, public authorities and stakeholders at all levels, to apply the provisions of the Convention to the sustainable development and management of tourism policies, strategies, projects and activities. They will provide technical guidance to policy makers, decision makers and managers with responsibilities covering tourism and/or biodiversity, whether in national or local government, the private sector, indigenous and local communities<sup>1</sup>, non-governmental organizations or other organizations, on a process for working together with key stakeholders involved in tourism and biodiversity.
3. The Guidelines cover all forms and activities of tourism. These activities should be consistent with the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. These include, but are not limited to, conventional mass tourism, ecotourism, nature- and culture-based tourism, heritage and traditional tourism, cruise tourism, leisure and sports tourism. Although the primary focus of the Guidelines is vulnerable ecosystems and habitats, they are also appropriate for tourism with impact on biodiversity in all geographical locations and tourist destinations. The guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development can also play a crucial role in incorporating sustainable use and equity strategies within and around protected areas. Furthermore the Guidelines recognize the need for collaboration between originating and receiving countries and should be used to balance local interests and national, regional and international policies.

1/ For the purposes of the present Guidelines “indigenous and local communities” means “indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity”.



## **B. THE POLICY-MAKING, DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

4. The main elements considered in developing the Guidelines are:
  - (a) Framework for management of tourism and biodiversity;
  - (b) Notification process in relation to such a management framework;
  - (c) Public education, capacity-building and awareness-raising concerning tourism and biodiversity.
  
5. Policy-making, development planning and the management process need to be undertaken through a multi-stakeholder process. Governments will normally coordinate this process at national level. This process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and should ensure strong involvement of indigenous and local communities throughout the management and decision-making process. In addition, those responsible for tourism development and activities are encouraged to consult with and involve all relevant stakeholders, and especially those who are or may be affected by such developments and activities. The process applies to both new tourism development and the management of the existing tourism operations.

### *Institutions*

6. In order to ensure coordination between the levels of decision-making in government departments and agencies concerned with management of biological diversity and tourism as well as agencies responsible for broader national economic development, inter- and intra-departmental and inter-organizational structures and processes should be established, if they do not already exist, to guide policy development and implementation.
  
7. There is a need to improve awareness and exchange of knowledge between those responsible for and affected by tourism and nature conservation at a national, subnational and local level. In addition, national biodiversity strategies and action plans should include consideration of tourism issues, and tourism plans should likewise include full consideration of biodiversity issues. Existing documents, strategies and plans should be coherent or revised and amended to that effect as applicable.
  
8. A consultative process should be established to ensure ongoing and effective dialogue and information-sharing with stakeholders, as well as to resolve conflicts that might arise in relation to tourism and biological diversity and build consensus. To assist in this process, a multi-stakeholder body should be established including government departments, the tourism sector, non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities

and other stakeholders, to ensure their engagement and full participation in the whole process, and encourage the establishment of partnerships.

9. The institutional arrangements should provide for the comprehensive involvement of stakeholders in the management process described in these Guidelines.
10. Authorities and managers of protected areas have a special role for the management of tourism and biodiversity. To this end, there is a need for government support and resources for managers, including training to perform their role effectively. In addition, it is necessary to establish and review mechanisms and funding policies to ensure the availability of adequate resources for maintaining biodiversity and promoting sustainable tourism. International institutions and development agencies should be involved as appropriate.
11. To be sustainable, tourism development in any destination requires coordinated policy-making, development planning and management. The policy-making, development planning and management process comprises the following steps:
  - (a) Baseline information and review;
  - (b) Vision and goals;
  - (c) Objectives;
  - (d) Review of legislation and control measures;
  - (e) Impact assessment;
  - (f) Impact management and mitigation;
  - (g) Decision-making;
  - (h) Implementation;
  - (i) Monitoring and reporting;
  - (j) Adaptive management.

### ***1. Baseline information***

12. Baseline information is necessary to enable informed decisions to be taken on any issue. A minimum of baseline information is needed to enable impact assessment and decision-making and it is recommended that its compilation follow the ecosystem approach.
13. For tourism and biodiversity, the baseline information should include information, as appropriate, on:
  - (a) Current economic, social and environmental conditions at national and local level, including current and planned tourism development and activities and their overall positive and negative impacts, as well as development and activities in other sectors;

- (b) Structure and trends within the tourism sector, tourism policy and tourism markets and trends, at national, regional and international level, including information based on market research as necessary;
  - (c) Environmental and biodiversity resources and processes, including any special features and sites of particular importance and protected areas, and identifying those resources that may be off bounds to development due to their particular fragility and those resources identified by existing analysis of threats;
  - (d) Culturally sensitive areas;
  - (e) Benefits from, and costs of, tourism to indigenous and local communities;
  - (f) Information on damage done to the environment in the past;
  - (g) National biodiversity strategies, action plans and reports and other sectoral plans and policies relevant for tourism development and biodiversity;
  - (h) National, subnational and local sustainable-development plans.
14. Baseline information should take into consideration all sources of knowledge. The adequacy of the baseline information available will need to be reviewed, and where necessary, further research and information-gathering can be undertaken to fill gaps that may be identified.
15. All stakeholders may contribute relevant information to this process, including indigenous and local communities. To this end, there is a need for capacity-building and training to assist stakeholders in documenting, accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information.
16. Collation and synthesis of information provided will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity issues, and in traditional knowledge and innovation systems.
17. In order to ensure that all relevant information, its credibility and reliability, are considered, all stakeholders should be involved in review of the collated baseline information available, and in the synthesis of this information.
18. Baseline information should include maps, geographical information systems and other visual tools, including already identified zoning schemes.
19. The baseline information-gathering and review process should make full use of the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as other relevant networks such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage sites and Ramsar sites.

