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Sustainable Tourism Development Principles in Small Island Developing States

Introduction

Globally, the travel and tourism economy generates nearly US\$6 billion dollars in economic activity, accounting for a tenth of global GDP. It contributes 8.4 per cent to global employment (238 million jobs)¹ and is projected to grow at an average of 4 per cent over the next decade. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)²:

Travel and tourism – encompassing transport, accommodation, catering, recreation and services for visitors – is one of the world's highest priority industries and employers.

Even though the industry has contracted slightly over the past year (2007), mainly due to high energy and food prices and a weakened US dollar and economy, the travelling public has surged to 898 million globally.³ New destinations are opening up and offering competitive adventures and experiences in regions such as Asia and the Middle East, which have posted the highest arrival growth rates. Rising per capita incomes and the operation of competitive low-cost airlines have also contributed to this increase.

The global travel and tourism economy has outpaced all other sectors in terms of growth and opportunity, and this has provided a robust incentive for continued investment in new infrastructure and facilities. China is particularly significant as it alone is expected to contribute 100 million travellers.⁴ All indications are that in spite of a downturn in the global economy beginning in 2008 due to the global financial crisis, the travel and tourism industry is robust enough to withstand these pressures over the next decade. Depending upon the sophistication of the industry in terms of the solidity of its linkages and supply chains, some destinations are likely to recover more quickly than others.

In spite of its successes, tourism has been associated with high levels of land degradation, solid waste generation, land-based sources of pollution (e.g. wastewater) in aquatic and marine areas, and unsustainable consumption of freshwater and energy resources, among other environmental problems. As an industry, it often competes for prime real estate and juxtaposes visitors with different cultural practices and values to host communities, with consequent negative influences.

The SIDS network comprises 51 mainly small island states spread across three main regions – the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) (figure 8.1). Their economies and progress in development have been the subject of intense scrutiny, as a result of limitations in topographic character; vulnerability to natural disasters, climate changes and related impacts; threats to biological diversity, especially in coastal and marine areas; consumption of scarce natural resources; declining traditional productive sectors; poverty; and their reliance on the travel and tourism industry for economic performance. Given the importance

of tourism to many SIDS, the sustainable planning, development, operation and management of their tourism industries are of prime importance and the subject of this chapter.

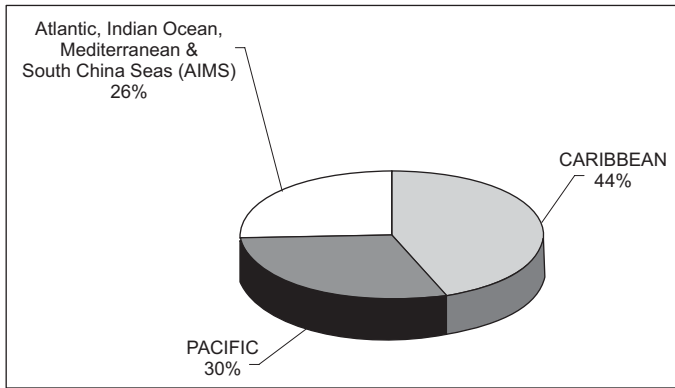


Figure 8.1 SIDS by geographic region

A comparative view of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)⁵

Most SIDS are small island nations in the Caribbean (44 per cent), Pacific (30 per cent) and AIMS regions (26 per cent). SIDS demonstrate much similarity in terms of their relative island size (figure 8.2), with three-quarters of all SIDS less than 25,000 km² in area. Large island nations comprising Papua New Guinea, Cuba, Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Guinea Bissau and those located in Central/South America (Suriname, Guyana, Belize) make up the SIDS grouping with geographic areas in excess of 25,000 km².

