

Green tourism in the age of green economy

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Abstract— Tourism has become a major international industry, with many countries all over the world relying on the income it produces. Its economic advantages as a major source of finance and employment leads to its active promotion by governments and other institutions, independent of the consequences on the environment, ecology and social structure of affected regions. Today's globalised environment calls for greater awareness and spreading and enabling of leisure and tourism practices that generate sensitivity to the environment. As such tourism, a leisure activity, may become a positive factor not only in sustaining environment but making future generations more sensitive to it. Social and economic inequalities that affect the environment differently could, perhaps, be reduced if diverse peoples came together through leisure tourism, which may take many forms.

Contemporary tourism is a social and especially a cultural process; it is a way of life of today's man. Up to modern times, the basic social relations represented a function of social proximity. The local communities, with a local cultural environment, sharing fundamental values, have eased the definitions of identity by the individuals and have given a meaning to the social groups, which are generally stable.

This paper argues that these measures will not be sufficient to deal with the environmental challenges facing the tourism industry and system, and that without a stronger environmental ethic in the market it will be difficult to impose controls on tourists behaviour designed for environmental conservation. It subsequently analyzes the conceptualization of environmental ethics, the rationale for the evolution of an environmental ethic in society and evaluates its relevance to the tourism market.

Keywords— ecology, globalization, green economy, impact, strategy, sustainable tourism.

Motto: "In the human metabolism with nature, industrial technology never solves a problem, the best it can do is displace a problem. The displacement may be spatial - shifted on to the backs of less powerful sectors of society, or the displacement may be temporal - shifted on to the backs of future generations." Dr. Salleh (2012)

TOURISM can be a significant physical, economic, social and cultural force that can and does have major impacts on numerous sustainability dimensions. Within the tourism research domain there has been some work on sustainability issues but arguably these have been limited in their scope into both the realms of practice and wider sustainability discourses.

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Overall, it seems that the adoption and implementation of sustainable tourism has reached a stagnation point, where easier targets have been adopted but due to the lack of creative forces from the tourism sector more complex, multi-disciplinary dialogue has seldom resulted in new advances with regard to the roles of tourism in sustainable regional development.

Tourism has reached a milestone in 2012: according to the UNWTO reports, for the first time in human history more than one billion people travelled internationally (Fig.1). If we add the estimated extent of domestic tourism, the figure would be four times higher. Consequences are not only positive: enormous negative triple bottom line impacts (ecology/planet, sociology/people and economy/profit) result from one-sided rather than requisitely holistic behaviour. One billion tourists have travelled the world in 2012, marking a new record for international tourism – a sector that accounts for one in every 12 jobs and 30% of the world's services exports.

On the symbolic arrival date of the one-billionth tourist (13 December 2012), UNWTO revealed the actions tourists can take to ensure their trips benefit the people and places they visit, as voted by the public. International tourism has continued to grow in 2012, despite global economic uncertainty, to reach over one billion international tourist arrivals (Table 1).

The figure cements tourism's position as one of the world's largest economic sectors, accounting for 9% of global GDP (direct, indirect and induced impact), and one in every 12 jobs and up to 8% of the total exports of the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This article will look at the big picture of tourism development impacts and approaches to deliver low impact development. It will teach a holistic approach to planning and sustainable tourism development that reviews governments' and international donors' role in rural land development, stressing bioregional planning as a key tool for governments and their donors to move rural areas into a more thorough process for sustainable regional development. If efficiently planned and managed, tourism could become an ally and a supportive economic and political force for conservation. That is the aim of promoting sustainable tourism or tourism that is compatible with sustainable development.[1]

Tourism in a green economy refers to tourism activities that can be maintained, or sustained, indefinitely in their social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts: "sustainable tourism". Sustainable tourism is not a special form of tourism; rather, all forms of tourism may strive to be more sustainable (UNEP and UNWTO 2005). The movement toward more sustainable tourism implies significant improvements in the performance of conventional tourism, as

well as growth and improvements in smaller, niche areas centered on natural, cultural and community resources.¹

Table -1: Economic relevance of tourism in selected countries

Source Author's calculations with data from UNWTO (2011c) and WTTC (2012)

