

## Ecotourism

in Germany's Technical  
Cooperation with developing  
and transforming countries



# Tourism and conservation of biological diversity

## The symbiosis of tourism and nature conservation

Nature can frequently only be conserved sustainably by combining such protection with human use. Tourism offers a particular economic incentive to preserve natural resources. The German national parks such as "Berchtesgaden" or "Wattenmeer", the major African parks such as the Krüger National Park or the Amboseli National Park, as well as countless other reserves are not conceivable without tourists. The protection of biological diversity could not be financed without the revenues from tourism.

## Promotion of Tourism in Development Cooperation

When tourism makes a contribution to economic development and thus to alleviating poverty, tourism promotion projects can be assisted within the context of Germany's development cooperation. For example, ecotourism can contribute to creating alternative sources of income for the population in the fringes of nature reserves and thus to reducing the pressure of use on protected areas.

In 1981 the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) first published a summarising analysis of "Tourism in developing countries". The study was updated in 1993. In addition the BMZ set up an

"Ecotourism Working Group" as an interdisciplinary task force which combines scientific research and practice-oriented consultancy. In the report, "Ecotourism as a

### What is Ecotourism?

The terms ecotourism, nature tourism, sustainable tourism etc. have a wide range of meanings. There are no internationally recognised definitions. Here ecotourism can be defined as a form of travelling with a strong sense of responsibility in natural regions. Such travel is as environmentally and socially sound as possible, contributes to financing nature conservation, creates income opportunities for the local population and thus contributes to sustainable development.

conservation instrument?", which appeared in 1995, basic policies are set out alongside case studies.

The government-owned *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) GmbH is commissioned by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to plan and implement projects and programmes of technical cooperation with developing countries on its own responsibility. The objective is to

strengthen the performance capability of people and organisations in developing and transforming countries, as well as their capacity for self-help. To this end, technical, economic and organisational skills are transferred and measures improving the conditions for application of such know-how are supported. Germany's inputs consist in providing advisory services, materials and equipment, and financial support. The tasks are largely carried out on the basis of agreements under international law between the German Federal Government and the partner countries on a non-profit basis and in some cases on a trust basis. The promotion of tourism as an instrument for preserving natural resources and a means for sustainable regional development plays a major role in a large number of projects.

## Tourism in developing countries assumes a sense of responsibility

Tourism in developing countries presumes a high sense of responsibility on the part of the travellers. Since 1976 the GTZ together with the BMZ and church and private organisations has been promoting a series of journals called "Sympathiemagazine" published by the "Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung" (Study Group for Tourism and Development). These magazines aim to create understanding for and a positive attitude towards travel destinations and the local populations. Efforts to break down misunderstandings and prejudices are at the heart of this project. So far *Sympathiemagazine* have been published on over 30 countries and a large number of tour operators covering developing countries offer these brochures to their customers to help them prepare their holidays.



### **Biodiversity and the Biodiversity Convention**

The term "biological diversity", or "biodiversity" for short, encompasses the diversity of life on earth, from genetic diversity and diversity of the species to the diversity of ecosystems. The Biodiversity Convention adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 unites three elements, i.e. the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use and equitable distribution of the costs and profits resulting from this use. In the meantime some 170 countries have joined the Convention. By signing the Convention Germany has agreed not only to conserve biodiversity on its own territory, but also to support developing countries in implementing the necessary steps.

### **Tourism in Development Cooperation: Examples**

#### **Uganda: Promotion of tourism by establishment of a national park administration**

The Murchison Falls National Park was once not only Uganda's largest protected area, but thanks to the Victoria Falls and large game stocks the most important tourist attraction in the country. Income from tourism made a substantial contribution to hard currency revenue in Uganda. During the civil war in the seventies and eighties, however, the park suffered considerably. The infrastructure was largely destroyed and the game reserves greatly reduced.

