

Wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development

Opportunities and constraints



Colophon

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Coast of Dominican Republic, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland
Beach tourism in Dominican Republic, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland
Rafting water through rice fields Bali, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland
Unsustainable souvenirs and child labour, TUI Nederland

Introduction

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, in 2006 travel and tourism are expected to generate:

- **US\$ 6,477.2 billion in economic activity**
- **10.3% of total global GDP**
- **234,305,000 jobs or 8.7% of total employment worldwide**

Source: www.wttc.org

In the developing world millions of people rely to a great extent on wetlands for their livelihoods and food security. History and practice have shown that where wetlands are degrading poverty generally increases, increasing pressure on remaining wetland resources and leading to further wetland degradation and poverty. This vicious circle has to be broken. Poverty reduction and wetland conservation must go hand in hand because there is no other choice, either ethically or in practice¹. The development of tourism has increasingly been regarded as a possible solution to the reduction of poverty in wetland areas, but, as this brochure will show, there are constraints as well as opportunities.

Tourism needs wetlands. Tourists like to swim and bathe, canoe, dive or snorkel, watch birds and other wildlife, learn more about nature or just enjoy the scenery. Therefore coastal areas, lakes, rivers, mangroves and other wetland areas are an important resource for tourism. However, the relationship between tourism and wetlands is complex and sometimes adversarial. Tourism can impact wetlands: for example, by causing habitat loss, pollution, over-consumption of water, and visual or noise impacts. Under certain conditions, tourism can also be an innovative mechanism for funding nature conservation and poverty reduction in wetland

areas, therefore wetlands might also need tourism. Tourism may serve as an opportunity to generate additional funds for nature conservation and an opportunity for communities to develop sustainable economic strategies.

Finding a balance between wetland conservation and sustainable tourism development is often challenging because tourism can generate additional environmental and social problems for the very regions it needs to protect.

In this brochure the relationship between tourism and wetlands is described, and the disadvantages as well as the opportunities that tourism might offer for nature conservation and poverty alleviation are considered. Second, some common constraints are outlined, and, third, the roles that the main stakeholders can play in pro-poor sustainable tourism development are discussed. Some of the key lessons learned are described in greater detail (see boxes). To conclude, some useful internet resources for further reading are presented. The brochure thus aims to strengthen understanding

What is the purpose of this brochure?

This brochure discusses the complex relations between wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development.

It targets the middle management of governmental, non-governmental and private organisations who are working towards pro-poor sustainable tourism development in wetlands.

The brochure sets out the key opportunities and constraints involved in combining wise use and conservation of wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development.

of the dynamic relations between wetland conservation, poverty reduction and tourism development.

This brochure has been developed through cooperation between Wetlands International, the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL), the Dutch development organisation Cordaid, the travel organisation TUI Nederland, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and the Tourism & Environment Group of Wageningen University and Research Centre. Together with many others, these organisations support the wise use and conservation of wetlands and the alleviation of poverty, through – among other means – the development of tourism. They execute projects, carry out research and work with a wide range of networks and stakeholders to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the integration of wetland management, poverty reduction strategies and tourism.

Over the next few years, Wetlands International will undertake a range of integrated activities within its Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project. These activities are organised into four thematic areas: policy and partnership, demonstration projects, capacity building and awareness, and outreach. Tourism will play an increasing role in these activities. This brochure is the first step in creating awareness of the link between wetlands, poverty reduction and tourism, and aims to act as catalyst for the development of other activities in the near future.

1. See for example R.J. Fisher, S. Maginnis, W.J. Jackson, E. Barrow and S. Jeanrenaud (2005), *Poverty and conservation: Landscapes, People and Power*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

Wetlands, poverty and tourism

Wetlands are valuable ecosystems that occupy about 6% of the world's surface. They provide numerous goods and services, not only to the local people living around them but also to communities living outside wetland areas.

Many wetlands are prime locations for tourism. Like most coastal zones, not all wetlands are protected, although some of the finest are designated as National Parks, World Heritage Sites and Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites). Wetlands indirectly provide important services for tourism. They provide resources for tourists, such as food and water, and raw materials for

building tourism infrastructure, and they regulate ecological processes that contribute to a healthy environment such as climate regulation and water purification.

Wetlands are also an important tourist attraction in their own right. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands divides wetlands into three main habitat categories: (1) marine/coastal wetlands such as beaches, estuaries, lagoons, mangroves and coral reefs; (2) inland wetlands such as lakes, rivers, peatland, marshes, streams, creeks and waterfalls; and (3) man-made wetlands such as rice fields, canals and ponds. Wetlands in all three

categories are an important resource for tourism and recreation and provide opportunities for sunbathing and swimming, boating and canoeing, diving and snorkelling, sport fishing and hunting, photography, wildlife viewing and birdwatching, education and simply enjoying the landscape.

Historically, wetlands and tourism have been closely related. For example, for centuries tourists have frequented the Mediterranean coast. Today millions of people flock to this region every year, with the number likely to reach between 235 million and 355 million people by 2025, roughly doubling 1990 levels.

The Florida Keys wetland area in the United States generates at least US\$ 800 million in annual income from tourism. Tourism is the largest commercial activity in the Great Barrier Reef region in Australia. The marine tourism industry is a major contributor to both the local and national economies. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park records on average 1.8 million visitor-days per year.

In many of these more traditional destinations tourism has developed in wetland areas, in particular, but has sometimes depleted the very resources it depends on. Box 1 illustrates how tourism in the Mediterranean has impinged on wetlands. This should act as a warning for managers of wetland areas where tourism development has only recently begun.

Unlike in Europe and the United States, where tourism started in the early 1900s, in other parts of the world and, especially, in developing countries tourism has expanded relatively recently. In these countries, tourism is increasingly recognized by governments as an opportunity for economic growth, and also as an instrument for poverty reduction. According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)³, tourism is a principal

Box 1. How tourism is damaging Mediterranean wetlands

A recent WWF report² claims that tourism is destroying valuable wetlands and threatening water supplies in the Mediterranean. France, Greece, Italy and Spain have already lost half of their original wetland areas. The report points out that tourists and tourism facilities in the region use up to 850 litres of water per person per day during the summer – almost four times the daily water consumption of an average Spanish city dweller. However, installing simple, cheap devices such as water-saving taps and toilets could reduce water consumption by up to 50%. Furthermore, poor water treatment systems are failing to cope with the increasing demands of tourism, causing untreated water to contaminate the sea and rivers, threatening fish and waterbirds. According to Holger Schmid, of WWF's Mediterranean Freshwater Programme: "The tourism industry's growing demand for water-guzzling facilities and services, such as water parks, golf courses and landscaping, is destroying the very resource it depends on".