Country	Domestic tourism consumption / total tourism consumption (%)*	Tourism gross domestic product / GDP (%)*	Jobs in tourism industries / total jobs (%)**	Tourism investment / total investment (%)**
Australia	73.9	4.1	4.8	12.5
Chile	75.0	3.1	2.6	7.5
China	90.8	4.2	2.3	8.5
Czech Republic	45.3	3.0	3.3	11.0
Ecuador	69.4	4.1	1.8	12.4
Honduras	54.5	5.7	5.3	8.4
Israel	61.0	1.8	2.6	7.6
Japan	93.5	1.9	2.8	5.8
Latvia	51.4	1.9	9.0	7.4
Lithuania	56.4	2.6	2.6	9.8
Netherlands	80.8	3.0	4.3	7.3
New Zealand	56.2	12.0	9.7	15.0
Peru	74.4	3.3	3.1	9.9
Philippines	80.7	6.9	9.7	11.3
Poland	41.0	2.0	4.8	7.1
Romania	47.7	2.2	8.3	7.3

* Estimated with TSA country data for latest year available (mainly 2009). ** 2011 values

Recalling the positive impact even the smallest action can have if multiplied by one billion, UNWTO launched the One Billion Tourists: One Billion Opportunities campaign to celebrate this milestone, showing tourists that respecting local culture, preserving heritage or buying local goods when travelling can make a big difference.

The public was asked to vote for the Travel Tip that would have the greatest benefit for the people and places they visit and to pledge to follow that tip when travelling. [2]

The winning tip, revealed on the arrival date of the one-billionth tourist, was Buy Local, encouraging tourists to buy food and souvenirs locally, or hire local guides, to ensure their spending translates into jobs and income for host communities. A close second, Respect Local Culture calls on tourists to learn more about their destination's traditions, or some words in the local language, before leaving home. Another research/report by WTTC: "The Comparative Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism" builds on WTTC's groundbreaking Benchmarking study and looks at Travel & Tourism

as an industry in terms of its economic linkages and leakages as well as the regional distribution of benefits, and compares these against six other industry sectors across 20 countries (comparator sectors included mining, education, chemicals manufacturing, automotive manufacturing, communications and financial services). This research also includes a look at the return on investment from destination marketing and uses case studies, findings from a specially-commissioned WTTC survey of senior industry executives and reviews of previous research to show that well-designed marketing campaigns consistently produce strong economic returns.²

Fig.1. Turning one billion tourist into one billion opportunities (Source: unwto.org.)



The decisive element in the scientific and decision-making plan is to define a firm, realistic concept on capitalizing heritage and tourism sustainable development objectives. Romanian tourism alignment to these requirements is necessary both because of its characteristic mobility and because of the importance of this sector in Romania's economic recovery. (Table 2)

One of UNEP's Tourism Programme strategic focuses is to "encourage demand for sustainable tourism products and services".

A critical point in that perspective is indeed to identify players and implement the possible tools and instruments that could contribute to the mobilization of a real and substantive demand for environmentally friendly tourism products. In this sense, tourism cannot truly become more sustainable unless consumers (tourists) consistently favour more sustainable destinations and activities in their purchasing decisions.[3]

This is because, generally, the industry is driven by market opportunity. Consumers play a direct and indirect role in supporting environmental conservation goals and linking tourism to poverty alleviation. Tourists' demand for more 'sustainable' tourism services and facilities can influence the performance of the private sector. Tourists can also directly prevent impact by avoiding certain behaviours that greatly impact on the environment, and in particular sensitive ecosystems such as coral reefs, and coastal and mountain areas.[4]

A **green transformation in tourism** should begin with a three-step process that includes an assessment of the destination's environmental health, the creation of a green

¹http://www.unep.org/resourceefficiency/Portals/24147/scp/business/tourism/greeneconomy_tourism.pdf

²<http://www.wttc.org/research/benchmarking-travel-tourism/comparative-economic-impact-travel-tourism/>

strategy, and the collaborative execution of projects related to the green strategy.

Planning	Information	Establishment of tourist offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mission statement ▪ organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information for guests ▪ information for local people ▪ support for journalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ concern for guests ▪ amusement for guests ▪ coordination of tourism infrastructure ▪ operation of amusement facilities ▪ control and improvement of product quality
Marketing and communications	Sales	Lobby
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promotion ▪ sales promotion ▪ PR ▪ brand management ▪ market research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information and reservation system ▪ packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ tourism awareness among the population ▪ understanding of tourism at the level of political authorities ▪ collaboration in “cooperative” organizations

Table 2 Tasks of a Sustainable Tourism Destination in the context of Green Economy

A successful green strategy in tourism balances the unique needs and priorities of all stakeholders, including government, the tourism industry, the local community, and tourists.