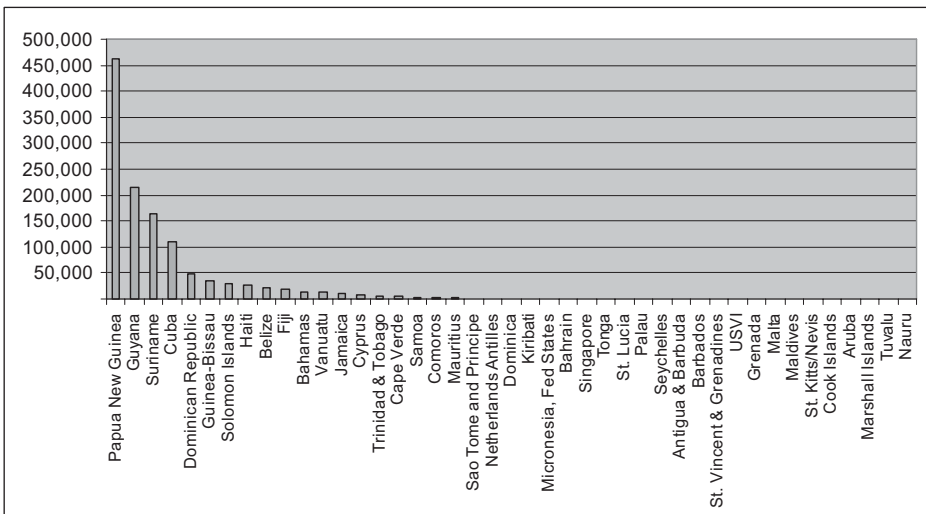


Figure 8.2 SIDS by size of geographic area

SIDS are not all uniform in terms of their economic development. There is significant variability in GDP per capita, as indicated in figure 8.3, with many of the more developed tourist economies such as Aruba, Singapore, US Virgin Islands (USVI) and the Bahamas, showing higher levels of prosperity.

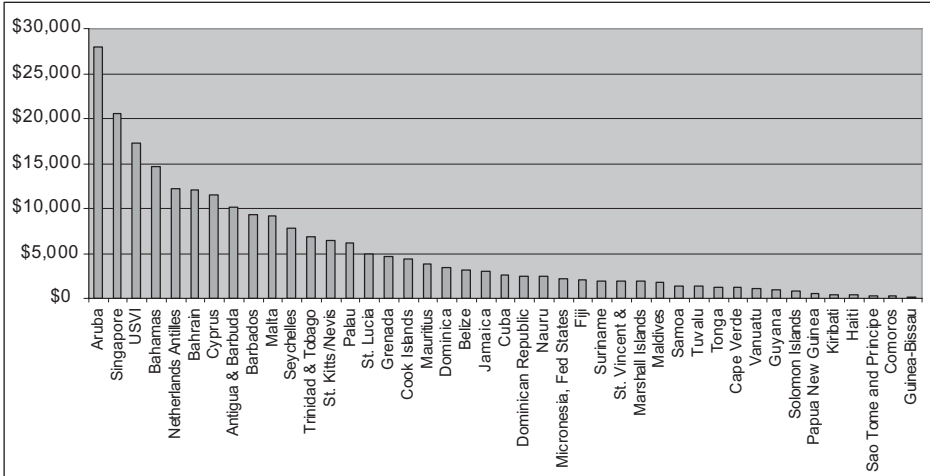


Figure 8.3 SIDS GDP per capita (US\$)

Caribbean SIDS tend to enjoy higher standards of living (e.g. Aruba, The Bahamas, USVI and Antigua and Barbuda).

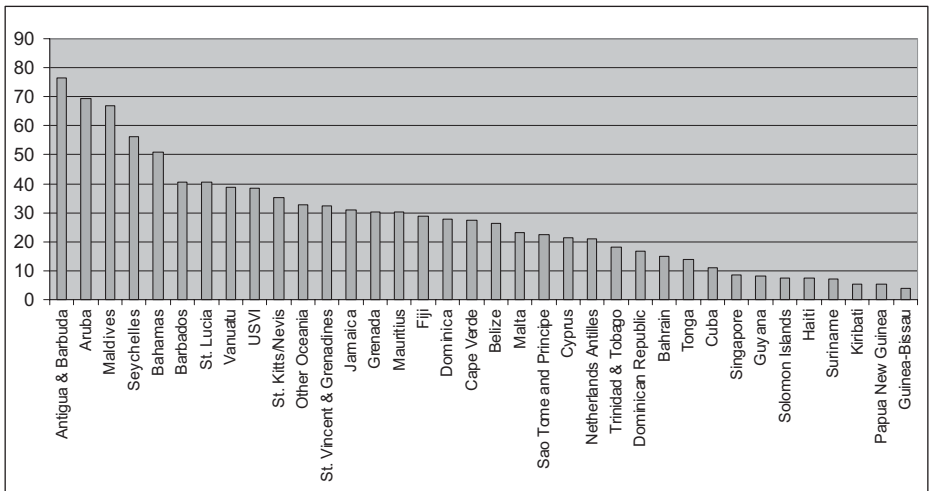


Figure 8.4 SIDS: tourism contribution to GDP (%)

Figure 8.4 compares SIDS' tourism contribution to GDP. The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world, with Antigua/Barbuda and Aruba topping the list. On the other end of the scale, the least tourism-dependent countries are Guinea Bissau and Papua New Guinea.