Coast of Dominican Republic, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland

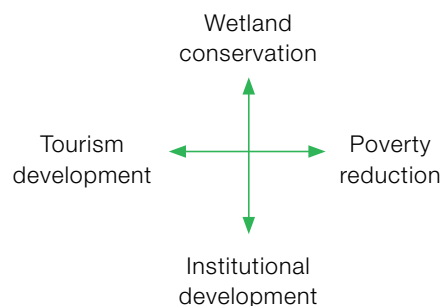


export for 83% of developing countries. Developing countries reported almost 300 million international arrivals in 2000, an increase of 95% since 1995. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) hosted around 5 million tourists, an increase of nearly 75% in one decade. Eighty per cent of the world's poor (those whose income is less than US\$ 1 a day) live in just 12 developing countries and LDCs. In 11 of these countries, tourism is significant and growing: developing countries are attracting an increasing share of the international tourism market, from 21% in 1973 to 42% in 2000. Domestic tourism is a significant and rapidly growing market; LDCs secured a 45% growth in income per international arrival between 1990 and 2000. In 2000 tourism ranked third among the major merchandise export sectors for both developing countries and LDCs. If petroleum industry exports are excluded (they are significant in only three LDCs) tourism is the primary source of foreign exchange in the 49 LDCs. Tourism is a fact of life, therefore, for many of the world's poor.

Tourism has certain characteristics that suggest that in some circumstances it may be particularly valuable for pro-poor development⁴:

- tourism is more diverse than many other industries, increasing the scope for wide participation;
- tourism is consumed at the point of production, providing opportunities for economic linkages;
- tourism is highly dependent on natural capital (flora and fauna, scenery) and culture, assets that most of the poorest countries and wetlands areas have;
- tourism can be more labour intensive than manufacturing, and usually provides a wide range of employment opportunities;
- compared to other modern industries, tourism employs more women and young people. It also creates opportunities for many small-scale entrepreneurs.

In many developing countries poverty itself is one of the drivers of wetland degradation. And although tourism activities often occur in locations where poor people live, opportunities for them to benefit from tourism regularly remain untapped. Decision makers often do not understand the opportunities and constraints of pro-poor sustainable tourism development in wetlands. This brochure explores some of the ways to optimise the positive impact of tourism on the wise use and conservation of wetlands and poverty reduction. It focuses on those countries and regions in the world where poverty is widespread, and aims to contribute to the understanding of the complex relationships between:



2. L. De Stefano (2004), *Freshwater and Tourism in the Mediterranean*. Rome: WWF-Mediterranean Programme.
3. See, e.g., UN World Tourism Organization (2004), *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation. Recommendations for Action*. Madrid: UNWTO.
4. C. Ashley, D. Roe and H. Goodwin (2001), *Pro-poor tourism strategies: making tourism work for the poor*, London: Overseas Development Institute, International Institute for Environment and Development, and Centre for Responsible Tourism. See also: UN World Tourism Organisation (2004), *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation. Recommendations for Action*. Madrid: UNWTO.

Box 2. Pro-poor sustainable tourism development

In the last 15 years there have been many debates about how to make tourism more sustainable. Terms such as sustainable tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism and responsible tourism have been used to describe the various strategies employed to strengthen the contribution of tourism to sustainable development. This brochure puts the poor, poverty and the wise use and conservation of wetlands at the centre of the debate. It suggests ways in which tourism could be developed in wetland areas in such a way that it generates net benefits for the poor. These benefits may be economic, and they may also be social, environmental or cultural. In order to generate these benefits, governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, community organisations and the poor themselves all have critical and very different roles to play. Pro-poor sustainable tourism development in wetlands presupposes sound policies, strong partnerships and the active participation of all those involved.

Beach tourism in Dominican Republic, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland



Tourism and wetland conservation: the downside

Tourism very much represents a double-edged sword for the socio-environmental movement, in that it is an activity which is both reviled and revered. It has become a focus of criticism, as a result of its impacts, and promotion, as a means of achieving sustainable development

Mowforth and Munt (2003: 141)

Wetlands fulfil a variety of ecological functions in the life cycles of numerous plants and animals, usually on a local scale, but often on a regional or even global scale. For example, wetlands may function as a summer range, migration stopover, wintering area and/or breeding site for migratory waterbirds such as geese, terns and waders. The birds' migration routes may cover thousands of kilometres, and this emphasizes the need for the conservation and wise use of wetlands – whether protected areas or not – along the route⁵. Their long migrations and tendency to concentrate in large numbers in certain wetlands make

waterbirds both visible and attractive. They are important indicators of the ecological condition and productivity of wetland ecosystems, and their presence is widely valued by numerous stakeholders, including local people, tourists and associated enterprises. Waterbirds and other wetland species offer many opportunities for the sustainable use of wetlands, particularly through nature-based tourism. Unfortunately, all too often the principles of wise use of wetlands have not been well implemented.

Tourism can also seriously impact the very resource it depends on. In terms of biodiversity these impacts can affect the ecological balance of ecosystems and consequently their species diversity.

The impacts of tourism on the ecological values of wetlands derive from tourism-related transport and infrastructure; the construction, maintenance and use of tourist accommodation and facilities; and the presence and activities of tourists in wetland areas. These impacts may be both direct and indirect; may vary from global warming and climate

change to local effects such as trampling or pollution of ground water; and may be short-term or long lasting.