20. Requirements for site-specific information in relation to proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations are set out in the notification process, and its compilation should follow the ecosystem approach. To enable impact assessment and decision making, the basic information required includes:
- (a) Site-specific aspects:
    - (i) The various laws and regulations and plans that may be applicable to the specific site, including overviews of:
      - a. Existing laws at local, subnational and national levels;
      - b. Existing uses, customs and traditions;
      - c. Relevant regional and international conventions or agreements and their status, and cross-boundary agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoUs);
    - (ii) Identification of various stakeholders involved in or potentially affected by the proposed project - including stakeholders in governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors (particularly those from the tourism sector), and indigenous and local communities - along with details concerning their participation in and/or consultation on the proposed project during its design, planning, construction and operation;
  - (b) Ecological aspects:
    - (i) Detailed indication of the protected and biodiversity significant areas;
    - (ii) Specifications on the ecosystems, habitats, species;
    - (iii) Quantitative and qualitative information on the loss of habitats and species (main reasons, trends);
    - (iv) Indexing of species;
    - (v) Identified threats;
    - (vi) Existing zones, ecological zones and existing tourism zones within the ecological zones;
    - (vii) Ecologically sensitive zones and zones where ecological disasters have or will most likely take place;
  - (c) Development aspects:
    - (i) Summary of the proposed project, why and by whom it is proposed, estimated outcomes and possible impacts (including impacts on the surrounding areas and transboundary impacts), and quantitative and qualitative data on these aspects;
    - (ii) Description of the stages of development and the various structures and stakeholders that may be involved at each stage;
    - (iii) Description of current land-uses, infrastructures, tourism facilities and services and their interaction with proposed operations.

## ***2. Vision and goals***

### ***Vision***

21. An overall vision for sustainable tourism development in harmony with the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other related conventions, such as the World Heritage Convention, is important for the effective management of tourism and biodiversity, and for ensuring that this also contributes to income generation and poverty reduction and a reduction of threats to biodiversity. The vision developed at the local level, while reflecting local priorities and realities, should take into account, as appropriate, national and regional tourism development strategies, policies and plans for economic and social development and for land-use, as well as the baseline information and review. It should be based on a multi-stakeholder process including indigenous and local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development.

### ***Goals***

22. The main goals are established to maximize the positive benefits of tourism to biodiversity, ecosystems, and economic and social development, and of biodiversity to tourism, while minimizing negative social and environmental impacts from tourism, and can cover, inter alia:
  - (a) Maintenance of the structure and functioning of ecosystems;
  - (b) Sustainable tourism compatible with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
  - (c) Fair and equitable sharing of benefits of tourism activities, with emphasis on the specific needs of the indigenous and local communities concerned;
  - (d) Integration and interrelation with other plans, developments or activities in the same area;
  - (e) Information and capacity-building;
  - (f) Poverty reduction, through the generation of sufficient revenues and employment to effectively reduce threats to biodiversity in indigenous and local communities;
  - (g) Protection of indigenous livelihoods, resources and of access to those resources;
  - (h) Diversification of economic activities beyond tourism to reduce dependency on tourism;
  - (i) Prevention of any lasting damage to biological diversity, ecosystems, and natural resources, and of social and cultural damage, and restoration of past damage where appropriate;
  - (j) Supporting the effective participation and involvement of representatives of indigenous and local communities in the development, oper-

- ation and monitoring of tourism activities on lands and waters traditionally occupied by them
- (k) Zoning and control of tourism developments and activities, including licensing and overall targets for and limits to the scale of tourism, to provide a range of activities for user groups that meet overall visions and goals;
  - (l) Empowerment through participation in decision-making;
  - (m) Access by indigenous and local communities to infrastructure, transport, communications and healthcare provisions laid on for tourists;
  - (n) Increased safety for indigenous local communities;
  - (o) Increased social pride;
  - (p) Control of tourism development and activities including licensing and clear indication on the limits to the scale and type of tourism development.
23. In relation to sharing of benefits arising from tourism and the conservation of biodiversity with indigenous and local communities, it should be noted that benefits may take various forms, including: job creation, fostering local enterprises, participation in tourism enterprises and projects, education, direct investment opportunities, economic linkages and ecological services. Appropriate mechanisms need to be established/ evolved to capture the benefits.
24. The vision and goals will form the basis of national strategies or master plans for sustainable development of tourism in relation to biodiversity. Such plans should also incorporate consideration of biodiversity strategies and plans. In addition, biodiversity strategies and plans should include consideration of tourism issues.
25. Governments will normally coordinate this process at national level. This process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by communities at community level. Where local and community level vision and goals for tourism and biodiversity have been set, these may be taken into account by governments when preparing the national level vision and goals, for example through workshops at the local level.