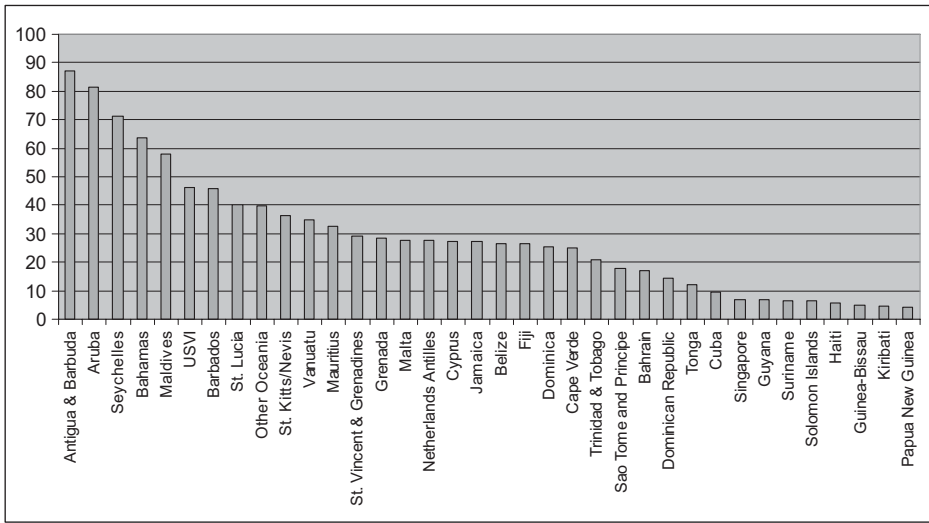


Figure 8.5 SIDS: tourism contribution to employment

A similar picture emerges (figure 8.5) with the contribution of tourism to employment among SIDS. The Antigua and Barbuda and Aruba tourism industries in the Caribbean provide the most employment (more than 80 per cent). In all, one-third of all SIDS have tourism industries that account for at least 40 per cent of GDP and total employment.

With tourism continuing to emerge as a major economic strategy for many SIDS, the challenge is exactly how should their tourism strategies be developed and implemented, at what scales and cost, and for whose benefit?

The business of tourism

The business of tourism involves far more than the inside of a comfortable hotel room. Its core product is an unforgettable experience at the selected destination that attracts the curiosity of a new visitor and maintains the fidelity of repeat guests. It involves an intricate network of products and services, infrastructure, players within the private, public and community sectors, markets, promotions, tour packages and services. Commentators typically refer to the business of tourism as an ‘industry’, an ‘economy’ or a ‘sector’. References to the first two ascribe a level of maturity, integration and penetration of services that contribute to exports, national accounts and the development of the country, while the ‘sector’ reference infers a nascent industry competing for allocated resources with other productive sectors.

The ‘destination’ is at the heart of the business of tourism. These may be countries, islands or specific regions or towns within both. A destination’s endowment of natural or cultural assets – e.g. beaches, valued ecosystems, scenic land- and seascapes, heritage, food, festivals and/or people – is the primary reason that visitors arrive. The Caribbean, for example, is renowned for its rhythms and azure seas; the Pacific and Indian Ocean countries for their mystical islands in a vast expanse of ocean; and Mediterranean islands for their unique blend of mythical climate and culture. These regions also possess relics of centuries past, whether archaeological, architectural or related to indigenous lifestyles; all are distinct and attractive to the discerning visitor.

As the most obvious icon of the tourism destination, the hotel may be small or large scale, part of an international chain or indigenously owned. It is the accommodation of choice for most visitors to a destination. Guests are promised safety, security, a 'home-away-from-home' and receive the expected level of comfort, service and experience for the advertised price. Other enterprises that contribute to the tourism business and economy are the network of restaurants and bars, tours and attractions, and public goods maintained by public sector agencies e.g. utility services, access roads and community assets. These together provide the key infrastructure assets that add structure and flavour to the destination experience. The host population, with its unique charm and customs breathe life and vitality into destinations.

The destination and its supporting industry need to be properly planned and operated, however, within defined limits in order to reduce impacts, maximise benefits and deliver on the promise of improved livelihoods for indigenous populations. It may be viewed as a system representing a continuum of public goods, and private and natural assets. Public sector agencies are responsible for the construction and upkeep of public assets, supported by the private sector and the community. Typically, a mature tourism destination is well organised along the lines of its supply and demand networks, to ensure the efficient use of resources and transfer of goods and services. Hence, in-bound tour operators who bring visitors to the destination en masse, do so with the assistance of local private sector operators and service providers.