Some of the major environmental risks related to tourism are⁷:

- The construction of tourism facilities, such as hotels, lodges, restaurants, visitor centres or campsites and related infrastructure, as well as the associated problems of water and soil pollution, can seriously impact biodiversity in wetland areas. Concentrated use of areas around facilities may have a negative effect on both vegetation and fauna. Tourism facilities and their use require resources for tourists, such as food and water, and raw materials for building tourism infrastructure, which may be extracted from wetlands.
- Transportation by plane, ship or car causes pollution from carbon emissions, thus contributing to global climate change, which may severely impact biodiversity⁸, for example, by bleaching coral reefs. Climate change is also a threat to many of the poor, whose land use and water resources may be jeopardised by increasing droughts or floods. Transportation may also have direct negative effects on the environment (e.g. removal of vegetation, disturbance to animals, release of oil and fuel from ships and other craft). Marine mammals may be injured or killed by impacts with boats.
- Visitors may disturb wildlife, including species that are not attractive to visitors, by making noise or harassing animals. And the impact may last beyond the initial contact period. Hunters or fishers may change population dynamics or may demand the introduction of foreign species and increased populations of target animals. As explained in Box 4, the sale of souvenirs made from endangered species is also destroying the beautiful natural environment that the tourists come to enjoy.

Box 3. Coral reefs

Coral reefs illustrate the complex and sometime adverse relationship between tourism and wetlands. Countries with coral reefs attract millions of divers every year. Globally, tourism is estimated to provide almost US\$ 10 billion in annual net benefits – almost twice as much as fisheries – and much more than this amount in tourist spending. However, the revenue derived from coral-reef tourism is being threatened by the deterioration of the reefs, often caused by the increase in tourism. Direct damage caused by tourists and indirect impacts caused by unregulated construction and irresponsible operation of tourism facilities pose a threat to reefs and the income that reefs provide to the local population⁹.

Dividing near Bonaire,
TUI Nederland



However, tourism may not only impact the ecological resource base on which it depends. The introduction of tourism could generate both socio-economic and cultural transformations, discussion of which goes far beyond the scope of this brochure. In short, however: on the one hand tourism has the potential to contribute to regional socio-economic development. Policy makers have frequently shown great optimism about the favourable impacts of tourism on the balance of payments, employment and income, as well as on entrepreneurial activities. However, these economic benefits are often accompanied by a variety of costs, including high inflation and land speculation in tourist destinations, low returns on investment because of seasonal fluctuations in demand, and overdependence on tourism. Tourism does not always bring socio-cultural benefits to host areas. It may equally well lead to the exacerbation of existing problems and the creation of new ones, often related to inequalities in access to resources, uneven distribution of benefits and the perception of loss of control and ownership over developments¹⁰.

In order to address these drawbacks and ensure the wise and sustainable use of wetlands, careful planning and management are required that take into consideration not only environmental impacts but also the related economic and social consequences of tourism development in wetlands. For example, environmental impacts can also induce additional financial and economic costs related to prevention, protection and habitat restoration. In addition, there may be significant conflicts related to inequitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of wetlands by tourism. Similarly, tourism in wetland areas can have social costs, for example, decreased quality of life or disturbance to daily community activities. Obviously, decision making at the local level on

Box 4. Souvenirs⁹

Many people list natural beauty and wildlife as a main reason for visiting a destination. And yet by buying just one shell or piece of coral they are contributing to the destruction of the resource on which tourism depends. Each year, customs inspectors seize tens of thousands of tourist souvenirs made from endangered species, which are protected by the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES has been signed by more than 165 countries, and regulates trade in about 5,000 species of animals and 25,000 species of plants.

Unfortunately, souvenirs made from endangered species are often sold openly in holiday resorts, and it may be hard for tourists to imagine that they are doing any harm. In serious cases, however, tourists returning home with such products in their baggage are risking hefty fines.

Items derived from endangered species that are commonly on sale are tortoiseshell, reptile skins, coral and seashells. It is illegal to export and import many of these products, while others may require complicated permits.

Unsustainable souvenirs and child labour, TUI Nederland



developing tourism in wetland areas is part of a much larger and more complex process in which stakeholders with often-competing interests need to work together to find common solutions and bridge their differences.

5. See United Nations Environment Programme – African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, www.unep-aewa.org
6. CEEC (2003), The Economics of Worldwide Coral Reef Degradation, Zeist: WWF-Netherlands.
7. See, e.g., P.F.J. Eagles, S. F. McCool and Chr. D. Haynes (2002), Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Guidelines

for Planning and Management. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 8. Cambridge: IUCN – The World Conservation Union.

8. See United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre
<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/climate>

9. See, e.g., <http://www.responsibletravel.com/>;
<http://www.ifaw.org>; <http://www.panda.org/>; <http://www.cites.org/>

10. For an extensive discussion on cost and benefits of tourism, see, e.g., G. Wall and A. Mathieson (2006), Tourism, Change and Opportunities, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, and M. Mowforth and I. Munt (2003), Tourism and Sustainability. Development and New Tourism in the Third World. London: Routledge.



Box 5. Case study: Kuala Gula Wetlands in Malaysia

A case study of Kuala Gula Wetlands, located in the northernmost region of Larut-Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve in Malaysia, illustrates how wetland conservation and tourism can go hand in hand. Between 2003 and 2005, Wetlands International implemented a community-based tourism project in order to provide alternative incomes for the local communities, thus reducing the pressure on fisheries and mangrove resources. Through the project, two formal, community-based organisations were created; their members were trained to carry out tourism activities at the site. As a result of this work, the local community and local government agencies were made more aware of the importance and values of the Kuala Gula wetlands to local livelihoods and the local economy. The local community enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the conservation and management of the Kuala Gula wetlands.

The local communities understood the importance of maintaining a cleaner environment in Kuala Gula to improve their health and as a pre-requisite for enhancing the ecotourism and business potential of the area. A system of household rubbish collection, paid for by users, was initiated, and this brought about a clear improvement in cleanliness. About 80% of the community was willing to pay the minimal cost of € 1.30 per month per household. A community survey conducted in 2006 showed that more than 80% of the participants agreed that rubbish collection had improved, as had the condition of the mangroves. Many villagers also agreed that the number of waterbirds had increased.

The villagers found the training programme useful for the local community. About a quarter of the villagers interviewed agreed that extra income was generated through tourism

activities, however the villagers thought that the activities should be diversified.

The number of tour groups to the Kuala Gula wetlands has increased recently as a newly completed bridge at Kuala Kurau has improved access to the site. An estimated 500–1,000 tourists a month use chalet facilities at the site and about three busloads of tourists a month use community facilities. The increased number of tourists to Kuala Gula has resulted in income generation for those involved as chalet and boat operators and nature guides, as well as seafood restaurant and grocery shop owners. However, local people reported that most of the tour groups were arranged by agencies, and that the tours had insufficient emphasis on the values of nature, particularly of mangroves. The tour agencies failed to convey the conservation message.

