



# TIES Global Ecotourism Fact Sheet

## **The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)**

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## Tourism: "Travel undertaken for pleasure"

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### Tourism Overview:

- **Size of Global Tourism:**
    - As the largest business sector in the world economy<sup>i</sup>, the Travel & Tourism industry is responsible for over 230 million jobs and over 10% of the gross domestic product worldwide.<sup>ii</sup>
    - In 2006, Travel & Tourism (consumption, investment, government spending and exports) is expected to grow 4.6% and total US\$6.5 trillion.<sup>iii</sup>
    - If tourism were a country, it would have the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economy, surpassed only by U.S.
    - In over 150 countries (four out of five), tourism is one of five top export earners. In 60 countries, tourism is the number one export.<sup>iv</sup>
  - **Global Growth of Tourism:**
    - 1950: 25 million tourist arrivals.
    - 1990's: Tourism grew globally at 7% per year.
    - 2004: 760 million tourism arrivals corresponded to a 10% global growth.<sup>v</sup>
    - 2005: The number of international tourist arrivals recorded worldwide grew by 5.5% and exceeded 800 million for the first time ever.<sup>vi</sup>
    - 2020: Global tourism is forecast to reach 1.56 billion international arrivals.<sup>vii</sup>
  - **Importance to Tourism in Developing Countries:**
    - Tourism is a principle "export" (foreign exchange earner) for 83% of developing countries, and the leading export for 1/3 of poorest countries.<sup>viii</sup>
    - For the world's 40 poorest countries, tourism is the second most important source of foreign exchange, after oil.<sup>ix</sup>
    - Over last decade, tourism has been "the only large sector of international trade in services where poor countries have consistently posted a surplus."<sup>x</sup>
    - International tourism in developing countries is increasing by 9.5% a year compared to 4.6% worldwide.<sup>xi</sup>
    - Tourism "appears to be one of the few economic sectors able to guide a number of developing countries to higher levels of prosperity and for some to leave behind their least-developed country status."<sup>xii</sup>
  - **Negative Impacts of Tourism**
    - There are 109 countries with coral reefs. In 90 of them reefs are being damaged by cruise ship anchors and sewage, by tourists breaking off chunks of coral, and by commercial harvesting for sale to tourists.<sup>xiii</sup>
    - Cruise ships in the Caribbean are estimated to produce more than 70,000 tons of waste each year.<sup>xiv</sup>
    - An average 18-hole golf course soaks up at least 525,000 gallons of water a day - enough to supply the irrigation needs of 100 Malaysian farmers.<sup>xv</sup>
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**Ecotourism:** “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people” (TIES, 1990)

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*Since surveys rarely ask either travelers or businesses specifically about ecotourism, precise statistics are difficult to determine. Ecotourism is frequently lumped together with nature tourism and other forms of ‘experiential’ or ‘alternative’ tourism. These figures represent TIES best effort to put together an accurate assessment of the strength of ecotourism, particularly since 2000.*

- **Size of Global Ecotourism:**

- Beginning in 1990s, ecotourism has been growing 20% - 34% per year.<sup>xvi</sup>
- In 2004, ecotourism/nature tourism was growing globally 3 times faster than the tourism industry as a whole.<sup>xvii</sup>
- Nature tourism is growing at 10%-12% per annum in the international market.<sup>xviii</sup>
- Sun-and-sand resort tourism has now “matured as a market” and its growth is projected to remain flat. In contrast, “experiential” tourism—which encompasses ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural, and soft adventure tourism, as well as sub-sectors such as rural and community tourism—is among the sectors expected to grow most quickly over the next two decades.<sup>xix</sup>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Conservation International have indicated that most of tourism’s expansion is occurring in and around the world’s remaining natural areas.<sup>xx</sup>
- Sustainable tourism could grow to 25% of the world’s travel market within six years, taking the value of the sector to £250 billion (US\$473.6 billion) a year.<sup>xxi</sup>
- Analysts predict a growth in eco-resorts and hotels, and a boom in nature tourism — a sector already growing at 20% a year — and suggest early converts to sustainable tourism will make market gains.<sup>xxii</sup>