I. PROBLEM FORMULATION

However, major changes in economic growth patterns are taking place by focusing on intensive types, on sustainable development, globalization and integration fields. In this context, tourism acts as a social component, with a significant participation in the overall progress and, not least, as a promoter of globalization and sustainable development factor. Tourism has been recognized by major multilateral world agencies, the World Bank, IMF and United Nations, as a key economic sector for achieving a global transition from a brown to a green economic system. [5]This transition includes an incumbent ethical mission, seeking to improve ‘human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities’ (UNEP 2011: 1–2). Nevertheless, five key challenges have been identified to tourism playing its part in fulfilling the aims of a green economy, four of which are directly related to its interaction with the natural environment and encompass a strong behavioural component. They are: a consumer trend to travel further for shortening durations of time; a preference for energy-intensive transportation based upon non-renewable fuel usage with an accompanying growth in GHG emissions;

excessive water consumption; and damage to marine and terrestrial biodiversity. Simultaneously, the United Nations Environment Programme holds that the driving force of the greening of the tourism industry is consumer demand. The favoured approach from the World Bank and IMF to change environmentally destructive behaviour and reflect the full costs of an increasing ecological scarcity is through price and market correction. Other favoured approaches place a reliance on the greening of technology as a solution to environmental problems. Two elements are essential in the tourism industry system: how to make use environmentally, sustainably of the tourism potential of the landscape and the anthropogenic potential. The following are dedicated to them. Why ecology in tourism? Why ecology of hospitality? Why ecology of tourism? These are questions that I have partially answered and this article tries to bring to the attention of tourism phenomenon lovers issues, thoughts, experiences.

„The roadmap for moving to a competitive economy³ both for European and global tourism outlines actions to support the global economy and the tourism sector, according to the 15 strategic axes divided into three interrelated components:

Ability to recover – support for the sector to respond quickly, keeping staff and training them, establishing partnerships and regional, innovative support structures, and development of the use of cutting-edge technology in tourism.

Stimulation – defends the principle of including tourism, in general, in economy boosting programs, particularly in the context of fiscal and monetary measures, highlighting its ability to contribute to the overall objectives’ achievement which are: creating jobs and economic recovery

Green economy – promoting tourism place and contribution in the green economy as a sector capable of inducing a motivating, reasonable increase, intelligent infrastructures and efficient jobs (with regard to energy consumption) [6]

Transferred to Romanian conditions, **mandatory changes** which must be reflected in the policies of the post-economic crisis recovery in tourism are:

- **The focus should move to the general economic development**, rather to uncoordinated and inconsistent measures targeted for tourism industry
- **Promoting a policy in favor of tourists**, instead of granting priority now to tour operators and – to a lesser extent – the local tourist accommodation industry
- Improvement of communication by smarter branding and advertising actions
- Networking industry par excellence, Romanian tourism can accomplish even more than other areas of the country’s economy.

³<http://www.veilleinfotourisme.fr/feuille-de-route-pour-developper-le-tourisme-en-europe-commission-welcomes-recovery-in-the-european-tourism-sector--65231.kjsp>

- Tourism has been defined as a system in which interdependence is essential and collaboration and cooperation between different organizations in a tourist destination create the tourist product.⁴
- **Under the impact of globalization**, the development of tourism in each world country is possible only under optimal public-private partnerships;
- **There is no real public-private partnership in the field**, and institutions authorized to create a specific education and behavior to support the sustainable development of Romanian tourism are not ambitious;
- The move toward more sustainable tourism can increase **job creation**. Additional employment in energy, water, and waste services and expanded local hiring and sourcing are expected from the greening of mainstream tourism segments. Furthermore, an increasing body of evidence suggests significantly expanded indirect employment growth opportunities from segments oriented toward local culture and the natural environment (Cooper et al. 2008, Moreno et al. 2010, Mitchell et al. 2009).