Wetlands International - Malaysia

How tourism can benefit conservation

Many wetlands are prime locations for tourism. Consequently, tourism has been and is able to contribute to a growing awareness of the value of nature in general and wetlands in particular. In this way tourism can create public support for the conservation of wetlands.

The development of tourism can also be a way to make wetlands economically viable, and can provide employment and income for local people. Moreover, some wetland sites have been able to raise considerable funds directly from tourism (see also Box 11). Some of the mechanisms used to raise such funds are discussed below.

Rafting water
through rice fields
Bali, Elise Allart-
TUI Nederland



Tourism is growing rapidly, and the regions that are facing the greatest growth are in developing countries with high levels of biodiversity. Unfortunately, many conservation organizations have inadequate funds to respond properly to the demands of tourism and wetland conservation. Clearly, wetlands provide society with a range of essential services, and these services should be recognised by some form of public financing. However, as this is not always possible managers need to be inventive in raising funds, and tourism is a promising source of such revenue.

The main methods used by protected areas to raise funds for nature conservation are¹¹:

- **Entrance fees:** fees charged per person or per vehicle, or a combination of both, for entrance and access to wetland areas;
- **User fees:** fees charged to visitors for undertaking specific recreational activities or for the use of specialised facilities within wetland areas, subject to compliance with the area's regulations (e.g. for parking, camping, fishing, hunting, boating, diving, sports, photography etc.);
- **Concessions and leases:** contracts between managers of wetland areas and business or individuals under which the businesses or individuals are permitted to operate within the wetland area;
- **Direct operation of commercial activities:** provision of commercial goods and services (such as accommodation, guiding, specialised rental equipment, food sales or merchandising of clothing, crafts and souvenirs, for example);
- **Taxes:** levies on certain goods, services or transactions that provide funds for national or local governments, and that, in this case, are used to support the conservation of wetland areas;
- **Volunteers and donations:** volunteers are persons who offer their services to a wetland



Rafting through rice fields Bali, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland

area of their own free will and without payment (except, in some cases, to cover their basic living expenses); donations are gifts or money, or in some cases goods and services, that are donated to support the conservation of wetland areas.

Clearly, as wetland areas rely increasingly on income from tourism to pay for conservation initiatives, local communities often have to compete with conservation projects for revenues. The challenge is to direct a substantial proportion of the income earned through these means to community/local poverty reduction projects. Conservation could do more to address poverty reduction, as poverty alleviation also can lead to improved conservation outcomes. When commercial operations are being developed, local people living within or around the areas should be involved, in order to bring jobs and income to the community.

Box 6. Cross-product marketing and image sale

Destination branding may be another interesting mechanism for bridging the gap between tourism, wetland conservation and poverty alleviation. Wetlands might represent a valuable 'intellectual property', as an image with which corporations wish to be associated. A few protected areas earn substantial income from the sale of licenses to use their names and images. Cross-product marketing is a very popular business practice, but it is rare in protected areas. As an example of cross-product marketing, a conservation organisation could develop an emblem, which is licensed for use on a range of clothing, products, equipment and accessories, in return for a royalty¹³. Importantly, this branding can also benefit the poor by promoting local products and increasing linkages between tourism and the local economy. A range of local products – such as food or souvenirs – could be sold under a defined brand with clear quality criteria and market recognition.

Aguajales, Peru, W. Guzmán / Tiger prawn, Marcel Silvius-WI / Iguana on Bonaire, TUI Nederland



Furthermore, there is a need to be realistic about the potential to raise funds from tourism. At many wetland sites stakeholders tend to overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs of tourism: in part this is because they often fail to establish proper management plans and to understand the business realities of tourism. Moreover, all wetland areas should also seek a diversity of funding sources in order to mitigate the risks associated with excessive dependence on any one source. The generation of income from tourism provides one source of funds for site management, but this may be volatile as visitor numbers change, and income from visitors must be balanced against the costs of tourism management.

A recent WWF report¹² concludes that whatever type of organizational arrangement is in operation to manage a protected area, several conditions

need to be met if managers are to be effective at drawing in the funds that they require. These include, in particular:

- The establishment and implementation of *clear goals for the management* of the protected area that are understood and broadly accepted by all relevant local, national and international stakeholders, from local communities to intergovernmental bodies;
- *Transparency and accountability* in the management and use of the funds;
- *The capacity to use funds* to manage the protected area effectively, including the retention of suitably trained and competent staff, and sound expenditure on necessary equipment and infrastructure;
- *The maintenance of good relations with key stakeholders*, especially local communities, the private sector, and local and national governments.

11. See X. Font, J. Cochrane and R. Tapper (2004), *Tourism for Protected Area Financing: Understanding Tourism Revenues for effective management plans*, Leeds, UK: Leeds Metropolitan University. See also B. Spergel (2001), *Raising Revenues for Protected Areas. A menu of options*. Washington D.C: Centre for Conservation Finance, WWF Washington, and P.A. Verwey and M. de Man (2005), *We cannot afford more biodiversity loss: the urgency of protected area financing*. Amsterdam: Greenpeace International, www.greenpeace.org.

12. X. Font, J. Cochrane and R. Tapper (2004), *Tourism for Protected Area Financing: Understanding Tourism Revenues for effective management plans*, Leeds, UK: Leeds Metropolitan University.

13. See, e.g., P.F.J. Eagles, S. F. McCool and Chr. D. Haynes (2002), *Sustainable Tourism in protected Areas. Guidelines for Planning and Management*. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), *Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 8*. Cambridge: IUCN – The World Conservation Union.

Tourism and poverty alleviation

As many poor depend for their survival and income on goods and services provided by wetlands, wetland degradation threatens their livelihoods and they have nothing to fall back on. This leads to increased poverty as well as over-exploitation of wetlands, and turns poverty into a cause of wetland degradation. This vicious circle needs to be broken. Tourism is often seen as a wedge, but, as shown above, it has opportunities as well as constraints.

So the question is not only how tourism could benefit nature conservation, but – more importantly – how tourism could benefit nature conservation and poverty alleviation. In the last few years the latter question has become a matter of greater concern.

