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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN DESTINATION

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Tourism has become an important economic driver for many destinations around the world, but it has also brought with it a range of negative impacts on the environment, including pollution, habitat destruction, and overuse of natural resources. Therefore, it is essential to have effective environmental management practices in place in tourism destinations to minimize these negative impacts and ensure sustainable tourism. To mitigate the negative impact of tourism activities on the environment, there is a need for the implementation of environmental management practices in tourism destinations. This paper provides a systematic review of the literature on environmental management practices in tourism destinations. The review highlights the key environmental management practices that have been implemented in tourism destinations, their effectiveness, and the challenges of implementing such practices.

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries, with an estimated 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals in 2018, generating \$1.7 trillion in revenue. However, the industry's growth has also led to a significant environmental impact, including degradation of natural habitats, loss of biodiversity, and pollution of air and water. To mitigate these impacts, environmental management practices have been implemented in tourism destinations. The purpose of this paper is to provide a systematic review of the literature on environmental management practices in tourism destinations, highlighting their effectiveness and challenges.

Reducing the environmental impact of tourism is key to ensuring it remains a major source of economic activity. The tourism services within the sectors that are the focus of this technical report –

accommodation, food and beverage and tour operators and travel agents – involve a wide range of activities that give rise to various environmental pressures, and, ultimately, impacts (Figure 1) [1].

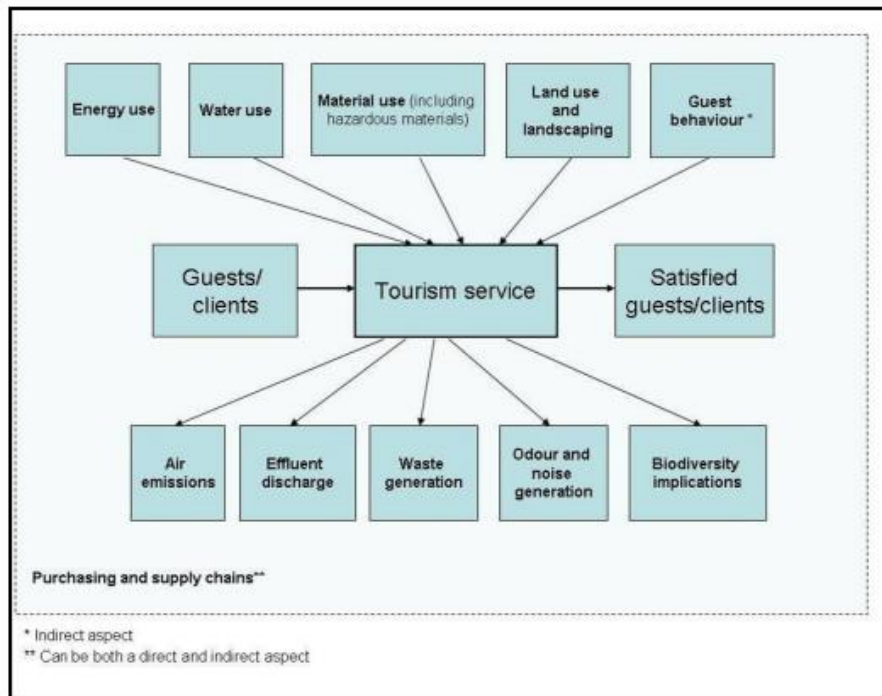


Figure 1. Tourism service inputs and outputs

According to EMAS Regulation [2], an 'environmental aspect' is an element of an organisation's activities, products or services that has or can incur an impact on the environment, both the natural environment and people. Environmental impacts arise from pressures generated by environmental aspects, such as the emission of greenhouse gases or air pollution. Environmental aspects may be classified accordingly:

- Direct environmental aspects are elements of an organisation's activities, products or services over which the organisation has full management control, and can thus influence directly.
- Indirect environmental aspects are elements of an organisation's activities, products or services over which the organisation does not have full management control, and thus cannot influence directly. These may include aspects related to products used, transportation, and other factors in the supply chain. Although these aspects may not be within direct control of the accommodation facility operators, they can still have significant implications for the environmental impacts of the services, seen from a lifecycle perspective. Tourist behaviour, including customer choice, is an important indirect aspect over which tourism actors may have some control (e.g. through provision of information, incentives, facilities, etc.). Indirect aspects can be addressed via dialogue with the responsible actors.

The success of tourism destinations depends on a number of factors including climatic, cultural and natural features, accessibility, services and the built environment. The concentration of tourism on sites of high nature and cultural value increases the risk of environmental degradation, as demonstrated in numerous popular destinations [3]. Furthermore, major tourist destinations experience large population increases during peak season, and this can exert additional environmental pressure through capacity exceedence for various infrastructures and services. Such factors can reduce the attractiveness of major tourism destinations, whose continued success depends on sustainable management that:

- preserves the ecosystems that support local populations and attract tourists

- ensures sustainable rates of resource consumption
- provides efficient services that have the capacity to accommodate peak-season visitor numbers.

Destination managers can play a crucial role in maintaining or enhancing environmental conditions at the destination level. They usually have either direct control or strong influence over the policies, planning decisions, infrastructure and services that influence environmental pressures (Figure 2). For example, local authorities have a mandate to implement regional and national regulations related to tourism, and have various degrees of power to influence and supplement such regulations. SCBD [4] note that biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development requires management at the destination level, and that the central tool for the sustainable development of tourism is the 'Destination Plan'. They refer to Destination Management Organizations (DMO), in which local authorities play the lead role, with input from destination stakeholders, to manage sustainable tourism development based on a Destination Plan.