Challenges to address include turning concern into reality with respect to holiday choices and behavior, through effective promotions, information and price signals, and also making sure that the industry is alert to new motivations such as cultural heritage and nature based tourism, rather than assuming that most tourists are uninterested in issues of environmental quality and impact.[7]

Environmental sustainability and climate change is a global issue, with many cultural, organizational, technical, social, regulatory, and individual factors. Just as computer-based information systems have been the driving force for productivity improvements, Green IS can be a driving force for sustainability improvements. "Our quest for environmental sustainability needs an information strategy to parallel and complement engineering solutions." (Watson, Corbett, Boudreau, Webster, 2012).

This paper aims to show how tourism can contribute to the ongoing efforts being made in response to the current crisis (creating jobs, promoting trade and accelerating the development), and a long-term challenge: turning tourism into a green economy.[8]

II. PROBLEM SOLUTION

Basically, in this crisis, Romanian tourism must maintain accommodation capacities and improve services. The real benefits will be obtained later;

The effects of the financial and economic crisis globally are felt by all market players, no matter where they work.[9]

⁴Mazilu Mirela Elena, *Actors involved in a sustainable tourism destinations*, in *Proceedings of The 2-nd INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE: "Sustainable mountain tourism-local responses for global changes"*, , Publishing House Universitaria, Craiova, 2009, pp. 215-221;

The existing EU framework for the development of economic, social and environmental policies based on the Partnership for Growth and Jobs and the Sustainable Development Strategy provides an adequate background for achieving Objectives on the sustainability of the European tourism and challenges to be addressed to objectives of this "agenda": economic prosperity, social equity and cohesion, protection of the natural environment and culture⁵.

These objectives should also guide European tourism stakeholders in their policies and actions affecting the impact of outbound tourism from Europe and in supporting tourism as a tool for sustainable development in host countries[10].

To achieve these objectives, a number of tourism specific challenges⁶ need to be addressed.

They mainly include the preservation and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, minimizing resource use of resources and pollution in tourism destinations including the production of waste, managing change in the interests of community welfare, reducing the seasonality of demand, studying environmental impact of local transport involved in tourism, making tourism accessible to all without discrimination and improving the quality of jobs in the sector, also addressing in the Commission migration policy⁷ the issue of employing third-country nationals whose stay is illegal.

Ensuring safety and security of tourists and local communities in tourist areas is another challenge and also a prerequisite for the successful development of tourism⁸.

These priorities may vary in space or time. Priority given to them, how they will be addressed and opportunities they can offer vary from case to case.[11]

Stakeholders should continue to anticipate and monitor changes. Policies and actions must take into account how demand and offer will be affected by environmental challenges – such as climate change⁹ and water scarcity¹⁰ –, technology developments or other current political, economic and social issues.

Therefore, all challenges will be regularly updated in conjunction with all stakeholders.[12]

Achieving the objectives of this agenda and addressing the above challenges will require consistent action that can be supported by appropriate public policies: sustainable management of destinations, the integration of

⁵ These objectives are detailed in the TSG Report (p. 3).

⁶ These key challenges have been detailed in the TSG report (pp. 8-17) and are related to the seven challenges identified in the renewed Sustainable Development Strategy.

⁷ See also Proposal for a Directive providing for sanctions against employers of third-country nationals staying illegally, COM (2007) 249, p.2; Impact Assessment Report SEC (2007) 603, p.7.

⁸ Member States could benefit from the identification and sharing of best practices on the protection of individual sites and major events through the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection which would allow appropriate coordination of relevant activities.

⁹ See also Green Paper "Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action" COM (2007) 354 final of 29.06.2007.

¹⁰ See also "Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union" COM (2007) 414 final of 18.07.2007.

sustainability in the business environment and tourists' awareness on sustainability. In this respect, the primary barrier to sustainable development through tourism is an over reliance on market mechanisms to guide tourism development and consumption decisions. The market-which treats cultural and environmental wealth as free, "public goods" and which responds to degradation of this wealth as a "free rider"-provides instruments to guide development, but is insensitive to many requirements of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, in a global market such as tourism, the problem of "leakage", whereby the economic benefits of local tourism activity flow out of the local community and country back to a foreign corporate headquarters, is another indication of the inadequacy of simple market-driven approaches.[13]