### ***3. Objectives***

26. The objectives focus on actions to implement specific elements of the overall vision and goals, and may include clear activities and the time by which these will be achieved. Objectives should be performance-based (e.g., construction of an interpretative trail to aid development of local guide services) and process-based (e.g., establishment of an operational management system for tourism and biodiversity). As with the vision and goals, it is

- important to involve and consult with all relevant stakeholders, and especially the tourism industry and indigenous and local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development, in the process for setting objectives.
27. Objectives should be specific and should include specific areas identified in clearly delineated zones listing the types of activities and infrastructure that would be acceptable and should be developed. It should also outline the impact management measures that would be appropriate, and intended markets (with greater detail, as set out in the notification process, being required for proposals for tourism development or activities at specific locations).
28. Governments may also wish to consider:
- (a) Measures to ensure that sites designated at international level, such as Ramsar or World Heritage sites or Biosphere Reserves, are accorded appropriate legal recognition and government assistance at the national level;
  - (b) Establishing reserves based on the biosphere reserve concept and incorporating sustainable-development objectives, generating income and employment opportunities for indigenous and local communities, and promoting appropriate product development;
  - (c) Measures to ensure that sites, at the national level, such as national parks, reserves and marine conservation areas are accorded appropriate legal recognition, have management plans and are provided necessary government support;
  - (d) Strengthening the protected area network and encouraging the role of protected areas as key locations for good practices in the management of sustainable tourism and biodiversity, taking into account the full range of protected area categories;
  - (e) Use of political and economic tools and measures to encourage the channelling of part of total tourism revenues towards supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, such as conservation of protected areas, education, research programmes, or local community development;
  - (f) Encouraging all stakeholders, as well as the private sector, to actively support the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components.
29. Governments will normally coordinate this process at national level. This process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by communities at community level. Where local- and community-level objectives for tourism and biodiversity have been set, these may be taken into account by governments when preparing national level objectives.

#### ***4. Legislation and control measures***

30. Respect for existing national legislation and appropriate regulatory mechanisms and tools, such as land-use planning, protected area management plans, environmental assessment, building regulations and standards for sustainable tourism, are essential for the effective implementation of any overall vision, goals, and objectives. A review of legislation and control measures could consider, as appropriate, the legislation and control measures available for implementation of the overall vision, goals and objectives for tourism and biodiversity, their effectiveness, including enforcement, and any gaps that may need to be addressed for example, by revision of—or the development of additional—legislation and control measures.
31. The review of legislation and control measures may include, inter alia, assessment of the effectiveness of any provisions for resource management, access, and/or ownership by communities, especially indigenous and local communities in relation to tourism development or operations on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by them;; addressing legally established rights of indigenous and local communities; and enabling these groups to make decisions about tourism development and activities, amongst other forms of development and activities, in these areas.
32. Legislation and control measures considered could include measures for:
  - (a) Effective enforcement of existing laws, including the participation of all stakeholders;
  - (b) Approval and licensing processes for tourism development and activities;
  - (c) Controlling the planning, siting, design and construction of tourism facilities and infrastructures;
  - (d) Management of tourism in relation to biodiversity and ecosystems, including vulnerable areas;
  - (e) Application of environmental assessment, including assessment of cumulative impacts and effects on biodiversity, to all proposed tourism developments, and as a tool to develop policies and measure their impacts;
  - (f) Setting national standards and/or criteria for tourism that are consistent with overall national or regional plans for sustainable development and national biodiversity strategies and action plans:
    - (i) Environmental quality and land-use criteria in and around tourism sites;
    - (ii) Development of a decision-making process with environmental and cultural sustainability guidelines for new and existing tourism development within the designated goals and objectives of the site's different zones and within the limits of acceptable change;



- (g) Integrated land-use management;
  - (h) Ensuring inter-linkages between tourism and cross-cutting issues, including agricultural development, coastal zone management, water resources, etc.;
  - (i) Mechanisms to resolve any inconsistencies between policy objectives and/or legislation in a manner that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders;
  - (j) Application of economic instruments, including tiered user fees, bonds, taxes or levies, for the management of tourism and biodiversity;
  - (k) Creating incentives for sustainable tourism development in line with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21 through relevant economic mechanisms;
  - (l) Supporting private sector voluntary initiatives consistent with these Guidelines, such as certification schemes and providing opportunities for the private tourism sector to contribute to management initiatives through direct donations, in-kind services, and other voluntary initiatives consistent with these Guidelines, and relevant policies;
  - (m) Avoiding tourism development or activities outside those areas set out in the objectives;
  - (n) Monitoring, control of and provision of information on activities related to collection and trade of biological and related cultural resources within tourism sites.
33. Governments will normally coordinate this process at the national level. It is important to involve and consult with all relevant stakeholders, and especially indigenous and local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development, in the process for reviewing legislation and control measures, assessing their adequacy and effectiveness, and proposing development of new legislation and measures where necessary.

### ***5. Impact assessment***

34. Impact assessment for sustainable tourism development in ecosystems should be based on the “Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment” developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity and contained in the annex to decision VI/7 A (paras. 1-24) as well as on the Akwe: Kon voluntary guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessment regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities (as contained in section F of decision VII/16).