In order to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals, international organisations have increasingly developed pro-poor tourism strategies. For example, in 2002 UNWTO started its Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (STEP) programme. Worldwide, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation now has over 45 tourism advisors in around 25 countries working on poverty reduction through sustainable tourism development. German, Swedish and Austrian development organisations also support sustainable tourism development. The UK-based Overseas Development Institute (ODI), in close cooperation with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Centre for Responsible Tourism, has begun a pro-poor tourism partnership. You can now learn from their experiences.

Pro-poor tourism is tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. The benefits may be economic and environmental as well as social or cultural. Pro-poor tourism should not be considered as a specific product or sector of



Masai selling handicrafts to tourists, Marcel Silvius-WI

tourism, but an overall approach. Strategies for making tourism pro-poor focus specifically on unlocking opportunities for the poor within tourism. The focus and scale of pro-poor tourism initiatives vary enormously: from including tourism in national poverty reduction strategies to organising small-scale community-based tourism projects; from forming connections between (international) tourism companies and the poor to capacity building and providing training and technical assistance. There are many ways forward.

Seven ways in which the poor can benefit from tourism

According to the UNWTO¹⁴ there are at least seven ways in which the poor can benefit from tourism economically:

- *Employment*: measures can be taken to increase the level of employment of poor people within all kinds of tourism enterprises (hotels, resorts,

transport companies, attractions and tourism services);

- *Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises*: measures can be taken to maximise the proportion of visitor spending that is retained in the local community and to engage the poor in the supply chain process in order to increase the economic benefit to them;
- *Direct sales of goods and services to tourists*: measures can be taken to ensure that the poor earn more income by selling products and services direct to tourists; for example, by running food and fruit stalls, making handicrafts, or by providing guiding services, transport such as taxis and boats, and accommodation;
- *Establishing and running a tourism enterprise*: measures can be taken to stimulate that local people can run tourism businesses at individual or community level;
- *Tax or levy tourism income whose proceeds benefit the poor*. Revenues earned by national and local governments, including general income, business and development taxes, as well as more specific tourism-related charges such as airport taxes, bed taxes and visa fees, can be used for poverty alleviation;
- *Voluntary giving and support*: measures can be taken to increase voluntary support for poor communities by visitors or tourism enterprises;
- *Investment in infrastructure*: tourism development can require investment in new infrastructure, including roads, water and energy supply, sanitation and communications. With careful planning this may also bring net positive benefits to the poor in the locality.

14. See: UN World Tourism Organisation (2004), *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation. Recommendations for Action*. Madrid: UNWTO.

Addressing some common constraints

A traditional approach to increase economic benefits from tourism has been to attract more visitors (in particular international arrivals), to focus on community-based tourism projects and to develop tourism in isolation from other economic sectors in the destination region. This brochure

advocates an approach that focuses on existing flows of tourism, preferably domestic; on private sector development or – alternatively – community-based developments that team up with the private sector; and on the creation of intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral linkages.

International or domestic tourism?

In many countries, such as China, Brazil or India, domestic tourism outweighs international tourism. Unlike domestic tourism, international tourism, although still growing at a global average of 4.5 % a year, is highly volatile and extremely susceptible to events that are difficult to control. International political crises, natural disasters or diseases can seriously affect the magnitude and direction of international flows of tourism. Moreover, long-haul tourism using aeroplanes has a serious impact on the environment and contributes significantly to global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer.

In spite of this, many countries formulate policies aimed exclusively at an increase in international tourism. However, pro-poor tourism works best when it is not fully dependent on international flows of tourism in the destination region and effective networks can be developed between the poor and mainstream tourism elements, and when it targets existing, or promotes the development of domestic, tourism.

Community-based or private sector development?

Pro-poor tourism development goes well beyond community-based tourism. It requires mechanisms to unlock opportunities for the poor at all levels and scales of operation, and community-based initiatives are only one useful component of pro-poor sustainable tourism development. The reconciliation of tourism with wetland conservation and poverty alleviation involves more than just a community focus.

Nevertheless, there have been numerous community-based tourism projects in the last two decades, and obviously there have been many successes, some large, some small. But there also



SCORE Uganda

Box 7. Case study: Mabamba-Busi Islands in Uganda

IUCN NL recently supported a successful project in Uganda, run by an NGO and a private travel agency, which benefits local communities. 'Sustaining Community Resources and Experiences in Uganda' (SCORE) and Shoebill Safaris jointly organise bird watching tours. Visitors are attracted by the Shoebill – one of the most endangered bird species

in Uganda. Increased community awareness of nature conservation and financial and non-financial benefits derived from the project have considerably decreased hunting in and burning of the wetlands. The illegal capture of Shoebills has also declined. A community association controls the costs and benefits of tourism-related activities. Whereas SCORE

focuses on the conservation and poverty-alleviation aspects of the project, Shoebill Safaris organizes, promotes and sells the birdwatching tours. The project also tries to stimulate small-scale entrepreneurial projects by local people – building restaurants, for example – in order to upgrade the tourism facilities¹⁵.

have been many failures.

Community-based tourism strategies to create net benefits for the poor have faced many obstacles to economic participation, including lack of skills and organisation, low understanding of tourism, poor product quality and limited market access. Such strategies have often been developed in a supply-oriented way. Too many community-based initiatives rely on building tourist lodges, which are capital intensive and need considerable maintenance. Emphasis has been placed on the attractions (and needs) in the destination area, while market opportunities have been considered only in the later stages, or not at all. This has resulted in the development of non-viable tourism products and a lack of exposure to the market for potentially interesting products.

If pro-poor sustainable tourism projects are to be commercially successful, they need to succeed in competitive tourism markets. Establishing effective contacts with the private sector, including travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers, is probably the best way to help ensure that initiatives are commercially successful. The provision of micro-credit and assistance in the development and distribution of products may also help.

Creating linkages

To many developing countries the increase of indirect or induced economic impacts and thus the reduction of leakages, should obviously be a priority. The aim of creating linkages is to reduce the high import content in the tourism sector, and this could be achieved by substituting foreign imports with local supplies.

