Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is tourism attempting to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate future employment for local people. The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists themselves. Sustainable tourism is not the same as ecotourism.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria Partnership, a coalition of 27 organizations,issued criteria for sustainable tourism at the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) World Conservation Congress held in Barcelona. The guidelines focus on four areas:

1. maximizing tourism's social and economic benefits to local communities;
2. reducing negative impacts on cultural heritage;
3. reducing harm to local environments;
4. and planning for sustainability.

How to make Tourism Environmentally Sustainable	How to make Tourism Socially and Culturally Sustainable	How to make Tourism Economically Sustainable
• Use renewable energy to power tourist facilities e.g. solar or wind. • Recycle water (use of grey water). Collect rainwater. This possible in tropical climates, where there is a large amount of water. • Set quotas to limit the amount of tourists visiting an area. Establish a carrying capacity and stick to it. • Creating National	• Promote local culture e.g. food, dance and clothes. Ensure that tourists are educated about local traditions. This also ensures the involvement of local people. • Sell local products to tourists using traditional techniques. Offer demonstration classes and encourage participation of tourists. • Educating tourists about how to be sustainable. Make sure tourists no how to respect local	• Only employing local residents in tourist facilities. Train local staff so that they are able to work in managerial roles as well as manual roles. These skills can then become transferable to different local industries. • Be locally owned. This is not always possible, especially if FDI is needed to establish a tourism resort or project, but local staff and products should definitely be used. • Only purchasing local products • Minimise economic leakage.

parks and reserves to protect local flora and fauna • Creating breeding programs for endangered species e.g. the Amur Leopard or the Panda. • Only use sustainable products to build hotels. Ensure woods are from sustainable forests, etc. • Only use biodegradable products for washing, cleaning, etc. This is especially important when protecting local water sources. • Use local food products to reduce food miles • Transport guests use public transport or low emission vehicles.	traditions, save money, etc. • Enforce working regulations e.g. paid holiday, maximum working week. • Introduce minimum wage that is a liveable income • Reinvest some profits back into the local community • Make tourist facilities available to locals as well as tourists. Avoid privatisation of beaches, parks, etc.	Profits from many companies go overseas. It is important to ensure as much money as possible stays inside the host country. This can be a difficult balancing act, because you don't want to stop FDI. • Avoid debt when building tourist developments

Below are some examples of how it is possible to be sustainable in different environments.

Sustainable Tourism in Urban Areas (Examples)

- Recycling Bins
- Enforced fines for littering
- Pedestrianised areas
- Cheap public transport
- Bike hire
- Promote local hotels and shops
- Reduce electricity and water waste by educating tourists
- Ensure locals can also visit historic sites. Many countries run dual pricing, where tourists pay more than locals to visit sites.
- Possible introduce quotas or curfews to protect areas.
- Ensure locals are not priced out of local market - try and maintain traditional mix of residents, tourists, businesses, etc.

Sustainable Tourism in Coastal Environments (Examples)

- Banning of plastic bags (very harmful to turtles who mistake them for jellyfish)
- Avoid light pollution near turtle nesting sites. Baby turtles are often confused by light and struggle to find the sea (normally they use the light from the horizon)
- Avoid sewage being pumped into the sea

- Promote sustainable diving (possible introduce quotas like in Sipadan in Malaysia)
- Avoid privatisation of beaches. Ensure that locals can also use the beach
- Stop trade in coral, turtles shells, etc.
- Ensure that seafood is caught from sustainable sources. In Japan, sustainable sushi is being introduced to protect blue fin tuna, whales, etc.
- Minimise damage to mangroves, dunes, forests, etc. when building resorts.
- Ensure proper boating channels to avoid injury and death to turtles, manatees, etc. from speed boats and jet skis

Sustainable Tourism in National Parks (Examples)

- Create National Parks to protect flora and fauna
- Reforest areas that have been damaged or logged
- Ensure that no illegal logging takes place
- Stop poaching (catching wild animals) by making it illegal and enforcing with strong penalties.
- Only allow low impact activities e.g. walking, horse riding.
- Start breeding and reintroduction programmes e.g. Giant Panda in China.
- Only allow small scale developments using locals products to build the small-scale low-impact developments e.g. basic cabins or just tents
- Use renewable energy sources e.g. local HEP
- Ensure no non-biodegradable products are released into local water sources or the ground.
- Educate tourists about flora and fauna and the importance of protection.
- Give flora and fauna and economic value, making animals more valuable a live than dead. In Rwanda tourists now pay $500 to see mountain gorillas. This has completely stopped poaching because the mountain gorillas are now more valuable alive than dead.

Sustainabletourism Online Website

Ecotourism - A Sustainable Trade? - BBC article

Sustainable Travel in Malaysia - BBC article

Green Tourism Business Scheme - UK Homepage

Greentraveller Homepage