

# Can tourism be sustainable en the 21st century

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CAN TOURISM BE SUSTAINABLE IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY ? Tourism industry is one of the largest industry of the world in the 21st century, before the oil industry and the automobile industry. It is a vital sector for a lot of countries as it generates jobs and wealth. Nevertheless, Tourism can also engender environmental, social, and cultural degradations as more and more people travel all around the world. There was roughly 935 million of tourists in 2010, and there will be 1.6 billion tourists in 2020 according to the World Tourism Organization.

This enormous flow of tourists has undoubtedly a lot of impacts on the environment, on the local populations or on the economy. Furthermore, the global population is increasingly growing and the question of resources available is crucial and has become a matter of global concern when development occurs in a time of globalization. Because tourism keeps increasing, this is necessary to find ways to make tourism more sustainable. The question of sustainable development has become a major issue of the 21st century notably due to the climate change.

While the original call for sustainable development in Brundtland Report (which goal was to unite countries to pursue sustainable development together) discussed the application of the principles, tourism was not specially discussed' (Hall, 1998) Yet, there has been an increasing recognition of the role that tourism could play in sustainable development. As it is a driving force of the economy and a powerful instrument of development, it has a role to play to limit its negative impacts whether they are cultural, environmental or economic.

That is to say, adopting the principles of sustainable development to tourism. ' Sustainable tourism is an extension of the concept of sustainable development" (J. Swarbrooke, 1999). The sustainable development is defined in the Bruntland Report as' a development which meets our needs today without compromising the ability of people in the future to meet their needs'. Therefore, sustainable tourism also deals with long-term viability. The goal of sustainable tourism is to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, so the future generations will enjoy the environmental resources.

It also has to respect the cultural heritage and traditional values of host communities and enable them to benefit from the advantages created by tourism, to make an equal distribution of benefits from tourism possible. The challenges are to reconcile tourism and respect of the environmental, economic and social dimensions to minimize the socioeconomic negative externalities of tourism. So can tourism be sustainable in the twenty-first century? | Successful initiatives

Sustainable tourism is a complex notion which is part of a global system and cannot be tackled in isolation specifically, economically or temporally (Munt2003), it requires the implementation of different measures and initiatives. We can achieve sustainable tourism if different actors are aware of the situation and ready to take measures in order to improve things. Several summits and codes of conduct carried out show the growing interest in sustainable tourism and efforts made to achieve it. Rio Summit in 1992 , The Global Code of Ethics for tourism or AGENDA 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development...) They give recommendations on the application of sustainable development to tourism.

The support and cooperation of the private and public sector are required to make sustainable tourism possible. All relevant stakeholders have to work in partnership to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy (Hall, 1998). All actors involved in the process have to participate for each level: local, regional, national.

As tourism is part of a global system, sustainability has to be achieved in all sectors because they are interdependent. (Hall, 1998) “ Since the 1980s, there has been a growing interest in the ethical standards of businesses. Public and political pressure has been growing for companies to behave more ethically in relation to a range of issues” (J. Swarbrooke, 1999) For instance, the ‘ Club Med’, a French corporation of vacation set a charter of sustainable tourism to guarantee environmentally friendly practices and to take part to the local economic development in an ethical manner.

To address the negative impacts of tourism, new alternatives to mass tourism are developed such as green tourism or ecotourism which is a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (International Ecotourism Society, 1990) Besides some successful measures are taken to limit touristic flow. For instance to see orang utans in parks in Tanzania, visitors have to pay a high price: 235 pounds which enable to control the stream of travellers. Moreover, money generated by tourism will help to preserve parks as it is invested in the parks for the preservation of the oranges utans .

II Yet even some successful initiatives exist, some progress remain to be made First, more and more operators are using those terms ‘ sustainable tourism’ as a new trend. It is a way to differentiate themselves from

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competitors with only commercial motivations. (Munt, 1998) Sustainable tourism has to adapt to each environment' as each locality is totally different in terms of geography, ecosystem, social structure and economy, it is unlikely that the carrying capacity will be the same in any two places, so its application in any place is very different to forecast'. J. Swarbrooke, 1999) Besides, when an action is implemented it is not easy to judge if it is really sustainable. An action can be judged sustainable or not after a long period of time when it is proved that the development of the activity ' has not prejudiced the needs of what were future generations when the development began '(Hall, 1998) The majority of commentators agree on the fact that intervention is needed to achieve sustainable tourism .

Nevertheless, public sector regulation is not easy in a time when there is a lot if privatization We generally oppose mass tourism to some alternative forms of tourism. For example, ecotourism is not necessarily more sustainable if ecotourism " grows to a mass scale" it will show all the characteristics of mass tourism. (J. Swarbrooke, 1999) " We have seen that a partnership is required to achieve sustainable tourism but the tourism industry and local communities can have conflicting requirements.

And the host communities are usually not enough strong to make their voice heard compared to the power of the tourism industry. The Maldives is representative of both positive and negative impacts engendered by tourism. Tourism accounts for 30 % of the Maldives GDP. Every tourist products an average of 7. 7 pounds of waste each day. With the development of the tourism, the government has decided to sacrifice one of

the island and to make it the bin of the archipelago. The island grows of a square meter per day.

For tourists, the rubbish remains invisible. Pollution is becoming worst and everyday the seabed is altered. Ships unload 300 tons of rubbish everyday, which are dumped on the floor with no waste sorting. There are some toxic waste material which pollute the sea but also endanger the life of fishermen. Sustainable tourism is a complex task because key concepts are interrelated, it is about stakeholders whose interests have to be balanced. To lead to great social, economic and environmental benefits, sustainable tourism is required.

A tourism bad managed can have negative consequences and have a prejudicial effect or even destructive on the social and environmental dimensions. And the complete set of impacts has to be measured at a global scale or we cannot hope to achieve complete sustainability at anything less than this scale" (Hall, 1998) Furthermore, to be truly sustainable, tourism has to pay more attention to the social dimension because we usually focus more on the environmental dimension. Touristic activities have to contribute towards the economic development and improves the quality of life of local populations.

Tourism creates some negative impacts, but the role of the sustainable tourism is to try to limit them. So that the consequences tourism has on biodiversity, natural resources or the amount of waste keep acceptable. Maybe " truly sustainable tourism can probably never be achieved but it remains an ideal that we must strive to attain" (Hall, 1998) BIBLIOGRAPHY

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