Within the context of German Development Cooperation efforts are now being made to rehabilitate the park as an ecologically and economically viable conservation area. Work is focused on building up an effective park administration, restoring the infrastructure, training

and equipping the rangers who guard against poaching, and marking the boundaries of the park. Within the context of Technical Cooperation advisory, training and financial inputs to the value of DM 7.5 million are being provided via the GTZ and a further DM 15.5 million are being supplied via the *Kreditanstalt for Wiederaufbau* (KfW) within the scope of Financial Cooperation. Furthermore, two development aid workers from the *German Development Service* (DED) are participating in the restoration of the park.

advisory services and supplies of materials and equipment within the context of German-Turkish cooperation. These funds are being used to implement environmental monitoring programmes in the area around the Bay of Dalyan and to support the development of an environment information centre. In addition, measures to inform and guide visitors are being promoted. While the project initially concentrated on the Specially Protected Area "Bay of Dalyan", project work now focuses on preparing and implementing an



#### **Guiding visitors in nature reserves in Turkey**

The Turkish Government was planning to construct a hotel complex in the Bay of Dalyan on the Mediterranean coast. However, the national and international nature conservation community launched a campaign against it in 1989, as the bay is known as a nesting area for marine turtles. Finally, the Turkish Government decided against the construction of the hotel, and established a "Specially Protected Area". In order to support the development of the newly created authority responsible for establishing and administering Specially Protected Areas, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany made DM 6 million available for

overall nature conservation concept.

#### **Lake Baikal: tourism as an element of regional planning**

Lake Baikal in southern Siberia was always a popular holiday destination and growing numbers of visitors from abroad now come here seeking wide open spaces, seclusion and untouched nature. So far tourism - like industrial settlement, timber felling, infrastructure planning etc. - has been pursued largely without any regional planning basis and without measures for nature conservation and protection of natural resources in the Baikal territory, part of which has been declared a national park. Within the scope of the project



"Ecologically oriented land use planning in the Baikal region", a master landscape plan is being prepared. Data on natural resources requiring protection (soil, water, fauna and flora) are being compiled and current forms of use are being evaluated with regard to sustainable development of the region. The local population is to participate actively in the design, planning and development by means of a process of public involvement.

As an independent measure the GTZ is additionally supporting the planning and setting up of an "eco-camping site" by Lake Baikal. This is to serve as a model for the planning of camping sites in harmony with the landscape and at the same time as a source of income for the local population.

### Study on ecotourism in Malaysia's rain forest

The development of the rain forest for ecotourism is to contribute to creating income for the local population which is economically

more attractive in the long term than the yields obtained from converting the forest into land for agricultural use. Two national parks in Malaysia were studied within the context of the GTZ's "Tropical Ecology Support Program". Although considerable turnover is now being achieved in the Taman Negara National Park, which was already developed for tourism, 90 % of the revenues are not retained in the park region. The rising cost of living accompanying tourism and the environmental harm resulting at strongly frequented locations represent negative factors for the local population. Recommendations for action to be taken in planning and implementing ecotourism were derived on the basis of this experience for the Endau-Rompin National Park, which was established in 1993. Consequently greater participation by the population in the planning and implementation of tourist measures, recognition of traditional rights of use and integration in a concept of regional rural development are called for.

### Environmental Information Centre on Chumbe Island near Zanzibar

Chumbe Island is an almost untouched and uninhabited coral island with an area of only a quarter of a square kilometre, located 6 kilometres off the coast of Zanzibar. It is one of the last, well-preserved coral islands in Tanzania. A lighthouse erected under the British administration in the year 1904 was converted into an Environmental Education Centre with support by the GTZ. The principles of ecological building construction were taken into account in the structural implementation of this project. The

lighthouse now serves school classes, fishermen and other visitors as a centre for conducting information and education programmes. Furthermore, nature trails have been laid out in the forest on the island and information materials have been produced.

### Ecotourism as a component in securing nature reserves

In the Bay of Paracas on the Pacific Coast of Peru a national park was established as early as 1975. Thanks to its rich animal life, beautiful landscape and the Guano islands off the coast, it attracts over 100,000 visitors a year. 90 % of these are Peruvians, and of these 30 % are school children and students in particular need of information about the ecological importance of this conservation area. Within the context of the GTZ project "Implementing the Biodiversity Convention", support is being provided to set up an exhibition centre with an auditorium, to draft an environmental education programme, to train tourist guides and to produce information materials. These activities complement other support measures aimed at sustainable use of the coastal nature reserve.

Individual measures in a variety of developing countries which contribute to national implementation of the Biodiversity Convention are being supported within the context of the GTZ project "Implementing the Biodiversity Convention".

February 1997 / Photographs: Dr. A. Drews, R. Jürgens, Dr. M. Kasperek, A. König

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