

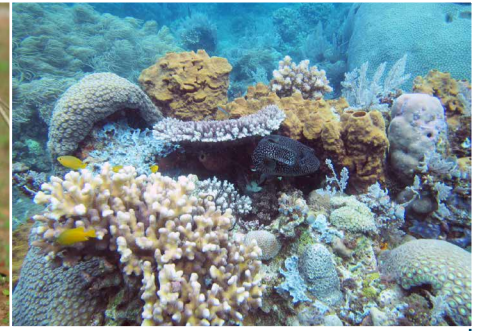


Sustainable high return ecotourism

Integrated solutions for high social
and economic gains



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UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



"Whether in a recession or a growth period, the travel and tourism industry is extremely robust. It grows between 1 and 1.5 percentage points faster than the world economy."

David Scowsill, president and chief executive of the World Travel and Tourism Council

Eco-tourism is 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people'. Awareness of the potential impacts of travel to fragile destinations is increasing and the willingness of travellers to spend more on environmentally-friendly travel has increased by a third in the last decade. Ecotourism is one of several niche areas. The market supports specialist tourism that allows people to see stunning nature first hand with high standards of accommodation, catering and service. The challenge is how to avoid activities that irreversibly damage the natural capital that the tourists are there to see and at the same time contribute to the livelihoods of local people.

What does WENR have to offer

'Sustainable' is no longer just a buzz word, it is a selling point – clients want to know that the business is contributing positively to the natural environment and that there will be sharing of benefits in terms of the livelihoods of local communities; the challenge for business is to show that they are actively delivering these things. We will provide our clients with 1) a clear assessment of the environmental impacts of their actual or proposed activities 2) integrated management planning with solutions that include long term protection and management of biodiversity 3) a bottom up approach with benefits for local communities as part of the design and delivery of existing and new enterprises 4) a personalised, practical service 5) supported by excellence in scientific research and knowledge from across Wageningen University & Research.

Track record

WENR has a proven track record in offering integrated, sustainable solutions. We have worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America. Specific examples include a tourism management plan for the Hustai National Park in Mongolia and an integrated land use plan for Chobe district, focussing on safari tourism development around the Chobe National Park in Botswana, where visitors are willing to pay 1800 US\$ for one overnight stay in a lodge which generates employment, income for communities and supports conservation. We have also been involved in similar ecotourism development and monitoring around the Kornati Archipelago in Croatia, the Sulu-Sulawesi sea region between Indonesia and the Philippines and the island of St Eustatius in the Dutch Caribbean.

Challenges

- Delivering actions to maintain the sustainability of the exploited ecosystems
- Ongoing delivery of a special wildlife experience to clients
- Ways to connect with and provide benefits to local communities through sustainable land use practice and job creation (local guides, locally supplied food, access to local culture, etc)

Takeaways

- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Integrated management plans
- Involvement of local communities
- Tailor-made and innovative solutions
- Demonstrate sustainability to your client base
- Delivery of Corporate Social Responsibility targets
- Sustainable business platform

Results

In Chobe, Botswana, there is room for carefully planned tourism expansion. In particular the role and benefits for communities has increased through training of key people and increased cooperation between businesses and local entrepreneurs and communities. Through capacity building of local staff and the development of an environmental monitoring plan for the Kornati Archipelago, Croatia, tourism development now meets the obligations for its status as an internationally important protected area (Natura 2000 and Ramsar status). In Mongolia our involvement has led to a tourism business which almost entirely covers the national park maintenance costs.

Research Programme

Biodiverse Environment

Contact

For more information, please contact:
Wageningen Environmental Research

Theo van der Sluis
T +31 (0) 317 481752
E theo.vandersluis@wur.nl

René Henkens
T +31 (0) 317 484992
E rene.henkens@wur.nl