Therefore, the key problem¹¹ at this stage of the "sustainable tourism" debate is the creation of tangible, working local partnerships. These local partnerships must be encouraged and supported by national governments and industry, and not undermined by "higher level" agreements. To succeed, local residents and their local authorities need to more fully recognize the significant adverse impacts of tourism development and must be informed about opportunities for reduced impact tourism development.[14]

In terms of sustainable development, an issue to be highlighted concerns that tourism, as a phenomenon, but that activity is unique in its way through dependence on a show against the environment, social and cultural values *what is found in the areas of interest. Because of this dependency, tourism has an undeniable interest in ensuring the sustainability of these values.*[15]

To achieve a competitive and sustainable tourism, the Commission invites all players to observe the following principles¹²:

❖ **Holistic and integrated approach** – In tourism planning and development all the impacts it may have should be taken into account. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated within the activities that have an impact on society and the environment.

❖ **Long term planning** – Sustainable development refers to the protection of needs of future generations and of this generation. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

❖ **Achieve an appropriate pace for development** – The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and observe the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

❖ **Involve all stakeholders** – A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and implementation by all those involved in the outcome.[16]

❖ **Using the best available knowledge** – Policies and actions should be drafted by the latest and best knowledge available. The entire Europe should share information on tourism trends and impacts, as well as skills and experience.

❖ **Reduce and manage risk** (the precautionary principle) – Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative measures to avoid harmful effects on the environment or society.

❖ **Reflect impacts in costs** (user and polluter pays) – Prices should reflect the real costs to society generated by consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but also the use of equipment that generates significant management costs.

❖ **Set and observe limits, where appropriate** – The limit capacity of individual sites and regions should be recognized, and where appropriate, there should be willingness and ability to limit the number of tourists and tourism development.

❖ **Undertake continuous monitoring** – Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them to make necessary changes and improvements.

Several stakeholders have already recognized the importance of sustainability and strive to improve their performance. Despite these efforts, it is necessary to make further progress. To obtain meaningful results, existing and future initiatives should work in a more visibly and synergistically.

This involves strengthening such a voluntary and continuous process. It should be promoted by all tourism stakeholders in Europe: the different levels of government – local authorities, destination management organizations, regions, Member States – and the European Commission, businesses, tourists and any other body¹³ can stimulate, support and influence tourism.[17]

The tourism sector involves many stakeholders from the private and public sector whose powers are decentralized.

Green tourism and its direct beneficiary: the tourist destination must join efforts towards the sustainable and competitive, to get that attribute of Excellence.

The latter is included in 'social responsibility' by ISO 26000. The European Union encourages the EU-member states and big enterprises (including their suppliers and other partners) and others to. It is relevant to any tourism enterprise, large or small, rural or urban, whether focused on ecotourism, business tourism or any other tourism niche market. **Green tourism businesses** are those actively engaged in reducing the negative environmental and social impacts of their tourism operations. The aim of the Green Tourism criteria is to offer guidelines to tourism industry on how to make their operations more sustainable while still delivering a high quality service. When

¹¹ Mazilu Mirela Elena, *Key elements of a Model for Sustainable Tourism*, International Journal of Energy and Environment, Issue 2, Volume 4, ISSN:1109-9577, 2010, pp. 45-54

¹² Report of the Tourism Sustainability Group "Action for more sustainable European tourism" (Action for More Sustainable European Tourism), February 2007, pp. 3-4.

¹³ Among others: educational establishments, universities and research centers, trade unions, consumer associations, NGOs and international organizations.

developing the **criteria**¹⁴ consideration has been given to a wide range of social and environmental factors, as well as up-to-date technological developments:

Compulsory - compliance with environmental legislation and a commitment to continuous improvement in environmental performance

Management and Marketing - demonstrating good environmental management, including staff awareness, specialist training, monitoring, and record keeping.

Social Involvement and Communication of environmental actions to customers through variety of channels and range of actions, e.g. green policy, promotion of environmental efforts on the website, education, and community and social projects

Energy - efficiency of lighting, heating and appliance, insulation and renewable energy use.

Water - efficiency - e.g. good maintenance, low-consumption appliances, flush offset, rainwater harvesting, as well as using eco-cleaners.

Purchasing - environmentally friendly goods and services, e.g. products made from recycled materials, use and promotion of local food and drink, and use of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and wood products.