35. At national level, Governments should normally undertake assessment of impacts associated with the overall vision, goals and objectives for tourism and biodiversity. In addition, this process may also be undertaken at more local levels by local government, and by indigenous and local communities.
36. Proposers of tourism developments or activities should assess the potential impacts of their proposals and provide information on this through a notification process.
37. Governments will normally undertake evaluations of the adequacy of impact assessments submitted by proposers of tourism developments or activities. These evaluations will need to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified team, drawing on a range of expertise, including expertise in tourism and in biodiversity management, and also involving those indigenous and local communities that would be affected by the proposals. There should be public access to the documentation.
38. If the information provided is not sufficient, or the impact assessment inadequate, then further impact assessment studies may need to be undertaken. The proposer may be requested to undertake such studies, or the Government may decide to undertake these studies, and may request funds from the proposer for this purpose, as appropriate. Other stakeholders, including biodiversity managers and indigenous and local communities that may be affected by a proposed development, may also provide their assessments of impacts associated with specific proposals for tourism developments or activities, and provisions may be needed to ensure that any such assessments are taken into account by decision-makers.
39. Indigenous and local communities concerned should be involved in impact assessment. Their traditional knowledge should be acknowledged and considered for impact assessment in particular tourism projects that affect their sacred sites or lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by them.
40. Sufficient time should be allowed considering the different conditions and circumstances to ensure that all stakeholders are able to participate effectively in the decision-making process for any project using information provided by the impact assessment. Such information should be provided in forms that are accessible and comprehensible to all the various stakeholders involved.
41. Impacts of tourism in relation to the environment and biological diversity may include:
  - (a) Use of land and resources for accommodation, tourism facilities and other infrastructure provision, including road networks, airports and seaports;

- (b) Extraction and use of building materials (e.g., use of sand from beaches, reef limestone and wood);
  - (c) Damage to or destruction of ecosystems and habitats, including deforestation, draining of wetlands, and intensified or unsustainable use of land;
  - (d) Increased risk of erosion;
  - (e) Disturbance of wild species, disrupting normal behaviour and potentially affecting mortality and reproductive success;
  - (f) Alterations to habitats and ecosystems;
  - (g) Increased risk of fires;
  - (h) Unsustainable consumption of flora and fauna by tourists (e.g., through picking of plants; or purchase of souvenirs manufactured from wildlife, in particular such endangered species as corals and turtle shells; or through unregulated hunting, shooting and fishing);
  - (i) Increased risk of introduction of alien species;
  - (j) Intensive water demand from tourism;
  - (k) Extraction of groundwater;
  - (l) Deterioration in water quality (freshwater, coastal waters) and sewage pollution;
  - (m) Eutrophication of aquatic habitats;
  - (n) Introduction of pathogens;
  - (o) Generation, handling and disposal of sewage and waste-water;
  - (p) Chemical wastes, toxic substances and pollutants;
  - (q) Solid waste (garbage or rubbish);
  - (r) Contamination of land, freshwater and seawater resources;
  - (s) Pollution and production of greenhouse gases, resulting from travel by air, road, rail, or sea, at local, national and global levels;
  - (t) Noise.
42. Socio-economic and cultural impacts related to tourism may include:
- (a) Influx of people and social degradation (e.g. local prostitution, drug abuse, etc.);
  - (b) Impacts on children and youth;
  - (c) Vulnerability to the changes in the flow of tourist arrivals which may result in sudden loss of income and jobs in times of downturn;
  - (d) Impacts on indigenous and local communities and cultural values;
  - (e) Impacts on health and the integrity of local cultural systems;
  - (f) Intergenerational conflicts and changed gender relationships;
  - (g) Erosion of traditional practices and lifestyles;
  - (h) Loss of access by indigenous and local communities to their land and resources as well as sacred sites, which are integral to the maintenance of traditional knowledge systems and traditional lifestyles.

43. The potential benefits of tourism may include:
- (a) Revenue creation for the maintenance of natural resources of the area;
  - (b) Contributions to economic and social development, for example:
    - (i) Funding the development of infrastructure and services;
    - (ii) Providing jobs;
    - (iii) Providing funds for development or maintenance of sustainable practices;
    - (iv) Providing alternative and supplementary ways for communities to receive revenue from biological diversity;
    - (v) Generating incomes;
    - (vi) Education and empowerment;
    - (vii) An entry product that can have direct benefits for developing other related products at the site and regionally;
    - (viii) Tourist satisfaction and experience gained at tourist destination.

### ***6. Impact management and mitigation***

44. Impact management is essential to avoid or minimize any potential damage to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use that tourism development or activities might cause. Proposals for tourism development or activities may incorporate proposals for impact management, but these may not necessarily be judged sufficient to deal with potential impacts on biodiversity. Therefore all stakeholders, and especially Governments that exercise overall control over tourism development and activities, will need to consider the various impact management approaches that may be necessary in any given situation. In particular, Governments should be aware that the tourism industry could provide a direct impetus for conservation of vulnerable ecosystems by supporting sustainable tourism activities that have a direct commercial interest in maintaining the vulnerable ecosystem in a good condition.
45. Tourism should be planned and managed using the internationally accepted planning methodologies (such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and the Limits of Acceptable Change). In vulnerable ecosystems, based on these methodologies and relevant background information, tourism should be restricted and where necessary prevented.
46. Impact management can include, inter alia, measures for the siting of tourism development and activities, including establishing appropriate activities in different designated zones, differentiation between the impacts of different types of tourism, and measures to control tourist flows in and around tourist destinations and key sites, to promote appropriate behaviour by tourists so as to minimize their impacts, and to establish limits to numbers of visitors and their impacts within Limits of Acceptable Change at any site.