The business of tourism has also been categorised into numerous niches e.g. ecotourism, catering to visitors indulging in nature-based activities; sporting events, entertainment, business meetings and conferences hosted by the destination, which provide the main impetus for the visit; or resort vacations catering to families and individuals seeking rest and recreation. A more recent niche emerging in SIDS is medical tourism, which promises more affordable medical treatments to visitors. Marketing and promotions of the destination and its offerings play an important role in defining the niche and attracting the sought-after visitor.

When the physical, social and cultural elements of the destination are synchronously operated within a commonly held vision and objective, the experience is unparalleled and leaves the visitor satisfied, and the experience and assets untarnished. Too often, however, these elements operate without any overarching framework or guiding principle, which allow the business interests to prevail and, in some cases, transcend the undefined limits of capacity, good taste and decorum.

SIDS, with their smaller economies of scale, are particularly vulnerable to global events. These include:

- Global terrorism events such as 9/11 in the US, war and conflict in the Middle East and Africa, which have temporarily or permanently upset adjacent local and regional tourism.
- Natural disasters e.g. hurricanes, cyclones and tsunamis that affect SIDS in the Caribbean and Pacific each year. The 2004 Asian tsunami devastated many regional tourism industries, e.g. Maldives and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The overall effect is irreparable damage to infrastructure and reputation, which sets development at the destination back several years.
- The increasing use of the internet, while also providing benefits for the consumer, often purveys bad news and at lightning speeds around the world. The tourism industries in Thailand, Indonesia and other destinations affected by the 2004 tsunami learned this lesson, as arrivals dipped sharply in the months that followed. Visitors were scared away by the graphic and disturbing images of destructive waves, decimated towns and villages, and scenes of death everywhere.

- Escalating costs of energy, oil and food prices, which have driven up airline and other industry operating costs with dire consequences for many SIDS. With the consequent consolidation among the major carriers and the emergence of competitive low-cost carriers, these have either benefited those SIDS with good airlift service and infrastructure or seriously impacted those without.
- Changes in economic conditions at source markets, which affect outbound visitor flows and have had dire consequences for arrival numbers.
- Cruise industry dynamics, which also impact the destination experience in regard to the carrying capacity of local infrastructure, quality services and ecosystems.

Knowledge and understanding of a destination's vulnerability are key factors in planning for and managing resilience and in sustainably developing the tourism industry.

Sustainable tourism development

For the purposes of this discussion, the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO's) definition on sustainable tourism is adopted:

*Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.*⁶

The key word in the definition is 'balance', as tourism sustainability infers that the destination is able to manage its exploitation, consumption and development of natural and cultural resources over the long term. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) advises, inter alia, that for tourism to be sustainable it should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations
- Encourage informed participation of all relevant stakeholders
- Promote constant monitoring of impact
- Maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction

Guiding principles for national development and also for the tourism industry have been at the heart of multinational declarations and framework conventions, and have for many years embraced the concept of 'sustainability'. The SIDS group came together 16 years ago at a specially convened sustainable development conference for small islands. That meeting, held in Barbados in 1994,⁷ produced the **Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA)**, which specified the commitment made by member states at the national, regional and international levels in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. Since then other statements have also been articulated.⁸

The United Nations' Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) has the task of monitoring the progress of the BPOA in its multiyear work programmes. The UNWTO has also been instrumental in the elaboration of numerous statements related to the sustainable development of tourism.⁹ By their nature, however, most declarations, charters, codes or statements are non-binding. By signing onto these, SIDS are morally obligated to interpret, adhere to and implement the requirements. It should therefore suffice that each calls for responsible and timely development actions on the parts of the state and other national actors. This would ensure opportunities for equitable participation and benefits for all citizens and take account of prevailing global issues.

In addition to the above, the UNWTO has also produced other guidance documents on planning for sustainable tourism development at destinations.¹⁰ Many provide comprehensive planning advice covering a range of topical issues, destination types and tourism developments, while also providing indicators for measuring and monitoring impacts and development progress.

Defining a sustainable tourism planning approach

In spite of the numerous declarations and statements outlined above, the problems of unsustainable tourism destination development abound. No single model for sustainable tourism development has evolved or been universally applied. This is a likely consequence of the fact that each destination presents its own unique geography, people, traditions and problems, which require custom-made rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. An approach that has yielded improvement in destination management, where systematically applied, involves a hierarchical planning cycle involving repeated phases of plan development, implementation and monitoring. This is the basic premise of all national planning strategies, but it is one with which many SIDS struggle because of the discipline required for its successful adoption.

