

## Updates on the project

The project 'Measuring, monitoring and managing sustainability: the coastal dimension' has now come to an end. Since the last issue, everyone has been busy putting together the different pieces of work and integrating the analysis and the data. The following has been accomplished for all the three study locations: socio-economic assessments, groundwater assessments, vegetation analysis, and coastal water quality assessments. The study has modelled environmental loads and resource use for the different drivers under different scenarios and developed a management model towards the optimization

of groundwater resources. Projections of land-cover change, according to different possible scenarios, are simulated using Cellular Automata and Markov models in combination in a GIS context. A set of tools to help decision-makers on sustainable management of coastal areas is designed, defining development drivers as the main driving forces, and water and land availability as natural resources. The tools are classified into three main groups: visualization tools, spatial analysis techniques, and advanced analysis modelling tools.

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## Sustainable tourism development and local participation: towards good governance

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**S**ustainability is a complex and less understood concept, and difficult to define. The concept of sustainability becomes relevant only when we define in practical terms what it means to be sustained (Lourenço 2001). The present context of uncertainty indicates that new understanding and solutions can only arise with wide public and scientific participation (Pretty 1995). When discussing issues regarding sustainability in tourism, both hosts and guests need to become the focus of attention. The destruction of natural resources for short-term gain will deny the benefits to be gained from the mobilization of those resources in the future.

From a tourism perspective, discussions on sustainability may pertain to the environment, cultural identity, economic well-being, or social stability. Individuals responsible for or interested in each of these areas taken separately may very legitimately focus on their area of concern and attempt to achieve sustainability in relation to some acceptable ongoing carrying capacity of the destination (Goeldner, Brent Ritchie, and McIntosh 2000). However, from an overall destination management perspective, the challenge lies in attempting to balance the sustainability of economic, cultural, social, and environmental systems. Often, the reason for the incompatibility is a divergence of the values from which the goal of sustainability is being pursued.

So far, the direct criticism of tourism due to its developmental impacts has tended to focus on possible deterioration of natural and cultural environments. In the World Tourism Organization agenda for sustainable tourism development, the following main areas are addressed.

- 1 Development and implementation of policies, national strategies, master plans, and other integrated tools for sustainable tourism development based on *Agenda 21*, providing focus and direction for the active participation of major public and private groups, as well as indigenous and local communities.
- 2 Working in partnership with major groups, especially at the local level, in order to ensure active participation in tourism-related planning and development.
- 3 Undertaking capacity-building work with indigenous and local communities in order to facilitate their active participation at all levels of the tourism development process, including transparent decision-making and sharing of benefits, and to create awareness of the social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits that they are bearing.
- 4 Maximizing the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty.
- 5 Taking strong and appropriate action, through the development and enforcement of specific legislation/measures, against all kinds of illegal, abusive, or exploitative tourist activity.
- 6 Participating in international and regional processes that address issues relevant to sustainable tourism development.

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## Sustainability and governance

The allocation of responsibility for tourism-related sustainability issues and decisions is not an easy exercise because of the highly interdependent, multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, and political nature of decisions. It is essential to identify shared responsibility and emphasize that as far as the tourism sector is concerned, issues related to nature and extent of tourism development must be supported by the community as a whole. This means that whatever direction tourism development takes in a community, region, or country, it must have the support of the majority of citizens who are affected by it. It also means that the perceived benefits from tourism must outweigh the total costs (environmental, economic, cultural, social) associated with it.

Local populations must be involved in tourism development if their needs are to be met, and this involves four major policy considerations: ownership, size, timing, and location. It is more a question of ensuring complementarity between all these issues, so that tourism can contribute towards the development of an area while minimizing adverse environmental, social, and economic effects to ensure sustainability.