47. Impact management in relation to transboundary ecosystems and migratory species requires regional cooperation.
48. There is a need to identify those who will be responsible for implementing impact management and the resources that will be required for impact management.
49. Impact management for tourism development and activities can include the adoption and effective implementation of policies, good practices and lessons learned that cover, *inter alia*:
  - (a) Controlling impacts of major tourist flows including excursions, cruise ships, etc., which can cause serious effects on destinations even though they are visited for only short periods;
  - (b) Reducing impacts of activities outside tourism areas on adjacent and other ecosystems of importance for tourism (e.g., pollution from nearby farming activities or extractive industries may affect areas of tourism development);
  - (c) Responsible use of natural resources (e.g., land, soil, energy, water);
  - (d) Reducing, minimizing and preventing pollution and waste (e.g. solid and liquid waste, emissions to air, transport);
  - (e) Promoting the design of facilities that are more eco-efficient, which adopt the cleaner production approach, and use environmentally sound technologies, in particular to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and ozone-depleting substances, as set out in international agreements;
  - (f) Conserving flora, fauna and ecosystems;
  - (g) Preventing the introduction of alien species as a result of the construction, landscaping and operating of tourism activities, including for example from shipping associated with tourism;
  - (h) Conserving landscapes, cultural and natural heritage;
  - (i) Respecting the integrity of local cultures and avoiding negative effects on social structures, involving, and cooperating with, indigenous and local communities, including measures to ensure respect for sacred sites and customary users of these sites, and to prevent negative impacts on them and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by them, as well as on their subsistence resources;
  - (j) Using local products and skills, and providing local employment;
  - (k) Promoting appropriate behaviour by tourists so as to minimize their adverse impacts, and to promote positive effects through education, interpretation, extension, and other means of awareness-raising;
  - (l) Alignment of marketing strategies and messages with the principles of sustainable tourism;

- (m) Contingency plans for handling accidents, emergencies or bankruptcies that may occur during construction and use of facilities and which may threaten the environment and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
  - (n) Environmental and cultural sustainability audits and review of existing tourism activities and developments and of the effectiveness with which impact management is being applied to existing tourism activities and developments;
  - (o) Mitigation measures for existing impacts, and appropriate funding to support them. Such measures should include development and implementation of compensation measures in cases when tourism has resulted in negative environmental, cultural, and socio-economic effects, taking into consideration the range of redress and compensation measures.
50. Governments, in cooperation with biodiversity managers, those communities that would be affected by the proposals, and other stakeholders, would normally assess the need for impact management in addition to any management measures included in the proposals under consideration. All stakeholders should understand the importance of such impact management.
51. The tourism industry can assist in promoting corporate policies on sustainable tourism and biodiversity, with defined goals, monitoring and reporting their progress publicly on a regular basis.

## ***7. Decision-making***

52. Decisions will be made concerning approval or otherwise of, inter alia:
- (a) National strategies and plans for tourism and biodiversity;
  - (b) Proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations in relation to biodiversity, which are to be submitted through the notification process;
  - (c) Adequacy of impact management measures in relation to anticipated impacts from tourism development and activities;
  - (d) Adequacy and frequency of monitoring and reporting.
53. Such decisions will ultimately be taken by Governments (or specific authorities designated by Governments). It is recognized, however, that effective consultation with and participation of the communities and groups affected, including specific input from biodiversity managers, and from indigenous and local communities as well as the private sector in a broad sense, is an important foundation of the decision-making process and critical to sustainable development. Decision makers should consider using multi-stakeholder processes as a tool for the decision-making process.

54. The decision-making process should be transparent, accountable, and apply the precautionary approach. Legal mechanisms should be put in place for notification and approval of tourism development proposals and for ensuring implementation of the conditions of approval of development proposals.
55. For proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations, the proposers will normally be required to provide the information set out in the notification process. This should apply equally to public-sector development and infrastructure projects, as well as to private-sector development. Impact assessment should be a component of any decision-making process.
56. Measures should be taken to ensure full and timely disclosure of project information concerning tourism development proposals. Consistent with Article 8(j), decision-making should include meaningful consultation with indigenous and local communities affected by projects in order to ensure, *inter alia*, respect for the customs and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, and adequate funding and technical support for effective participation. Where the national legal regime requires prior informed consent of indigenous and local communities with respect to decisions identified in paragraph 52, such prior informed consent must be obtained.
57. Decisions should include a review of the adequacy of information available, that could cover, *inter alia*, baseline information, impact assessment, and information on the proposed tourism development or activity, its nature and size, the type(s) of tourism involved, and information on human settlements and communities that may be affected.
58. In cases where there is not sufficient contextual/baseline information available at the time, or where the overall vision, goals and objectives for tourism and biodiversity have not been developed sufficiently to make a decision, decisions may be deferred pending sufficient information being obtained, and/or completion of overall plans/goals.
59. In making a decision, conditions may be attached to any approvals that may be granted, including conditions regarding management of tourism in relation to avoidance or minimization of adverse impacts on biodiversity, and for appropriate decommissioning of tourism activities should the development cease. Decision makers may also, as appropriate, request further information from a proposer; defer a decision pending further baseline research by other agencies; or refuse a proposal.