The first step in any planning cycle is articulating a planning method that is inclusive and built on principles of consultation and partnership. This activity should be led by the country's public sector tourism planning agency (or central planning authority), working in consultation and partnership with the tourism private sector. The plan process and method should be developed conjointly and discussed with all key stakeholders, interested parties and the national population. This approach is certain to achieve buy-in and relevance.

As a hierarchical process, the planning process should also lead to the establishment of an overarching policy and framework for the sustainable development of the tourism economy. A 'master plan' is the usual output, which should not be unduly burdened or delayed by the need for detailed local area planning in the initial phase.¹¹ The master plan should present the destination's vision, goal, purpose and strategy, as well as a general appreciation for the mix of available tourism assets and resources. It defines the major sustainable tourism goal and objective to be accomplished, describes the product in these terms and sets out the key planning steps and approaches to be followed (See box 8.1).

Box 8.1 Jamaica's master plan objectives for sustainable tourism development

In 2002, the Jamaica Ministry of Tourism and Sport produced its 'Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development'. This Plan resulted from extensive consultations, research exercises and analyses of the Jamaica tourism industry spanning five years. It involved the participation of a wide cross section of society: private sector groups, public sector agencies, civil society groups and other interested stakeholders. Its stated role and purpose, *inter alia*, is to 'provide a comprehensive planning framework for the development of the tourism industry' and to 'articulate a vision of the future direction, shape and composition of the industry to guide the actions of stakeholders to a common goal and purpose'.¹²

A master plan is essential for ensuring the orderly progress of plan implementation, as well as measuring and monitoring the achievement of objectives. Without it, development is likely to be chaotic and opportunistic. Sustainable tourism master plans, where they exist, are usually nested within national development plans and prepared by the ministries, departments or offices responsible for the sector. This maintains connectivity and relevance with other productive sectors.

Manning and Dougherty¹³ describe sustainable tourism destination planning as a ‘form of risk assessment’. They discuss the different elements at the destination that public sector planners must take into consideration, e.g. the availability and quality of public goods and services, and the tourism plant, including hotels, restaurants and attractions, which distinguish the destination’s character. The authors also describe the basic demands of tourists to be personal safety and security, clean accommodations and food, accessible washrooms, and functional services at the destination, including currency exchange, telecommunications and transportation, among others.

In order to satisfy the demands of the ‘customer’ (e.g. visitors), all requirements – private, public, natural and tourism assets – should be analysed as an essential first step. The SIDS’ challenge, however, is that tourism planning requires seamless and co-operative working relationships and shared resources among agencies that are either resistant to such co-operation or inhibited by their limited resources. Yet, given the UNWTO’s requirements for tourism sustainability above, such collaboration is essential.

Establishing limits to tourism development

The most effective plans are painstakingly informed by detailed research, data analysis and interpretation. Research outputs typically provide an inventory of the tourism asset base, an appreciation of its extent and value, and an analysis of its vulnerabilities and sensitivities. These only serve to improve the process of decision-making and provide the basis for establishing limits to tourism development (see box 8.2).

Box 8.2 Fundamental principles for sustainable tourism development¹⁴

Fundamental principles necessary for sustainably defining tourism development limits and options:

- Decisions should be based on scientific evidence
- The ‘precautionary principle’ should be applied in situations where risks and limits are unknown
- Anticipate and prevent rather than detect and correct – prevention is more cost effective
- Plan in conjunction with other sectors and not in isolation
- Involve all stakeholders

Defining limits for tourism developments (e.g. location, scale, height, density) is useful for the orderly control of the pace and progress of development over the long term.

Use of carrying capacity and tourism indicators

Planners should routinely build monitoring and evaluation programmes into their destination planning, using appropriate indicators to determine when the carrying capacities of public and natural assets are close to the limits of unacceptable change. Planners should also measure the progress of tourism development against the specified targets and goals of the plan. Analyses should typically reflect variations of visitor arrivals and from source markets by season or by event, as well as the overall performance of the tourism asset base. In other words, greater emphasis should be placed on data collection, assembly and analysis, in support of plan objectives.

Visitor arrivals have typically been the preferred indicator of a destination’s success. This indicator, however, provides no information on visitor preferences or on decisions to pursue vacation- or

business-related travel choices, which are more likely to provide a sense of the destination experience and/or customer requirements. The focus on visitor arrivals as a key indicator is perhaps the main reason why such an overemphasis is placed on marketing the destination, as opposed to developing and diversifying product offerings in accordance with customer preferences. Long data series can also inform destination contingency planning and preparedness for major upset events and build destination resiliency generally.