Pro-poor tourism could be promoted by increasing backward linkages. Intra-sectoral linkages focus on how the established tourism sector could link up with the local tourism sector (e.g. local transport, adding local excursions into guest itineraries, production of local souvenirs or setting

up new in-house services like baby sitting). Inter-sectoral linkages (i.e. linkages between different sectors in an economy) are, however, crucial for stimulating the economy as a whole and avoiding the reliance on a mono-‘crop’ economy such as tourism¹⁶. Although the challenges in terms of volume, quality and reliability of delivery might be considerable, tourism–agriculture linkages, in particular, can significantly increase the contribution to local economic development. Box 8 describes the contribution of the Sandals Resort to the local economy in Jamaica.

15. See K. Olsder (2006), *Tourism and Biodiversity*, Amsterdam: IUCN NL.

16.D. Meyer (2006), *Caribbean tourism, local sourcing and enterprise development: review of the literature*, PPT Working paper no. 18. Sheffield, UK: Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Sheffield Hallam University.

Box 8. Creating linkages: Sandals on Jamaica

According to a presentation at the World Travel Market in London 2004 by GTZ Caribbean (part of the German Technical Cooperation organisation) and Sandals UK, a resort operator, mainstream tourism can have important pro-poor effects. Based on a research project carried out in the Caribbean (seven resorts), they argue that an increase in the social/environmental/cultural soundness of mass tourism has much more impact than the promotion of 100% sustainable – but niche – tourism. An example of best practice is the Sandals chain of resorts.

A Sandals 5-star resort creates on average 1.5–2 jobs per room (compared to the normal 5-star hotel average of 1 job per room). The minimum wage at Sandals is US\$ 450 per month compared to US\$ 100–250 per month for the other resorts researched, and the gross monthly wage (cash and in-kind contribution) for Sandals line staff ranges between US\$ 700 and US\$ 1,150.

The resorts studied buy an average of US\$ 1 million up to more than US\$ 2 million per year on the local and national markets. The only resorts in the study sample that were actively supporting local farmer groups to produce for their needs were those run by Sandals. Seventy farmer families can receive an income of US\$ 100 per month (and live above the poverty line) simply by supplying watermelon and cantaloupes to Sandals. Including support provided for training centres and higher education for staff members, Sandals has spent an average of US\$ 5 million per year (or more than US\$ 600 per employee per year) on training. Sandals' community outreach is also considerable: the chain supports more than 200 projects in local communities in the Caribbean.

Sandals Grande Antigua, Resort & Spa



From pro-poor tourism to pro-poor sustainable tourism

As poverty is one of the drivers of wetland degradation, pro-poor tourism can be an important instrument for both poverty alleviation and wetland conservation. Clearly, however, addressing the needs of the poor and at the same time ensuring that tourism does not erode the environmental, and cultural, base on which it depends creates important challenges, and a careful analysis of a wide range of impacts with differential costs and benefits is needed (see, for example, Box 9.). The analysis should include the weighing up of a range of critical factors including the types of tourism to be developed, planning regulations, land tenure, market contexts and access to capital and training. Pro-poor approaches also necessitate partnerships and multi-stakeholder processes.

Partnerships for pro-poor sustainable tourism development

Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and the poor themselves all have important roles to play in pro-poor sustainable tourism development in wetland areas.

At the national level governments can do a great deal, for example by integrating pro-poor sustainable tourism into poverty-reduction strategies, tourism policies and small enterprise strategies. The private sector can be directly involved in projects – often community-based – run by non-governmental organisations and should be responsible for broadening intra- and inter-sectoral

linkages. The poor themselves are critical to pro-poor sustainable tourism development. They often need to organise themselves – for example, on a community level – in order to engage effectively in tourism. Non-governmental organisations are often an important catalyst and can bring stakeholders together. Indeed, in order to make pro-poor sustainable tourism work, stakeholders with often-competing interests need to work together to find common solutions and bridge their differences.

Some of the main stakeholder roles in pro-poor sustainable tourism are summarised below. The main recommendations of some of the international organisations concerned¹⁸ are:



Box 9. Case study: sea turtle conservation in Tortuguero, Costa Rica

The example of Tortuguero, Costa Rica, illustrates the difficulties related to balancing tourism, poverty alleviation and wetland conservation¹⁷.

The beaches of Tortuguero are visited every year by thousands of nesting sea turtles, and villagers traditionally harvested both turtles and eggs. However, the nesting turtles are now a tourist attraction: through tourism, live turtles are worth much more to the community than turtle meat and eggs ever were. With strong community-supported conservation in place, turtle

and tourism numbers have been climbing in tandem. Nesting turtle numbers increased over 400% between 1971 and 2003, while visitor numbers grew from 226 in 1980 to over 80,000 in 2004. Gross revenue from turtle tourism in Tortuguero in 2002 alone was estimated at over US\$ 6 million from board, lodging, transportation services, souvenir sales, and national park and guided tour fees.

As can be seen from the case of Tortuguero, the effects of tourism were not immediate and large-scale: it actually took several years

before the benefits from sea turtle tourism began to be realised. Moreover, although much of the benefit from the increased nature tourism is retained within the community, not all residents have had equal access to the new economic opportunities. A public water system is now available for the village and a waste-treatment plant has been built, but no sewage system exists. In addition, tourism has contributed to other problems such as increased solid waste and sewage production, prostitution and a rise in drug and alcohol abuse.

Tortuguero, Elise Allart-TUI Nederland / Tortoise, Peggy van Beek - IUCN NL

See also www.panda.org

Governments can:

- include tourism in strategies and action programmes on poverty reduction, and vice versa; for example, by integrating pro-poor sustainable tourism in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and by including poverty and nature conservation-related issues in tourism planning, infrastructure development, legislation and marketing;
- use planning controls, agreements and economic incentives for the private sector to promote pro-poor sustainable tourism;
- provide technical and financial assistance to small-scale and community-based tourism enterprises. Selective tax incentives, capacity-building programmes, small grants and micro-credit schemes, and assistance with market research and marketing, could support small-scale and community-based tourism enterprises to deliver benefits for the poor;
- introduce guidelines, indicators and certification schemes that encourage pro-poor sustainable tourism development.

Private companies can:

- adopt employment policies that provide opportunities for the poor;
- develop local supply chains that maximise the use of local suppliers, products and services;
- help boost understanding of the tourism industry among the poor, communities, governments and NGOs;
- establish partnerships with residents, communities and local projects that directly benefit the poor;
- adopt environmental management and certification schemes that minimise the impacts of tourism development on the environment;
- provide visitors with information about activities that can benefit the poor and encourage their support for local communities.