## ***8. Implementation***

60. Implementation follows a decision to approve a particular proposal, strategy or plan. Unless otherwise stated, the developer and/or operator will be responsible for complying with the conditions for granting the approval; and, as part of this process, they can also be required to notify the designated government authority of any failures to comply with conditions attached to an approval, including conditions for decommissioning, and/or of any changes in circumstances, including unforeseen environmental conditions and/or biodiversity issues (e.g., detection of rare or endangered species not recorded in the original proposal and impact assessment).
61. Any revisions or changes to an approved project, including additions and/or variations of activities, must be approved by the designated authorities before construction.
62. Implementation plans should recognize that indigenous and local communities and other relevant stakeholders may require assistance as actors in implementation, and should ensure that sufficient resources are available for implementation and for effective participation.
63. Local stakeholders should be given an ongoing opportunity to express their wishes and concerns to those managing tourism facilities and activities. As part of this process, clear and adequate information regarding implementation should be provided for review by the stakeholders, in forms that are accessible and comprehensible to them.
64. Availability of information on policies, programmes, projects, and their implementation, including information on existing and future guidelines, should be ensured and exchange of information fostered, for example, through the clearing house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## ***9. Monitoring and reporting***

65. It is necessary to establish a monitoring and control system for the management of tourism activities and biological diversity. Long-term monitoring and assessment are necessary in relation to the impacts of tourism on biodiversity, and will need to take into account the timescale for ecosystem changes to become evident. Some effects may develop quickly, while others may take place more slowly. Long-term monitoring and assessment provide a means for detecting adverse effects that may arise from tourism activities and development in relation to biodiversity, so that action can be taken to control and mitigate such effects.



66. Monitoring and surveillance in relation to management of tourism and biodiversity includes, inter alia, the following main areas:
  - (a) Implementation of approved tourism developments or activities, and compliance with any conditions attached when approval was granted, and taking appropriate actions in cases of non-compliance;
  - (b) Impacts of tourism activities on biodiversity and ecosystems, taking appropriate preventative actions as necessary;
  - (c) Impacts of tourism on the surrounding population, especially indigenous and local communities;
  - (d) General tourism activities and trends, including tour operations, tourism facilities, and tourist flows in originating and receiving countries, including progress towards sustainable tourism;
  - (e) Clearly defined objectives, actions and targets for conservation or mitigation of threats to biodiversity, maintenance or restoration of ecosystems and for tourism;
  - (f) Compliance with, and enforcement as necessary, of conditions attached to any approval. Communities and other interested stakeholders may also monitor and report their findings to the designated government authorities.
  
67. Developers and operators of tourism facilities and activities should be required to report periodically to designated authorities and to the public on compliance with conditions set out in approvals, and on the condition of biodiversity and the environment in relation to the tourism facilities and activities for which they are responsible.
  
68. Prior to the commencement of any new tourism development or activities, an inclusive monitoring and reporting system should be put in place, with indicators to track how tourism actions are mitigating threats to biodiversity, along with agreed upon quantifiable standards indicating thresholds of acceptable change. These should be developed in conjunction with all key stakeholders including indigenous and local communities.
  
69. Indicators to cover aspects of management of biodiversity and sustainable tourism, including socio-economic and cultural aspects, should be identified and monitored at global, national, and local levels, and should include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - (a) Conservation of biodiversity;
  - (b) Generation of income and employment from tourism (long-term and short-term);
  - (c) Proportion of tourism income retained in the local community;
  - (d) Effectiveness of multi-stakeholder processes for management of biodiversity and sustainable tourism;
  - (e) Effectiveness of impact management;

- (f) Contribution of tourism to the well-being of the local population;
  - (g) Visitor impacts and visitor satisfaction.
70. Monitoring results depend largely on the appropriate set of data to be collected. Guidelines on how to collect data in a way that can be used to evaluate change over time should be developed. Monitoring could follow a standard process and format, and be based on a framework including parameters on social, economic, environmental and cultural impact.
71. Monitoring and surveillance in relation to biodiversity impacts should include activities undertaken to ensure respect for endangered species under relevant international agreements, prevention of the introduction of alien species as a result of tourism activities, compliance with national rules concerning access to genetic resources, and prevention of illegal and unauthorised removal of genetic resources.
72. In relation to indigenous and local communities, monitoring and evaluation should include development and use of appropriate tools to monitor and evaluate tourism impacts on the economy of indigenous and local communities, particularly their food and health security, traditional knowledge, practices and customary livelihoods. Use of indicators and early warning systems should be developed as appropriate, taking into account traditional knowledge, innovation and practices of indigenous and local communities, and guidelines developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity relating to traditional knowledge. Measures should also be taken to ensure that indigenous and local communities involved in, or affected by tourism, have the opportunity to be involved effectively in monitoring and evaluation.
73. Monitoring of general environmental and biodiversity conditions and trends, as well as tourism trends and impacts, can be undertaken by Governments, including designated biodiversity managers. Management measures may need to be adjusted, as appropriate, where adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems are detected. The need for and nature of such adjustments will be based on the results of monitoring, and it is important for these to be determined in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including the developers and/or operators of tourism facilities and activities, communities affected by those facilities and activities, and other interested stakeholders. The monitoring process needs to be multi-stakeholder and transparent.