- **Economics of Ecotourism vs. Mass Tourism:**

- In Dominica, in the Caribbean, “stay over” tourists using small, nature-based lodges spent 18 times more than cruise passengers spend while visiting the island.
- In Komodo National Park in Indonesia, independent travelers spend nearly US\$100 locally per visit; package holidaymakers spend only half this. In contrast, cruise-ship arrivals spend an average three cents in the local economy.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- 80% of money for all-inclusive package tours goes to airlines, hotels, and other international companies. Eco-lodges hire and purchase locally, and sometimes put as much as 95% of money into the local economy.<sup>xxiv</sup>
- The daily expenditure of cultural tourists (over €70/US\$90) is higher than visitors on a touring holiday (€52/US\$67), beach holiday (€48/US\$62), city break (€42/US\$54) or rural trip.<sup>xxv</sup>

- **Consumer Demand:**

- More than two-thirds of U.S. and Australian travelers, and 90% of British tourists, consider active protection of the environment and support of local communities to be part of a hotel’s responsibility.

- In Europe:
  - 20%-30% of travelers are aware of needs & values of sustainable tourism.
  - 10%-20% of travelers look for 'green' options.
  - 5%-10% of travelers demand 'green' holidays.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- In Germany, 65% (39 million) of travelers expect environmental quality; 42% (25 million) "think that it is particularly important to find environmentally-friendly accommodation."<sup>xxvii</sup>
- Nearly half of those surveyed in Britain said they would be more likely to go with a "company that had a written code to guarantee good working conditions, protect the environment and support local charities in the tourist destination... [E]thical tourism will rightly be a big issue in the new millennium."<sup>xxviii</sup>
- A survey of U.S., British, and Australian travelers revealed that 70% would pay up to \$150 more for a two-week stay in a hotel with a "responsible environmental attitude."<sup>xxix</sup>
- **Consumer Demand (Cont'd):**
  - In a U.K. survey, 87% of travelers said their holiday should not damage the environment; 39% said they were prepared to pay 5% extra for ethical guarantees.<sup>xxx</sup>
  - 53% of American travelers say their travel experience is enhanced when they learn as much as possible about local customs and culture.<sup>xxxi</sup>
  - 95% of Swiss tourists consider respect for local culture to be highly important when choosing a holiday.<sup>xxxii</sup>
  - Nearly a third (46 million) of U.S. travelers buy specifically from companies that donate part of their proceeds to charities. In Europe, where there is a strong and growing sustainable tourism movement, these figures are even higher.<sup>xxxiii</sup>
- **Profile of Ecotourists in Europe:**
  - Experienced travelers
  - Higher education
  - Higher income bracket
  - Age: middle-age to elderly
  - Opinion leaders
  - Ask & tell their friends & colleagues about trip
  - Are the most important source of trip information <sup>xxxiv</sup>

## Typology of Tourism:

The following is a breakdown of different categories of tourism according to a 2005 report by The Worldwatch Institute.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Category	Definition
Adventure tourism	A form of nature-based tourism that incorporates an element of risk, higher levels of physical exertion, and the need for specialized skill.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.
Geotourism	Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place-its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.
Mass tourism	Large-scale tourism, typically associated with 'sea, sand, sun' resorts and characteristics such as transnational ownership, minimal direct economic benefit to destination communities, seasonality, and package tours.
Nature-based tourism	Any form of tourism that relies primarily on the natural environment for its attractions or settings.
Pro-poor tourism	Tourism that results in increased net benefit for the poor people.
Responsible tourism	Tourism that maximizes the benefits to local communities, minimizes negative social or environmental impacts, and helps local people conserve fragile cultures, habitats, and species.
Sustainable Tourism	Tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Mintel Report. "Eco and Ethical Tourism-UK", October 2003.

<sup>ii</sup> WTTC, Progress and Priorities 2006/07, 2006, "Chairman's Foreword"  
<http://www.wttc.org/publications/pdf/PandP2006-07.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> WTTC, Progress and Priorities 2006/07, 2006, p.6, <http://www.wttc.org/publications/pdf/PandP2006-07.pdf>.

<sup>iv</sup> World Tourism Organization, "Tourism, a Force for Sustainable Development," 19<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic Forum, Prague, Czech Republic, June 2, 2004.

<sup>v</sup> World Tourism Organization, *World Tourism Barometer*, January 2005, p. 2. (based on monthly data or preliminary full year results available in January 2005)

<sup>vi</sup> World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). "International Tourism up by 5.5% to 808 Million Arrivals in 2005." 24 January 2006, [http://www.world-tourism.org/newsroom/Releases/2006/january/06\\_01\\_24.htm](http://www.world-tourism.org/newsroom/Releases/2006/january/06_01_24.htm).