Waste - minimisation by encouraging, the '*eliminate, reduce, reuse, recycle*' principle, e.g. glass, paper, card, plastic and metal recycling; supplier take-back agreements; dosing systems; and composting

Transport - aims to minimise visitors car use by promoting local and national public transport service, cycle hire, local walking and cycling option, and use of alternative fuels.

Natural and Cultural Heritage - on site measures aimed at increasing biodiversity, e.g. wildlife gardening, growing native species, nesting boxes, as well as providing information for visitors on the wildlife on and around the site.

Innovation - any good and best practice actions to increase a business's sustainability that are not covered elsewhere. Destination planning and development strategies will be a critical determinant for the greening of tourism.

III. CONCLUSION

Tourism is one of the most promising drivers of growth for the world economy. The sheer size and reach of the sector makes it critically important from a global resource perspective. Even small changes toward greening can have important impacts.

Furthermore, the sectors' connection to numerous sectors at destination and international levels means that changes in practices can stimulate changes in many different public and private actors.

Tourism policy development requires a strategy that promotes both sustainable development and poverty reduction, while also addressing specific issues like climate change and biodiversity.

This strategy should include local, national and regional governments, consumers and residents in the implementation of programmes in pursuit of common goals.

At the local level, integrated management is needed to protect essential resources and assets, make sure that tourism remains a viable activity in the long-term, and increase and better distribute its benefits.

At the national and regional levels, policymakers should work together to protect what is attractive about a destination while at the same time promoting it.

Like all industries, the tourism industry can have adverse environmental, economic and social effects.

These impacts are mostly linked with the construction and management of infrastructures such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses, and marinas.

Managed tourism can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to soil erosion, increased air, soil and marine pollution, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires.

It often puts a strain on fresh water resources, leading also to users' conflicts between tourist-related and local consumption.

Finally, CO₂ emissions related to air transport in particular, with its growth forecast, poses a major problem in terms of sustainability: in particular for distant destinations, despite the known environmental impacts, air travel expansion is a necessary condition for economic development.

On the other hand, tourism has the potential to contribute to environmental protection and poverty reduction by capitalizing on biodiversity assets; to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems bringing people into closer contact with nature and the environment.

Because of their tourism potential, many natural areas are now legally protected.

Finally, sustainable tourism businesses can be promoted as sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities in areas where current economic activities have detrimental effects on the host environment but where biodiversity and cultural assets could be a source of income.

If efficiently planned and managed, tourism could become an ally and a supportive economic and political force for conservation. That is the aim of promoting sustainable tourism or tourism that is compatible with sustainable development.¹⁵

In order to strengthen institutional capacities for information management and monitoring in support of decision and policy making, UNWTO launched the concept of the **Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (GOST)** based on the UNWTO methodology for sustainable tourism indicators. GOST intends to facilitate the establishment of a network of observatories at all levels, through the use of a systematic application of monitoring, evaluation (sustainable

¹⁴http://www.greenbusiness.co.uk/GreenBusiness_Criteria_Introduction.asp

¹⁵<http://www.unep.org/resourceefficiency/Home/Business/SectoralActivities/Tourism/tabid/78766/Default.aspx>

tourism indicators) and information management techniques, as key tools for the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.

The "Monitoring Centre for Sustainable Tourism Observatories" was inaugurated on the Aegean Islands, the main archipelago of Greece.

This first Sustainable Tourism Observatory in Europe under the auspices of UNWTO will monitor the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism in the archipelago and serve as a model to expand the concept to a national level. (5 February 2013)

When tourism-related income grows with a substantial reorientation in favour of the poor, poverty can be reduced. In this regard, UNWTO launched in 2002 the ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism for the Elimination of Poverty) initiative, aimed at reducing poverty levels through developing and promoting sustainable forms of tourism.¹⁰ Increased tourism, local contributions and multiplier effects can accrue to wealthy, middle income, or poor alike.

Therefore, interventions must be made to help poor people become part of the processes that drive the industry (ILO 2010a). Investors and developers, as well as local and national governments, play a critical role in determining the role poorer population's play in the tourism industry.¹⁶

Tourism has been recognized by major multilateral world agencies, the World Bank, IMF and United Nations, as a key economic sector for achieving a global transition from a brown to a green economic system.

This transition includes an incumbent ethical mission, seeking to improve "human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP 2011: 1–2).