## *10. Adaptive management*

74. The ecosystem approach requires adaptive management to deal with the complex and dynamic nature of ecosystems and the absence of complete knowledge or understanding of their functioning. Ecosystem processes are often non-linear, and the outcome of such processes often shows time-lags. The result is discontinuities, leading to surprise and uncertainty. Management must be adaptive in order to be able to respond to such uncertainties and contain elements of “learning-by-doing” or research feedback. Measures may need to be taken even when some cause-and-effect relationships are not yet fully established scientifically<sup>2</sup>.
75. Ecosystem processes and functions are complex and variable. Their level of uncertainty is increased by the interaction with social constructs, which need to be better understood. Therefore, ecosystem management must involve a learning process, which helps to adapt methodologies and practices to the ways in which these systems are being managed and monitored. Adaptive management should also take the precautionary approach fully into account.
76. Implementation programmes should be designed to adjust to the unexpected, rather than to act on the basis of a belief in certainties.
77. Ecosystem management needs to recognize the diversity of social and cultural factors affecting natural-resource use and sustainability.
78. Similarly, there is a need for flexibility in policy-making and implementation. Long-term, inflexible decisions are likely to be inadequate or even destructive. Ecosystem management should be envisaged as a long-term experiment that builds on its results as it progresses. This ‘learning-by-doing’ will also serve as an important source of information to gain knowledge of how best to monitor the results of management and evaluate whether established goals are being attained. In this respect, it would be desirable to establish or strengthen capacities of Parties for monitoring. In addition, adaptive management learning portfolios should be developed between different sites so that comparison can be made and lessons learned.
79. Implementing adaptive management in relation to tourism and biodiversity will require the active cooperation of all stakeholders in tourism, and especially those in the private sector, with biodiversity managers. Impacts on biodiversity at a particular location may require rapid curtailment of visits by tourists to prevent further damage, and to allow for recovery, and in the longer-term, may necessitate an overall reduction in tourist flows. It may be possible for tourists to be redirected to less sensitive areas in such cases.

24 2/ Monitoring at World Heritage sites should be designed to also incorporate the World Heritage criteria upon which the site was inscribed. The monitoring system should be designed to contribute to the World Heritage periodic reporting structure, aimed at gathering information on the state of conservation of the site.

In all cases, maintenance of the balance between tourism and biodiversity will require close interaction between tourism managers and biodiversity managers, and appropriate frameworks for management and dialogue are likely to need to be established.

80. Governments, including designated biodiversity managers, in conjunction with all other stakeholders will therefore need to take actions, as appropriate, to address any problems encountered and to keep on track towards agreed goals. This may include changes and additions to conditions set in the original approval, and will require participation of and consultation with the developer and/or operator of the tourism facilities and activities concerned, and with local communities.
81. Adaptive management can also be undertaken by all those who have management control over any specific site, including local governments, indigenous and local communities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other organizations.
82. Where necessary, legal frameworks may need to be reviewed and amended to support adaptive management, taking into account experience gained.

### **C. NOTIFICATION PROCESS AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

83. Proposals for tourism development and activities at particular locations in relation to biodiversity are to be submitted through the notification process. As such, this process provides the link between proposers of tourism activities and development, and the management process steps outlined above. In particular, the notification process makes specific links to the steps in the management process for impact assessment and decision-making and should take into account local, regional and national impacts. Proposers of tourism projects, including government agencies, should provide full and timely advance notice to all stakeholders who may be affected, including indigenous and local communities, of proposed developments.
84. Information to be provided as part of the notification could include:
  - (a) Scale and types of tourism development or activities proposed, including a summary of the proposed project, why and by whom it is proposed, estimated outcomes and possible impacts, and a description of the stages of development and the various structures and stakeholders that may be involved at each stage;
  - (b) Analysis of market for proposed tourism development or activities, based on market conditions and trends;

