

## Tourism sustainable development and ecotourism

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The goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of today's generations without jeopardising possibilities of future generations to meet their needs. World Tourism Organization defines tourism sustainable development as «tourism that leads to resource management in such a way that economical, social and estetical needs are fulfilled with sustaining cultural integrity, valuable ecological processes and biological diversity and improvement of life quality». According to WTO, «tourism sustainable development involves improvement of local communities' life condition, but also providing high-quality tourist product, as well as protection of resources that are being consumed by tourism system». Three main principles of tourism sustainable development are:

1. Ecological sustainability, meaning development of tourism on destinations that sustains valuable ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources;
2. Social and cultural sustainability, meaning development of tourism that increases local communities' control of their environment and that's compatible with their cultural identity
3. Economical sustainability, meaning development of tourism that is economically efficient and provides resource management that will be of use to future generations

Blueprint for meeting these principles is Agenda 21, a document signed by 182 countries on Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. After this document was adopted, World Travel and Tourism Council, World Tourism Organization and Earth Council adopted Agenda 21 for tourism industry in 1995. Agenda 21 for travel and tourism industry defines the following 12 principles for tourism sustainable development:

1. Travel and tourism industry helps people to live a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature
2. Tourism should be involved in conservation, protection and restoration of world ecosystem
3. Travel and tourism industry should be based on sustainable forms of productivity and waste
4. Nations should cooperate in promoting free economy system in which travel and tourism industry operates in sustainable ways
5. Protectionism in travel and tourism industry should be stopped and reversed
6. Tourism, peace and environment protection depend on each other
7. In order to accomplish sustainable development, environment protection should be consisted as integral part of tourism development
8. Tourism development should be managed in a way to involve local population, where planning decisions should be agreed on local level
9. Nations should warn each other on threats that can affect tourists or tourist areas
10. Since employment of women is necessary, to achieve sustainable development, women employment must be possible
11. Tourism development should recognize and support identity, culture and interest of local community
12. International environmental laws should be supported by travel and tourism industry

There are many positive tendencies in tourism development, and two of them, most important for the environment, are:

1. Tourists have more ecological conscience
2. Discovering ecotourism as low-cost produce development

There are various definitions of ecotourism. International Ecotourism Society gave one of the first definitions of ecotourism in 1991: «Ecotourism is responsible trip to natural surrounding which saves the environment and keeps the pleasure of local community. In 1996, World Conservation Union defines ecotourism as trip which is responsible towards the environment and visit to relatively untouched parts of nature to enjoy it, as well as all complementary cultural objects from the past and present and promotes sustainability, which visitors have a low impact on it and provides useful and active social and economical involvement.

So, ecotourism is consisted of rural and cultural tourism elements. Tourists interested in ecotourism are usually more educated than average tourist. They are interesting in learning about flora and fauna in a non-polluted area, and in life of the local community that's living it that area at the same time. Their interests can be met by integration of activity of ecotourism subjects and cultural heritage tourism, forming a tourism product that could provide an overview of local tradition, art and local folklore, as well as natural surrounding. Tourists visiting national parks and forests have various possibilities for «tourist experience». Many of world's national parks have rivers and lakes, which provides an opportunity to form different tourist offers that include rafting, swimming, boat rides, fishing and birdwatching.

National parks in many countries attract a lot of visitors. In USA, every year, 285 million tourists visit national parks, and 340 million tourists visit national forests, which is a significant contribution to economical development of USA. There are over 300 000 employees whose profession is connected with tourism industry in national parks, and profit from tourism industry in these areas are over 14 billion dollars every year.