The question of ownership is particularly pertinent for destinations in less developed countries, given that net foreign exchange earnings from tourism are considerably inferior to total receipts. Substantial leakages result from the repatriation of wages and profits, since transport carriers, major hotel groups, and tour operators are based in the more developed countries, and have all become increasingly transnational in their operations. Therefore, only a small return is received from the costs of environmental degradation. Moreover, due to their low level of development, these countries can rarely afford preventive and restorative measures, jeopardizing their prospects for sustainability. Furthermore, any extra earnings only benefit a small commercial elite, more concerned with small-term profits than with environmental considerations. It is, therefore, insufficient to advocate local as opposed to foreign ownership without considering distributional aspects and environmental accountability (Cater and Goodall 1992).

The magnitude and intensity of tourism development projects is a complex issue. Small-scale projects, locally controlled, can have a significant impact on improving standards of living but are unlikely to meet the needs of large numbers of tourists. Some large-scale projects are inevitable, but it is important to consider the complementarity of large- and small-scale developments. As tourism development proceeds, indigenous firms and locals gain knowledge and experience.

Nowadays, the systems developed by society for governing itself, which are generally based in the nation state, become increasingly complex, and it seems necessary to discuss the basic structures of governance,<sup>3</sup> in order to manage the conflicting and changing economic, social, and environmental requirements of modern governance systems. Moreover, individuals, households, and communities are seeking greater control over their own destinies, while the boundaries between the public and private spheres are continually shifting. According to Pearce and Warford (1993), acquiring this type of control involves a clear definition of property rights in terms of environment, incentive for conservation of natural resources, and realigning prices by bringing them nearer to the social costs of production, which implies the need to assign an economic value to environmental goods and services.

Good governance becomes a key issue in terms of implementing sustainable development. However, the creation of appropriate institutions to promote socio-economic equity and environmental sustainability is one of the key challenges faced by society today. Through the participation of all legitimate stakeholders, these new institutions should be able to allocate rights and enforce responsibilities regarding environmental management at the appropriate level: local, regional, national, or global.

Governance also refers to the indispensable promotion of constructive interactions among the different levels of government. It includes '...the State, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society.... The State creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income. And civil society facilitates political and social interaction...' (UNDP 1997). Also, the increasing transboundary impacts of environmental degradation imply the recognition of the need for cross-national cooperation.

For sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the tourism sector, it is essential to strengthen national policy development and enhance capacity in the areas of physical planning, impact assessment, and the use of economic and regulatory instruments, as well as in the areas of information, education, and marketing.

Policy development and implementation should be conducted in cooperation with all interested parties, especially the private sector and local and indigenous communities. At the level of the European Union, the

<sup>3</sup>In the definition of UNDP (1997), governance is '...the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance is a neutral concept comprising

the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate their differences...'

Commission is discussing the development of an action-oriented international working programme on sustainable tourism, to be defined in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other relevant bodies.

## Local participation, stakeholder involvement, and social networks

The involvement of both the state and local communities in the processes of development is a priority for almost all international support programmes. This priority is supported by the perspective that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the affected citizens (the subsidiary principle), as well as the principles of local participation and decentralization.

According to Cernea (1985), participation has to do with giving people power to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors instead of passive subjects, manage resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives. This type of co-management requires power sharing between government agencies and citizens with a stake in the common pool of resources and territory. It emphasizes a bottom-up rather than top-down process, participation, and implies user groups playing an active role in decision-making. The local communities of stakeholders should play a central role in identifying resources, defining development priorities, choosing and adapting technologies, and implementing management practices.

Integrating local people in the tourism industry is not always a successful process. In view of the rapid growth of tourism, the viability of existing conservationist strategies is in question. The maximum number of visitors to be admitted has been progressively revised upwards over recent years. Domestic tourism is now an established and increasingly important socio-economic issue due to the increasing number of tourists in villages. However, local villagers must be able to continue carrying out their traditional methods of managing natural resources. They may participate in the decision-making process but they must also benefit directly from the funds generated by tourism (Cater and Goodall 1992).