<sup>vii</sup> World Tourism Organization, *Tourism 2020 Vision*, at [http://www.world-tourism.org/market\\_research/facts/market\\_trends.htm](http://www.world-tourism.org/market_research/facts/market_trends.htm).

<sup>viii</sup> Lisa Mastny, *Treading Lightly: New Paths for International Tourism*, Worldwatch Paper 159 (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute, December 2001), p. 15.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>x</sup> UN Council on Trade and Development, quoted in Patricia Goldstone, *Making the World Safe for Tourism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 46.

<sup>xia</sup> "The morality of tourism?" citing a recent report by the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Private Sector Development Blog, The World Bank Group, July 19, 2006, [http://psdblog.worldbank.org/psdblog/2006/07/tourists\\_have\\_n.html](http://psdblog.worldbank.org/psdblog/2006/07/tourists_have_n.html).

<sup>xii</sup> "The morality of tourism?" citing a recent report by the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Private Sector Development Blog, The World Bank Group, July 19, 2006, [http://psdblog.worldbank.org/psdblog/2006/07/tourists\\_have\\_n.html](http://psdblog.worldbank.org/psdblog/2006/07/tourists_have_n.html).

<sup>xiii</sup> Earth Portal, [www.earthportal.org](http://www.earthportal.org)

<sup>xiv</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

<sup>xv</sup> Tourism Concern, [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

- <sup>xvi</sup> Mastny, p. 37.
- <sup>xvii</sup> World Tourism Organization, press release, June 2004.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Mintel Report. "Cultural and Heritage Tourism-International", November 2004. Citing A European Commission report *Using Natural and Cultural Heritage to Develop Sustainable Tourism in Non-traditional Tourist Destinations*.
- <sup>xix</sup> World Tourism Organization, "Global Forecasts and Profiles of Market Segments," Vol. 7, *Tourism 2020 Vision*, Madrid: WTO, 2001.
- <sup>xx</sup> Costas Christ. "Ecotourism is Transforming the Travel Industry." Maine Center for Economic Policy. June 24, 2005, [http://www.mecep.org/MeChoices05/ch\\_06242005.htm](http://www.mecep.org/MeChoices05/ch_06242005.htm).
- <sup>xxi</sup> Travel Weekly, 14-07-2006.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Travel Weekly, 14-07-2006.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> "Changing the Nature of Tourism," Department for International Development <http://www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/publications/changing%20the%20na%85%20of%20tourism.pdf#se arch=%22tourism%20expenditure%20nature%22>.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, "Economic Impacts of Tourism," at [www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/economic.htm](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/economic.htm). Martha Honey, TIES, "Ecotourism: A Tool for Sustainable Development," *Workshop on Ecotourism*, conducted by Eco Tourism Society of Sri Lanka (ESSL) In Association with The Tourism Cluster & The Competitiveness Programme/USAID BMICH, Colombo, Sri Lanka, November 22, 2004.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Mintel Report. "Cultural and Heritage Tourism-International", November 2004.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Herbert Hamele, Ecotrans, Germany, 2004. [www.ecotrans.org](http://www.ecotrans.org).
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Ecotrans, 2002.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Tearfund, "Tourism—an Ethical Issue: Market Research Report," Tearfund, London, January 2000.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Travelbiz, "Green is Good for Hotel Business," Online article. 29 August 2002. <http://www.travelbiz.com.au/articles/14/0c010614.asp>. References IHEI, 2002.
- <sup>xxx</sup> MORI, *Package Holidays*, MORI, September 2002.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> "The Power of Socially Conscious Tourists," referencing the USA Geo-tourism Survey, <http://www.fairtourismsa.org.za/fairtrade/index.html>.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> "The Power of Socially Conscious Tourists," referencing the Switzerland Travel Writers and Journalism Club, <http://www.fairtourismsa.org.za/fairtrade/index.html>.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Costas Christ. "Ecotourism is Transforming the Travel Industry." Maine Center for Economic Policy. June 24, 2005, [http://www.mecep.org/MeChoices05/ch\\_06242005.htm](http://www.mecep.org/MeChoices05/ch_06242005.htm).
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Herbert Hamele, Ecotrans, Germany, 2004.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Zoe Chafe, "Interest in Responsible Travel Grows, Vital Signs 2005 (The Worldwatch Institute.) p 101. which sources: Merriam-Webster Dictionary, National Geographic Traveler, TIES, World Tourism Organization, Pro-Poor Tourism, Encyclopedia of Ecotourism, and Responsibletravel.com.