



**United Nations Environment Programme
World Conservation Monitoring Centre**



**IUCN WCPA Tourism and Protected
Areas Specialist Group**

FINAL

Planning for the development of tools for the valuation, mapping and monitoring of tourism in parks and protected areas

The project is to take initial steps toward the development of tools to map and measure and monitor trends in visitation in national parks and protected areas, linking to the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas and activities related to the follow up of the TEEB. Information derived from this work would be available to national tourism operators and for local, regional and global decision-making.

Background

Tourism is amongst the world's largest industries and nature-based tourism (primarily to protected areas) is widely considered to be a growing segment of the market.

Likewise, tourism represents a significant economic benefit from protected areas, and as one of many 'ecosystem services' provided to society by protected areas, tourism demonstrates the value of conserving and sustainably managing protected areas and the biodiversity they contain.

It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that no reliable, consistent and comparable data exist on the magnitude and value of protected area tourism globally. This means that we do not know how many tourists are visiting protected areas, how long they stay, what they do when they are there, how they benefit from the experiences, or what contribution their expenditure makes towards protected area budgets.

Such data would provide valuable insights into the growth and distribution of PA tourism across the diverse network of PAs that cover an increasing proportion of the globe. It would also assist in monitoring the flow of ecosystem services from protected areas - an important requirement of the new Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) strategic plan¹, which includes globally agreed targets on, amongst other things, restoring, conserving and effectively managing areas that provide important ecosystem services. It is also likely that it would provide evidence and rationale for investment in protected area management, for the expansion of marine and terrestrial protected areas, and for tourism in protected areas.

Some attempts to draw together data and develop models of PA tourism growth have been undertaken (Balmford et al., 2009) and to correlate global biodiversity distribution with tourism visitation (Christ et al., 2003), and many case studies exist for individual PAs and national networks. There are however many challenges to providing a more comprehensive picture, including the disparate nature of protected area tourism statistics, which are collected in many

¹ COP 10 Decision X/2. <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268>

different ways if they are collected at all, and the difficulties in amassing a large enough dataset and keeping figures updated year on year. Equally, estimating tourism's economic value in a consistent and comparable way with differing data sources is difficult.

Recent development of the Protected Planet initiative, (<http://protectedplanet.net/>) offers a potentially effective portal for data capture. This allows people working in protected areas across the world to remotely volunteer their tourism data to an online wiki system, without the need for costly field visits.

Needs

This project would address needs at the local, regional and global level by providing reliable baseline information for decision-making. The CBD Guidelines on Sustainable Tourism² recognises the value of tourism to help support the long-term conservation of biodiversity. The first of the ten guidelines in the document directed at national governments is to "Gather baseline information".

Local tourism operators need the information that could be generated by this project to better understand the local market at the level of individual parks and also to compare that with the regional market. While some more developed countries do monitor eco-tourism at the national level, poorer countries often do not. This project would provide the outputs of the data collection to countries for their own internal decision-making. At the global level, ecotourism as an ecosystem service is well recognized, but unfortunately there are no good metrics, beyond case studies.

Accurate data and knowledge is necessary to underpin strong policy frameworks. This is one of main objectives of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism that UNEP provides Secretariat services for.

Aims and objectives

The overall scope of this project is to gather global statistics on the financial and economic contribution of national parks and protected areas to national, regional and global economies. The scope of the *current proposal* however is limited to funding an expert workshop that would convene to plan the full scope of this work and to deliver a scoping study that would inform the workshop.

Outputs for this phase

1. Protected Areas and tourism expert workshop

In order to progress, and to develop a simple approach that can overcome inconsistencies and data gaps whilst drawing on the latest advances in modelling, mapping and economic valuation, UNEP-WCMC and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group propose convening a small, focused working group for a 2-day meeting to review existing evidence, develop a methodological approach, and identify potential sources of support for a global protected area tourism visitation and valuation initiative.

The proposed meeting would take place in April /May 2011 somewhere appropriate in Europe, possibly in the margins of a relevant larger event to reduce un-necessary travel. These may

² Biological Diversity and Tourism: Development of Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism in Vulnerable Ecosystems. 2002. Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Quebec Canada

include the Global Sustainable Tourism Council board meeting in Madrid hosted by UNWTO, or the IUCN WCPA Steering Committee Meeting in Geneva in April.

The meeting would involve no more than 15-20 participants, including representatives from UNEP-WCMC and IUCN WCPA-TAPAS, and interested specialists in PA tourism management, tourism economic valuation, statistical analyses and spatial mapping/modelling, as well as tourism industry representation such as WTTC or UNWTO, relevant staff of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, at least one representative from a national parks agency familiar with ecotourism in their country and potential donors.

The output of the meeting would be a detailed plan/methodology for the initiative, and a proposal for funding support.

2. Feasibility study

The meeting would be preceded by a brief feasibility study to review previous approaches and existing data in some sample sites.

Suggested outputs for long-term project

1. Protected areas and tourism data and information management tool (needs a snappier name!)

This component would allow data on individual parks and protected areas to be directly contributed to the World Database on Protected Areas through an online 'wiki' system associated with Protected Planet.

- a. Information on tourism visits would be transformed through an online economic valuation calculator based upon the methodology developed by the experts associated with the expert workshop. This transformed information could be summarised at various scales and downloaded for use by the tourism and environmental sector
 - b. Data input through this system could then be automatically summarised and presented through an online interactive mapping system.
2. Report: "Tourism's global contribution to protected areas" for IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014, and a progress report/awareness raising activities at IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2012 (plus other future meetings such as the CBD COP, , etc.)
 3. Regular reports sent to international agencies, governmental agencies and private sector associations on the status of protected area tourism (e.g. to UNWTO, WTTC, IUCN, GSTC etc).

Timetable for overall project

- 2011 - Desk review of existing research on tourism visitation, valuation and protected areas
- 2011 - 2-day working group meeting to review evidence, develop approach and identify funding sources.
- 2011-12 - Source funding. Implement program of data capture and analysis
- 2012 - Discussion and presentation of progress, and raise awareness of the program - IUCN World Conservation Congress, Rio + 20, CBD SP and NBSAP revision
- 2014 - Presentation of results "Tourism's global contribution to protected areas" - World Parks Congress

Budget

The budget for this initial would not exceed \$36,000 to cover venue hire (if required), travel and accommodation of participants, funds to pay for the feasibility study and funding for the development of a larger proposal for the full project (if necessary).

References

Balmford, A., Beresford, J., Green, J., Naidoo, R., Walpole, M. & Manica, A (2009) A global perspective on trends in nature-based tourism. PLoS Biol 7(6): e1000144.

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<http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.1000144>

Christ, C. Hillel, O, Matus, S., and Sweeting, J. (2003) Tourism and biodiversity, UNEP, Conservation International, accessible from <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/WEBx0016xPA-TourismFootprint.pdf>

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