- (c) Geographical description including recreation opportunity zones, outlining tourist activities and infrastructure development, and location of the site of tourism development or activities, the identity and any special features of the surrounding environments and biodiversity;
- (d) Nature and extent of human-resource requirements and plans for their procurement;
- (e) Identification of various stakeholders involved in or potentially affected by the proposed project - including stakeholders in governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors, and indigenous and local communities - along with details concerning their participation in and/or consultation on the proposed project during its design, planning, construction and operation;
- (f) The perceived roles of local stakeholders in the proposed development;
- (g) The various laws and regulations that may be applicable to the specific site, including overviews of existing laws at local, subnational and national levels, of existing uses and customs, of relevant regional and international conventions or agreements and their status, and cross-boundary agreements or memoranda or understanding and any proposed legislation;
- (h) The proximity of the site to human settlements and communities, sites used by people from those settlements and communities as part of their livelihoods and traditional activities, and heritage, cultural or sacred sites;
- (i) Any flora, fauna and ecosystems that could be affected by the tourism development or activities, including keystone, rare, endangered or endemic species;
- (j) Ecological aspects of the site and its surroundings, including indication of any protected areas; specifications on the ecosystems, habitats, and species; quantitative and qualitative information on the loss of habitats and species (main reasons, trends), and indexing of species;
- (k) Training and supervision of personnel carrying out the tourism development or activities;
- (l) Likelihood of impacts beyond the immediate area of the tourism development or activities, including transboundary impacts and effects on migratory species;
- (m) A description of current environmental and socio-economic conditions;
- (n) Expected changes to environmental and socio-economic conditions as a result of the tourism development or activities;
- (o) Proposed management measures to avoid or minimize adverse impacts from the tourism development or activities, including verification of their functioning;

- (p) Proposed measures for mitigation, decommissioning and compensation in the event of problems arising with the tourism development or activities;
  - (q) Proposed measures to maximize the local benefits of the tourism development or activities on surrounding human settlements and communities, biodiversity and ecosystems, which may include, but are not limited to:
    - (i) Using local products and skills;
    - (ii) Employment;
    - (iii) Restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems;
  - (r) Relevant information from any previous tourism development or activities in the region, and information on possible cumulative effects;
  - (s) Relevant information from any previous tourism development or activities by the proposer.
85. Categories of responses that Governments may wish to consider making in response to notification of proposals for, and requests for permission to undertake, tourism development, include, inter alia:
- (a) Approval without conditions;
  - (b) Approval with conditions;
  - (c) Request for further information;
  - (d) Deferral pending further baseline research by other agencies;
  - (e) Refusal of the proposal.

#### **D. EDUCATION, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND AWARENESS-RAISING**

86. Education and awareness-raising campaigns need to be addressed to both the professional sectors and the general public and should inform them about the impacts of tourism on biological diversity, and good practices in this area. The private sector, and, especially, tour operators, could provide information more widely to their clients—the tourists—about tourism and biodiversity issues, and encourage them to conserve, and avoid adverse impact on, biodiversity and cultural heritage to respect national legislation of the visited country, as well as traditions of indigenous and local communities of that country, and to support actions in conformity with the present Guidelines.
87. Awareness campaigns explaining the link between cultural diversity and biological diversity will need to be tailored for various audiences, particularly stakeholders including consumers of tourism, developers and tourism operators.

88. Education and awareness-raising is required at all levels of government. This should include processes for increasing mutual understanding between relevant ministries, including joint and innovative approaches for dealing with tourism and environmental issues.
89. Awareness should also be increased within and outside government that vulnerable ecosystems and habitats are often located within lands and waters occupied or used by indigenous and local communities.
90. The tourism sector as a whole, along with tourists should be encouraged to minimize any negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on biodiversity and local cultures associated with their consumption choices and behaviour, for example through voluntary initiatives.
91. It is also important to raise awareness within the academic sector responsible for training and research on issues regarding the interaction between biological diversity and sustainable tourism, of the role that they can play concerning public education, capacity-building and awareness-raising on these issues.
92. Capacity-building activities should aim to develop and strengthen the capacities of Governments and all stakeholders to facilitate the effective implementation of the present Guidelines, and may be necessary at local, national, regional and international levels.
93. Capacity-building activities can be identified through the adaptive management process and can include strengthening human resources and institutional capacities, the transfer of know-how, the development of appropriate facilities, and training in relation to biological diversity and sustainable tourism issues, and in impact assessment and impact management techniques.
94. Such activities should include ensuring that local communities are equipped with the necessary decision-making abilities, skills and knowledge in advance of future tourist in-flows, as well as with relevant capacity and training regarding tourism services and environmental protection.
95. Capacity-building activities should include, but not be limited to:
  - (a) Capacity-building and training to assist all stakeholders, including Governments, and indigenous and local communities, in accessing, analysing and interpreting baseline information, undertaking impact assessments and evaluations, impact management, decision-making, monitoring and adaptive management;

- (b) Development or strengthening of mechanisms for impact assessment with the participation of all stakeholders, including for the approval of the approach, content and scope of impact assessment;
  - (c) Establishment of multi-stakeholder processes involving government departments, tourism sector, non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders;
  - (d) Training of tourism professionals in conservation and biodiversity issues.
96. Information exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable tourism implementation through networking and partnerships between all stakeholders affected by, or involved in tourism, including the private sector, should be encouraged.





Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries. It also a source of increasing stress on fragile ecosystems. Its social, economic and environmental impacts are immense and complex, not least because tourism concentrates on vulnerable natural and cultural sites. The challenge is therefore to ensure that tourism is developed in harmony with environmental considerations.

The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development are a comprehensive instrument developed within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity to achieve more sustainable tourism development.

They are conceived as a practical tool providing technical guidance to policy makers, decision makers and managers with responsibilities covering tourism and/or biodiversity, whether in national or local government, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations and other organizations, on ways of working together with key stakeholders involved in tourism and biodiversity.

More information on the guidelines may be obtained from the national focal points for the Convention, or the Convention Secretariat.

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