Safari on foot in St Lucia Wetland Park, Marcel Silvius - WI

Box 10. Case study: St. Lucia Wetlands¹⁹

The case of St. Lucia in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa illustrates how many stakeholders are involved in developing pro-poor sustainable tourism development. In St. Lucia, a Ramsar site and World Heritage Site, tourism has been identified as one of the main investment initiatives. The Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park aims to become an international model that combines nature conservation, alleviation of poverty, community participation,

black empowerment and tourism. A € 50 million investment should create 900 permanent and thousands of temporary jobs in KwaZulu Natal.

The wetland authority clearly promotes public–private partnerships and developed non-negotiable criteria reflecting issues of black empowerment and poverty alleviation during the bidding process for concessions. The wetland authority appointed an

evaluation panel consisting of representatives from the South African National Parks, Tourism KwaZulu Natal and its own board. The panel examined environmental and economic suitability, and focussed on equity participation, job creation and procurement, with a focus on the participation of local communities. A minimum financial return to the park also had to be guaranteed.

Non-governmental organisations can:

- act as catalysts and liaise between stakeholders;
- invest in training, capacity building and technical assistance for the poor to increase their understanding of the tourism industry and wetland conservation and develop skills to run small-scale and community-based enterprises;
- identify projects, good practices, products and

services that could be linked up with private tourism operators and tourists;

- develop processes that increase the voice of the poor at policy level and support campaigns that aim to enhance the pro-poor objectives of sustainable tourism development;
- help avoid unrealistic expectations amongst the poor.

International donors, development assistance agencies and nature conservation organisations can:

- promote pro-poor sustainable tourism within the international agenda, including the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) framework, with other governments and the tourism industry;
- support pro-poor sustainable tourism initiatives, both technically and financially;
- ensure that tourism consultants and experts are aware of pro-poor sustainable tourism issues, given their considerable influence in tourism planning at various levels;
- work together on assisting pro-poor sustainable

tourism development by sharing knowledge and information; collaborating on advisory materials; collecting, analysing and systematising experiences gained; and avoiding duplication.

Multi-stakeholder processes

Pro-poor sustainable tourism development has many stakeholders. Donors, governmental agencies, NGOs, private businesses and specific groups within communities have their own particular interests and values – indeed, their own ‘language’ and ‘culture’. Reconciling poverty reduction, nature conservation, NGOs and governments, the business interests of the private sector and tourist satisfaction is a

very difficult task. The significance of pro-poor sustainable tourism development differs according to the interests of those who are defining it, and the interests of the local community will not automatically correspond with those of others; nor is it likely that the interests of the local community will be the same for all within it.

There is a range of stakeholder involvement techniques and planning tools for sustainable tourism development in natural areas available to address potential conflicts of interest, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this brochure. However, the key to successful and effective planning of pro-poor sustainable tourism



Box 11. Case study: Bunaken National Park, Indonesia

The development and management of Bunaken National Park, in Indonesia, is an example of a multi-stakeholder process. The park was established in 1991 to protect its reefs and mangroves and their outstanding biodiversity. The Government of Indonesia established the multi-stakeholder Bunaken Management Advisory Board (BNPMAB). The 15 seats on the board were allocated to eight non-governmental and seven governmental organisations, including representatives from the local villages, park authority, Tourism and Fisheries Departments, local university and private tourism sector²¹. In 2004 the board expanded to 19 members,

to include new stakeholders. They have all played an active role in developing exclusive zones for diving, wood collection, fishing and other forms of utilization. In 2006 the Bunaken entrance fees for foreign visitors were Rp 50,000 (approximately US\$ 6) for a day ticket or Rp 150,000 (approximately US\$ 17) for a waterproof plastic entrance tag valid for a full calendar year. Tags (or tickets) must be carried whenever the guest is within park boundaries and can easily be affixed to diving or snorkelling gear or backpacks. The entrance fee system has been adapted from the well-known Bonaire Marine Park system. On Bonaire

the management organisation, Stichting Nationale Parken (STINAPA), recently introduced a fee system for visitors, including divers and boat owners, that generated an income of US\$ 500,000 in 2005. This income covers the costs of STINAPA’s basic management tasks (education, research, management and law enforcement). In Bunaken the system was successful in raising over US\$ 420,000 for conservation programmes during the period 2001–2004²². Bunaken Marine Park was voted global winner of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award in 2003.

Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort, Sulawesi

development in wetland areas is the integration of more technical aspects into the planning process (for example, resource and visitor management, product development and marketing) with public participation by all stakeholders. However, issues of power and politics within communities and between the communities and outsiders should still be taken into account.

Therefore multi-stakeholder processes that aim to be balanced, legitimate and open, should meet at least some of the following criteria²⁰:

- Stakeholders should be involved from the start, agree to the process and its agenda, and thus feel they have 'ownership' of the process;
- All key stakeholders should be represented, and participants should be mandated to represent their organisation or group;
- All stakeholders should have equal access to information, resources and expertise;
- There should be clarity on how decisions are made and what influence participants will have.

17. Based on WWF (2006), *Species and people: Linked Futures*. Gland: WWF International.

18. UN World Tourism Organisation (2004), *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation. Recommendations for Action*. Madrid: UNWTO, and D. Roe and P.U. Khanya (2001), *Pro-poor Tourism: Harnessing the World's Largest Industry for the World's Poor*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

19. Mail & Guardian Online, 11 May 2004. See: http://www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?area=mg_flat&articleid=79055

20. R. Sidaway (2005), *Resolving Environmental Disputes. From conflict to consensus*, London: Earthscan.

21. See, e.g., X. Font, J. Cochrane and R. Tapper (2004), *Tourism for Protected Area Financing: Understanding Tourism Revenues for effective management plans*, Leeds, UK: Leeds Metropolitan University.

22. See: <http://www.sulawesi-info.com/bunaken.php>

Tortuguero,
Elise Allart-
TUI Nederland



Conclusion

The complex relationship between wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development is evident. It is also clear that opportunities for tourism development should be approached with caution. Agencies and authorities that promote tourism in wetlands as part of their management plans need to be realistic about the potential to raise funds from tourism. Many site managers tend to overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs of tourism.