Nevertheless, five key challenges have been identified to tourism playing its part in fulfilling the aims of a green economy, four of which are directly related to its interaction with the natural environment and encompass a strong behavioural component.

They are: a consumer trend to travel further for shortening durations of time; a preference for energy-intensive transportation based upon non-renewable fuel usage with an accompanying growth in GHG emissions; excessive water consumption; and damage to marine and terrestrial biodiversity. Simultaneously, the United Nations Environment

Programme holds that the driving force of the greening of the tourism industry is consumer demand.

The favoured approach from the World Bank and IMF to change environmentally destructive behaviour and reflect the full costs of an increasing ecological scarcity is through price and market correction.

Other favoured approaches place a reliance on the greening of technology as a solution to environmental problems.

This paper argues that these measures will not be sufficient to deal with the environmental challenges facing the tourism industry and system, and that without a stronger environmental ethic in the market it will be difficult to impose controls on tourists behaviour designed for environmental conservation. It subsequently analyzes the conceptualization of environmental ethics, the rationale for the evolution of an environmental ethic in society and evaluates its relevance to the tourism market.

Green tourism in contrast to "eco-tourism," which relies on travel to distant locations seeks to provide recreational attractions and hospitality facilities to local people within their local regions, thereby reducing tourism-related travel. While green tourism has the positive economic effect of stimulating local economic activity, it reduces the flow of foreign currency to developing nations and any resulting economic benefits that may accrue to developing towns and cities from these revenue flows. A clear distinction should be made between the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism: "The term ecotourism itself refers to a segment within the tourism sector with focus on environmental sustainability, while the sustainability principles should apply to all types of tourism activities, operations, establishments and projects, including conventional and alternative forms".¹⁷

The term sustainable tourism describes policies, practices and programmes that take into account not only the expectations of tourists about responsible natural resource management (demand), but also the needs of communities that support or are affected by tourist projects and the environment (supply).[16]

Sustainable tourism thus aspires to be more energy efficient and more climate sound (for example by using renewable energy); consume less water; minimize waste; conserve biodiversity, cultural heritage and traditional values; support intercultural understanding and tolerance; generate local income and integrate local communities with a view to improving livelihoods and reducing poverty. Making tourism businesses more sustainable benefits local communities, and raises awareness and support for the sustainable use of natural resources.

However, short of definitive actions by the tourism industry and host countries/communities to reduce the negative environmental impacts of foreign travel and the negative social impacts of foreign tourist enclaves in developing nations,

¹⁶ The Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative has identified seven different mechanisms through which the poor can benefit directly or indirectly from tourism: (1) Undertaking measures to increase the level of the poor working in tourism enterprises; (2) Maximizing the proportion of tourism spending that is retained in local communities and involving the poor in the supply process; (3) Promoting the direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor from informal businesses;(4) Establishing and managing more formal tourism enterprises by the poor, either individually or at a community level; (5) Using taxes or levies on tourism income or profits with proceeds benefiting the poor; (6) Supporting the poor in money or in kind, by visitors or tourism enterprises; and (7) Investing in infrastructure that offers local communities the chance to gain new access to available resources (UNWTO 2004b).

¹⁷ United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization (2012), *Tourism in the Green Economy - Background Report*, UNWTO, Madrid

green tourism advocates will continue to build support among tourism consumers.

The recent economic crisis situation could potentially be utilized as an opportunity to introduce green investment in the economies.

As governments devise a new international and national financial architecture to prevent future crises and find ways to jump start their economies, it is important to consider whether the post recession economies should still promote 'brown' economies with traditional dependence on low energy efficiency, non sustainable energy resources, high material use, unsustainable use of ecological resources and a high degree of climate risk. There is opportunity in the following trends and developments to provide a particularly promising space for greening tourism: (1) sizing and growth of the sector; (2) changing consumer patterns; and (3) potential for addressing local development and poverty reduction. The movement toward more sustainable tourism implies significant changes in the performance of conventional tourism, as well as growth and improvements in smaller niche areas centered on natural, cultural and community resources. The growth of the latter, as a proportion of the industry as a whole, may have proportionately higher positive effects on biodiversity conservation and rural poverty reduction; whereas the greening of conventional and mass tourism is likely to have its largest effects on resource use and management, as well as on increased economic spillovers and inclusion of disadvantaged populations.¹⁸

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