The participation of local communities involves different stakeholders present in the region, and therefore applies to an integrated, multi-level, and multi-disciplinary approach. The broad participation in

management of territory and natural resources is justified by the benefits to local communities resulting from the proximity of the local stakeholders to the resources, which could ensure a more adequate use. It is also justified by the expected increase of resource flows to rural populations, which can contribute to alleviating poverty, diversifying benefits, and achieving a more equitable income distribution; and the flexibility of the process, which can ensure a better adaptation in the context of uncertainty and change (Brown 1999).

In the decision-making process, networks<sup>4</sup> function as an essential tool in terms of transmission of normative systems, which will regulate decisions and allow for identification of existing problems and potentialities, and also aid the understanding of interactions and conflicts among the various social actors, whether individual or collective.

The community of individuals and organizations among whom exchanges take place is based on shared norms of trustworthy behaviour. The relationships/interactions of these various social actors (whether individual or collective) are structured in networks. In fact, '...the people belong not only to groups but to networks as well, the groups being the reflection of the structural relationships that tie the individuals together...' (Degenne and Forsé 1994).

At the local level, it becomes imperative to consider the relationships among the various social actors as real interactions and therefore as local potentials and liabilities, thus guaranteeing the success of the decision-making process. The success of the local network, as a support instrument for managing the territory and the natural resources, partly depends on the type of participation of the various stakeholders present in the region.

## From local to global governance

The interpenetration of markets and the globalization of advanced communication technologies, among other phenomena, are enhancing people's ability to organize voluntarily across state boundaries, and, as a result, vast networks of relationships are spreading (Wapner 1997). Environmental concerns are clearly one significant force behind the rising interest in the idea of global civil society.<sup>5</sup> Many of the organizations that arise within this domain – generally called non-governmental organizations – can and do directly shape widespread behaviour in matters of public concern and involvement. They influence the beliefs and actions of people throughout the world concerning their particular issue

<sup>4</sup> In a relatively static way, networks can be defined as '...systems of social actors that propagate among themselves information and resources across structures with strong connectivity with the objective of making common a variety of their internal environment. Aside from this, it is observed that the interactions with the external environment of the network arise from

structures with a lesser degree of connectivity' (Lemieux 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Civil society is that domain of associational life situated above the individual and below the State, made of complex networks based on interests, ideology, family, and cultural affinity through which people pursue various aims.

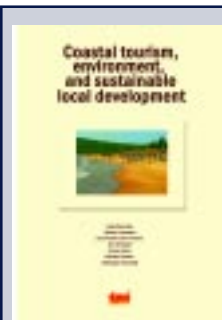
area, and their efforts are frequently successful, particularly in environmental matters.

Innovative approaches to governance have had the greatest impact on issues pertaining to natural resources and the environment. Current environmental agenda prompted a growing awareness of the need for new arrangements that would foster sustainable human/environment relations (Young 1997). Moreover, efforts to solve environmental problems both reflect and affect significant developments in the character of international society. Although states remain central players in natural resource and environmental issues, non-state actors have made particularly striking advances both in the creation of environmental measures and in the efforts to make these regimes function effectively, once they are in place.

In a global world, there is a trend in world affairs in which authority is being relocated from the state interaction to the level where subnational, transnational, and sometimes even supranational actors can play a significant role. Rosenau (1995) points out that a myriad of governance systems can be found at various levels. Thus, one can observe the increasing interest to study not only transnational corporations with global reach, but also transnational environmental groups, with global concerns. The study of the dynamics of global environmental governance concentrates on institutions that arise, and that can be potentially created, to address transboundary environmental challenges. Its fundamental starting point is that environmental issues transcend national boundaries. Thus, one must look towards mechanisms of governance whose authority emanates outside governments to address issues such as forms of sustainable coastal tourism.

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This upcoming multi-authored, multi-disciplinary volume explores the interface between social and environmental issues relating to coastal tourism. It highlights the issues that need to be considered in planning and managing for coastal development within a sustainability framework as well as the need for coastal policy making to be more stakeholder-sensitive.

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