Pro-poor sustainable tourism development is relatively untried and untested; there is as yet no blueprint. Nevertheless, a review of projects and literature from around the world suggests that there are common lessons to be learned²³:

- Pro-poor sustainable tourism development should include a *diversity of actions*, from the macro to the micro level, including product development, planning, marketing, investment, zoning, environmental management, capacity building and training;
- *Location matters*: pro-poor sustainable tourism development works best where the wider destination is developing well and where effective networks and linkages can be developed between the poor and mainstream tourism activities;

- Ensuring *commercial viability* is a priority. Close attention should be paid to demand, product quality, marketing, investment in business skills and inclusion of the private sector;
- *Non-financial benefits* (health services, participation, education, conservation) are also important;
- Pro-poor sustainable tourism development has *many stakeholders*. Incorporation of donors, governmental agencies, NGOs, private businesses and - specific groups within - communities is an essential, but demanding and time-consuming task.
- *External funding* is required to cover the substantial costs of establishing partnerships, developing skills and revising policies, etc.
- Pro-poor sustainable tourism development is a *long-term investment*; there are no quick solutions. Expectations must be managed and short-term benefits developed;

- Before embarking on a new venture it should be determined whether a pro-poor sustainable tourism development is actually a viable development and conservation option. A *rapid appraisal* could suggest what, and under what conditions, tourism development in wetlands should be pursued. This would help to create awareness of the potential and risks linked to tourism²⁴.

Demonstration projects, research to capture experiences, sound policies and partnerships and – above all – long-term investment are all needed. With more results and experience gained from these activities, it might be possible to contribute to the Millennium Development goals by integrating sustainable wetland management into poverty reduction strategies, while seizing the opportunities presented by sustainable tourism development.

23. See www.propoortourism.org.uk

24. See, e.g., B. Steck (1999), Sustainable Tourism as a Development Option, Practical guide for local planners and decision makers. Eschborn: GTZ, and SNV (2001), SNV and sustainable tourism. Background Paper. The Hague: SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. <http://www.snvworld.org/cds/rgTUR/>



Left to right: Diver's boat at Bunaken / Diver, TUI Nederland / Selling juice aguajal at Iquitos, Perú, W. Guzmán / Buffet in Dominican Republic, TUI Nederland / Iguana on Bonaire, TUI Nederland

Useful Internet resources

www.propoortourism.org.uk

This website provides up-to-date information on Pro-Poor Tourism: tourism that results in increased net benefits for poor people. A range of research reports and studies can be downloaded that focus on how tourism's contribution to poverty reduction can be increased.

www.snvworld.org

Tourism is one of the practice areas of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. A reference guide on sustainable tourism, with many documents and background papers, can be found on <http://www.snvworld.org/cds/rgTUR/>.

www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/

UNEP has been appointed by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as the Interagency Coordinator or lead agency responsible for implementation of Agenda 21 issues on tourism. Together with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), UNEP is the main focal point on sustainable tourism for CSD and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

www.panda.org

WWF executes a number of projects all around the world in which tourism, poverty alleviation and nature conservation are linked. A number of key publications can be downloaded from this website.

www.ecotourism.org

This US-based group provides networking and operational guidelines for ecotourism operators and eco-lodges, as well as information services to researchers and conservationists.

www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/index.html

The National Geographic Centre for Sustainable Destinations provides information and resources for communities and professionals as well as travellers.

www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (WTO) works for the promotion and development of tourism. The site provides recent tourism statistics and includes a sustainable tourism section with definitions, information on relevant events and lists of WTO's activities and publications.

www.wttc.org

The World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTCC) represents the travel industry. Members are mainly larger companies. The site includes information on sustainable tourism and various WTTCC initiatives and services. Each year WTTCC undertakes in-depth research studies on selected countries. These Special Country Reports quantify all aspects of travel and tourism demand then translate this information into economic concepts of production, which can be compared with other industries and the economy as a whole to provide information that will assist in policy and business decision making.

www.ramsar.org

The Ramsar Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world. The website provides key documents as well as technical guidelines on wetland management.

Participants

This brochure has been developed through cooperation between Wetlands International, the Netherlands Committee for IUCN, the Ramsar Convention, the Dutch development organisation Cordaid, tour operator TUI Nederland and the Tourism & Environment Group of Wageningen University and Research Centre. Together with many others, these organisations support the wise use and conservation of wetlands and the alleviation of poverty through tourism development.



Wetlands International

Wetlands International is the only global NGO dedicated to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Wetlands International works globally, regionally and nationally to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands, to benefit biodiversity and human well-being. www.wetlands.org



Cordaid

Cordaid is a development organisation with a Catholic tradition. Cordaid worldwide supports the poor and people without rights and strives for social and economic justice. Cordaid supports these people and their organisations regardless their age, background, belief or political conviction. www.cordaid.nl



IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL)

The mission of IUCN – The World Conservation Union, is to promote nature conservation in a just world. The IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL) was founded in 1983 and is the platform of the Dutch members of IUCN, and the Dutch members of the six international IUCN commissions. It carries out several small grants programmes, including a Small Grants for Wetlands programme, as well as a programme on Biodiversity & Tourism. www.iucn.nl



Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation. The Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world. www.ramsar.org



TUI Nederland

With a turnover of €1.2 billion, TUI Nederland is the market leader in the Dutch tourism sector. Every year TUI Nederland takes more than 1 million guests (1.2 million in 2005) to destinations worldwide. The tour operators Arke, Holland International and KRAS are active under the umbrella of TUI Nederland, and it runs more than 220 travel agencies and the airline ArkeFly. TUI Nederland is the Dutch representative of World of TUI, the largest travel organization in Europe. www.tuinederland.nl



Tourism & Environment (TE) Group of Wageningen University and Research Centre

The TE Group is a community of experienced professionals and members of academic institutions who execute scientific and applied research, as well as education and training, to further sustainable tourism development worldwide. The TE Group combines expertise from three different organisations: the international non-governmental organisation, World Leisure, through its International Centre of Excellence (WICE), the Alterra Institute and the Socio-Spatial Analysis Group, both of Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR). www.sal.wur.nl/uk

Mission:

To sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations.

For further information please visit our website or contact our office.

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