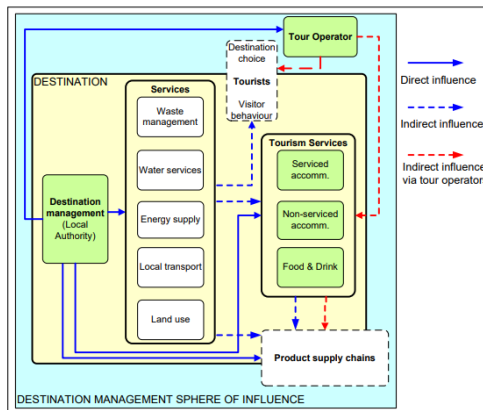


Figure 2: Major pathways of influence exerted by destination managers relevant to the environmental performance of tourists, tourism service providers, and their suppliers

Development of tourism and supporting services should be integrated into a strategic Destination Plan based on an assessment of local carrying capacity and vulnerabilities. For example, water use and extraction plans should be informed by local or regional water capacity assessments [5]. In summary, planning should ensure that the carrying capacities of infrastructure and services within a destination, natural and man-made, are not exceeded.

Destination Plans may be developed at the national, regional or local scales, and should:

- balance environmental, social and economic considerations
- integrate tourism sectors with surrounding sectors and activities
- foster coordination across all relevant government departments and agencies
- be integrated with relevant regional, national and international strategies and legal frameworks.

Table 1. contrasts typical characteristics of sustainable and non-sustainable tourism according to current mainstream thinking on the definition of sustainable tourism, compiled from a literature review by Perrat [6]. The importance of planning and development at the destination level is evident from this list.

Table 1 : Some typical features of sustainable and unsustainable tourism

Sustainable	Non-sustainable
General concepts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slow development - Controlled development - Appropriate scale - Long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapid development - Uncontrolled development - Inappropriate scale - Short term

- Local control	- Remote control
Development strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan, then develop - Concept-led schemes - All landscapes concerned - Pressures and benefits diffused - Local developers - Locals employed - Vernacular architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop without planning - Project-led scheme - Concentrating on 'honey pots' - Increase capacity - Outside developers - Imported labour - Non-vernacular architecture
Tourist behavior	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low value - Some mental preparation - Learning of local traditions and language - Sensitive to destinations and hosts - Repeat visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little or no mental preparation - No learning of local traditions and language - Intensive and insensitive - Unlikely to return
Source: Perrat [6]	

Destination planning requires coordination across multiple organisations and/or departments and levels within local, regional and national administration. One component of best practice is therefore to establish a destination management organisation (DMO) – an administrative department or a private, or public-private organisation – specifically responsible for coordinating and implementing Destination Plans.

Finally, another aspect of best practice in the development of Destination Plans is to ensure that environmental pressures arising from the provision (operation) of tourism services are minimised. Local authorities and/or DMOs can have a strong influence over the environmental performance of tourism enterprises within the destination. This can be achieved through:

- regulations requiring minimum levels of environmental performance/protection
- award schemes to promote more sustainable tourism services
- fiscal incentives (subsidies) to encourage uptake of efficient technologies and techniques
- fiscal instruments such as environmental taxation and stepped charges to encourage greater resource efficiency.

Table 2: Social, economic and environmental benefits of integrated coastal zone management

Social benefits	Economic benefits	Environmental benefits
Provides diverse opportunities for recreation, leisure and cultural activities and thus improves the quality of life	Supports sustainable economic activities and thereby ensures income in the long run	Ensures integrity of the coastal environment and biodiversity as a natural system
Helps resolve conflicts	Allows better zoning and use allocation	Ensures the sustainable use of natural resources
Strengthens institutional frameworks and enforces cooperation among stakeholders on the basis of shared objectives	Improves management (legal framework, risks, help to the decision-making process) and thus permits gains in efficiency and time	Preserves and improves natural areas (habitats, species and biodiversity)

Provides security from natural hazards and risks	Develops new economic instruments to finance environmental protection	Improves pollution control
Raises public awareness and favours information exchange on sustainable development and environmental issues	Promotes environmentally friendly technologies and cleaner production for the markets of tomorrow	Improves beachfronts and soil alteration management
Encourages broader public Participation	Adds value to products through ecolabelling schemes	Integrates river basin management
Source: UNEP [7]		

Destination plans that lead to more sustainable development of tourism destinations will give rise to multiple benefits. UNEP (2009) lists the economic, social and environmental benefits attributable to integrated planning for the example of integrated coastal zone management (Table 1). Similar benefits will arise from the implementation of destination plans in coastal areas and other settings.

Conclusion:

Environmental management practices in tourism destinations are essential for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. The review found that waste management, energy conservation, and water conservation were the most commonly implemented practices in tourism destinations. However, the review also highlighted the challenges of implementing environmental management practices in tourism destinations, including a lack of funding, limited public awareness, and inadequate regulatory frameworks. To address these challenges, there is a need for a collaborative effort between all stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, businesses, and government entities, to promote sustainable tourism development.

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