Data analysis is a powerful tool for destination planners if used judiciously with sufficient attention paid to accuracy and verification. Yet data collection and assembly are often subject to the planning agency's capabilities and resources, and for many SIDS are limited in extent and sophistication. The destinations that are able to transcend this challenge are those that will move closer to the objectives of sustainability.

Box 8.3 Sustainable tourism indicators

In 2005, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), the environmental division of the Caribbean Hotel Association, commissioned a study of Performance Indicators and Sustainability Reporting for the Caribbean Tourism Sector.¹⁵ The study examined a number of regional and international sustainable tourism initiatives, some of which were implemented regionally:

- The Quality Tourism for the Caribbean (QTC) standards for the hospitality industry
- The Green Globe benchmarking and certification programme for travel and tourism businesses
- The ISO 14000 series of standards for environmental management
- The UNWTO's indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations
- The Association of Caribbean States' (ACS) sustainable tourism indicators
- The Caribbean Blue Flag Campaign criteria
- The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System for Golf Courses
- The Institute of Responsible Tourism – Biosphere Hotels Label
- The Natural Step
- Touristik Union International (TUI) environmental policy and checklist
- The European Package Travel Directive, 1990, and related national travel consumer protection legislation
- The International Hotels Environment Initiative
- British Airways Holidays

The study concluded, *inter alia*, that the most effective sustainability indicators are those that monitor the key tourism sustainability risks and concerns and provide information that clarifies issues and measures responses. In this regard, the most commonly repeated areas of concern among the above environmental and sustainability initiatives were natural resource conservation, environmental protection, awareness and education, hygiene and safety (especially food safety), and social development, which were also determined to be the critical areas to be monitored and measured. In light of this, destination-level indicators were identified for:

- Environment/conservation: energy, water, solid waste, sewage treatment, recreational water quality, food safety and hygiene, pool management, chemicals use, landscape and built environment
- Economic: visitor arrivals, tourism receipts, incentive programmes and participation, labour, employment and related benefits, host community benefits
- Social: local involvement, community outreach, promotion of culture

Promoting sustainable development

Studies, research and analyses should therefore lay the groundwork for:

- a consistent and workable public sector policy framework, incentive programmes and an enabling legislative and enforcement regime,
- identifying appropriate development options,
- setting sustainable site development guidelines and standards,
- promoting sustainable use and consumption of resources, and
- Promoting sustainable facilities operations and maintenance.

These are discussed further below.

Public sector policy framework

Sustainable tourism development must be pursued through determined and effective leadership from the framers of public policy. They should acknowledge the difficulties faced by public sector planners over the years, and recognise the development challenges at the destination. As imperatives for change are driven by the health and wellbeing of SIDS and their island populations and ecosystems, this should inspire the leadership to promote innovation and quality.

An effective public sector policy framework provides the guiding framework for sustainable tourism development. Policies should be informed by review and analyses of individual SIDS' operating environments and present clear, workable incentives for action (see box 8.4).

Box 8.4 Government of Barbados establishes its policy for a green economy

The Prime Minister of Barbados outlined his administration's 'Green Economy Fiscal and Economic Proposals' in his 14 March 2007 budget speech. In this major policy speech, the Prime Minister indicated that: 'The notion of a green economy must be underpinned by the philosophy of putting Barbados on a sustainable economic growth pattern that incorporates prudent environmental management principles. What is now needed is for us to further integrate green principles into national economic planning, marrying economic growth with environmental management and preservation'. Three principles for action were articulated:

- 'We should not exploit resources at a rate greater than we can assimilate the waste that is generated.
- 'We should not exploit [groundwater] resources at rates greater than they can be replenished.
- 'Non-renewable [energy] resources should not be depleted at rates greater than they can be replaced by renewable resources'.

In many cases, the growth of SIDS' tourism industries has been so rapid and fortuitous that problems have now become acute and manifest economically, environmentally and socially.¹⁶ The most commonly cited are:

- land development pressures (e.g. competition for prime real estate, speculative pricing) caused by lack of clear tourism planning policies, guidance frameworks, controls and weak cross-sectoral linkages and enforcement,
- poor construction methods involving clear felling, indiscriminate removal of top soil and vegetation cover causing increased run-off, pollution, loss of habitats and ecosystems, especially along coastal areas,

- competition for potable fresh water supplies,
- costly energy supplies, energy inefficiency with limited focus on conservation or green house gas emissions,
- generation of solid wastes with limited waste management, reduction and recycling practices or facilities,
- seasonal employment trends, low wages and skills levels, high staff turnover at tourism facilities,
- lack of integration of the industry with other key sectors, e.g. infrastructure, agriculture and transportation, and
- leakage of tourism receipts, limited data monitoring and collection capabilities.

Many SIDS have shifted towards more inventive policy instruments and the use of strategic plans as a remedy for controlling island-wide impacts and improving sector linkages and benefits. These relate to the current issues of promoting energy conservation by both private and public sector tourism entities, thereby creating a culture of conservation at the destination.

A good and supportive policy framework is essential for achieving tourism product diversity, improving human resource opportunities and skills, creating a more wholesome destination experience, and for maintaining healthy and sustained growth rates. In order to maintain their competitiveness, the more mature sun-sea-sand destinations will need to reorient the destination towards new niche concepts that focus on nature-, heritage-, culinary- or event-based experiences.

Identifying appropriate development options

Strategic tourism plans should also describe the desired development concepts and options in clear and unambiguous language. These prioritised development options should also be scrutinised for their environmental, social and economic impacts, and adjustments made wherever required. Investors have benefited from gains from the pursuit of ‘greening’ initiatives and business approaches.

Many new hotels are pursuing, for example, Leadership in Energy Efficiency Design (LEED) certification in the US, which certifies that new buildings have been designed to achieve high levels of energy and water-use efficiencies. A menu of incentive options should be available to investors, which encourage high consumption efficiencies and maximise benefits to local communities. This approach would signal vision, clarity and firmness of purpose of the destination’s tourism development plan.

Setting sustainable development guidelines and standards

All development is subject to site development standards and guidelines. These set zoning and site density limits, environmental performance standards and the like. Zoning is a familiar planning practice for ensuring an appropriate use of development space, preserving its special characteristics and the juxtaposing of related activities. It also serves the purpose of meeting the needs of communities. Most SIDS have planning or development legislation that requires development forms to be zoned. However, such legislation has been weakly enforced, is outmoded or has been overtaken by development pressures.

The zoning objective from the perspective of the destination planner should be to help visitors and locals appreciate the natural and cultural uniqueness of the destination. More importantly, the imperative for sustainability is to ‘determine the **relationships** between site factors and how those

factors will adapt to change. Understanding these relationships also clarifies how development impacts from one area ... will affect other areas'.¹⁷

The imperative must therefore be to ensure that development goals and objectives as articulated in the tourism master plan are met, and any changes (desirable or undesirable) are effectively anticipated, monitored and, where necessary, mitigated. Planners should use this important technique to maximise prime real estate at the destination, yet simultaneously preserve areas with valued ecosystem and heritage resources.

The sustainable approach also requires an appreciation of the level of investment required from the public sector for infrastructure to maintain service continuity and quality over the plan period. The focus is on services. The opportunity cost for lost, degraded or altered ecosystems and their value-adding services is seldom reflected in the public accounting. Ecosystems such as mangroves, reefs and forests provide services ranging from shoreline protection, beach sand replenishment and fish nurseries, to potable water supply and 'scrubbing' of nutrients and sediments from rivers and streams. With the loss of key ecosystem services, the opportunity cost of remediation, repairing, stabilising and cleaning up prime tourist zones should provide the basis for defining site development priorities and standards.

Not to be overlooked is the abundance of tourism development guidelines and technical expertise available from the international community. For example, the UN-WTO's *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations* (2004) and other documents that cover topics ranging from standards and certification, and impact analyses to the wellbeing of tourism communities, sustaining cultural assets and capturing economic benefits from tourism, among others. UNEP's Secretariat on the Convention of Biological Diversity has produced its own *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development* for public sector planners.¹⁸ The Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership has developed guidelines for establishing private and public sector collaboration and linkages in the tourism sector and ensuring that local communities benefit from the industry.¹⁹ These resources are available to planners on a variety of topical and procedural issues, which should assist in the building of capability and resiliency at the destination.

Promoting sustainable resource use and facilities operations

A sound policy framework can also promote the sustainable use and consumption of resources, especially water and energy, by the private sector and communities. These can take the form of recognition, reward or incentive schemes for participating in or supporting conservation programmes or implementing conservation standards and certification programmes. For example, in recognising the Green Globe standards and certification programme for the tourism sector, the Government of Barbados in 2007 provided a tax write-off incentive to participating tourism businesses at the rate of 150 per cent of the cost incurred.

Codifying the development of historic and cultural resources

Refreshing or maintaining the destination's image and value-added will always be a challenge, but cultural and heritage resources present the best available opportunities for creating new niches. There are many SIDS that appear on UNESCO's listing of World Heritage Sites for their natural or cultural treasures (architectural, historical, religious etc.) or those with outstanding universal value, which if sustainably managed will continue to be an abiding source of intrigue and mystery for visitors.

The destination master plan should therefore require proper, accurate and interesting interpretation of natural, cultural and historical treasures. Interpretation is authentic and interesting when it encapsulates the vernacular, draws appreciation and co-operation from nationals, and engages the imagination and curiosity of the visitor. The existence and enforcement of historic preservation and design codes can help to preserve the destination's cultural and historic attractions from the pressures of development.

Managing for sustainability

Even with all the above instruments and approaches in place, sustainably managing tourism development is still very much a function of leadership within the public, private and community sectors. Partnership and shared responsibilities between the sectors for the benefit of locals and the delight of visitors is a core requirement, as is a consistent management framework and adherence to good governance and the rule of law, with clear lines of responsibility and authority established to accomplish defined goals and targets.

Sustainable tourism requires that a decision be made at the leadership or political levels for the integrated functioning of all institutional, economic and productive sectors. This is always the challenge for SIDS where sectors are allocated to government ministries, offices and/or departments with a poor reputation for effective collaboration and co-operation.

Systematic planning and teamwork is still perhaps the most effective approach available to SIDS to accomplish sector linkages, sustainable planning and management of tourism destinations. Teams may be permanent (e.g. standing committees) or they may be temporary (task forces) appointed for specific periods and tasks.

Strategic or tactical teams (e.g. ministerial committees, task forces, project teams etc.) with multi-sectoral membership have been used by SIDS to address each of the issues outlined above. In the final analysis, mainstreaming sustainability in day-to-day planning and management requires that such teams be taken seriously by assigning authority, responsibility, accountability and adequate resources in order that they may deliver on their mandates effectively.

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1. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2009). Available at <http://www.wttc.org> [last accessed 7 July 2010].
2. See: <http://www.wttc.org> [last accessed 7 July 2010].
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. SIDS graphs compiled and adapted from various data sources, but principally the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistical Division (2003) *World Statistics Pocketbook of Small Island Developing States*. Available at: http://www.sidsnet.org/docshare/other/20040219161354_sids_statistics.pdf [last accessed 7 July 2010].
6. See: http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html [last accessed 7 July 2010].
7. The first Global Conference on Sustainable Development of SIDS was convened in April 1994 in Bridgetown, Barbados.
8. The Johannesburg Plan of Action, from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, which reiterated the relevance of the BPOA; and the Mauritius Strategy to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States of January 2005.
9. Over the years, the following UNWTO declarations related to sustainable tourism have been articulated. A detailed discussion on each is beyond the scope of this chapter:
 - Manila Declaration on World Tourism, 1980
 - Acapulco Documents on the Rights to Holidays, 1982
 - Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourism Code, Sofia, 1985
 - The Hague Declaration on Tourism, 1989

- Lanzarote Charter for Sustainable Tourism, 1995 (jointly with UNEP, UNESCO, EU)
 - Statement on the Prevention of Organized Sex Tourism, Cairo, 1995
 - Agenda 21 for Tourism and Travel Industry, 1996
 - Global Codes of Ethics for Tourism, 1999
 - Hainan Declaration – Sustainable Tourism in the Islands of the Asia-Pacific Regions (2002)
 - Québec Declaration on Ecotourism, 2002
 - Djerba Declaration on Tourism and Climate Change, 2003
10. For example UN-WTO (2004).
 11. Detailed local area plans should be the responsibility of local, municipal or state governments, and should be consistent with the goals, objectives and strategies of the master plan.
 12. Government of Jamaica, September 2002; 61pp.
 13. Dr Edward W Manning and T David Dougherty, 2000.
 14. Ibid.
 15. The study (Lot 1 Research Capacity) was conducted by PA Government Services under the Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme (CRSTDP), funded by the 8th European Development Fund (EDF), August 2006. PA Government Services, Inc., Project No. 8, ACP RCA 035; 141pp.
 16. See Reil G Cruz, 2006; 47pp. Available at: <http://pascn.pids.gov.ph/DiscList/d03/s03-06.PDF>. Also World Bank, Caribbean Country Management Unit, 2005.
 17. United States Department of the Interior, 1993; 117pp.
 18. Ibid. note 6. Also Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2004; 29pp.
 19. Ashley et al., 2006. Also Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership and the Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2006.

