CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
  CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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Item 29 of the provisional agenda*

BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TOOLS TO APPLY THE CBD GUIDELINES

Note by the Executive Secretary

A.   INTRODUCTION

1.   This document complements UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1, towards a review by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its twelfth meeting, of the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development,[1] pursuant to decision XI/6 item E.[2] As such, it focuses on the substantive items, including tools and instruments on sustainable tourism management, in the draft decision under deliberation on agenda item 29 (cooperation on tourism, paragraph 132 of the annotated agenda UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

2.   The document relied on input from many of the presenters[3] of a series of side events organized to support deliberations of Parties at COP 12.[4] Like its pre-session complement, it was prepared with the generous support of the Federal Environment Ministry of Germany, also as an input to the Business and Biodiversity Forum parallel to COP 12.

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* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

[1] http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml.

[2] Decision XI/6, paragraph 48: The Conference of the Parties "*Decides* to review the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development at its twelfth meeting, in order to improve, *inter alia*, the provision of updated and innovative tools and instruments on sustainable tourism management to Parties and interested stakeholders and enhance their contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020."

[3] The Secretariat thanks the following experts for their input: Mr. Paul Dale, Senior Biodiversity Advisor, State Government of Sao Paulo, Brazil; Mr. Jose Koechlin, Founder and President, Inkaterra Group, Peru; Mr. Pedro Gamboa, Director, Natural Protected Area Services, Government of Peru; Ms. Deirdre Shurland, Coordinator, Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics; Ms. Giulia Carbone, Deputy Head, Global Business and Biodiversity Programme, IUCN, Switzerland; Mr. Manuel Bollmann, GIZ/Fair Trade Tourism, Germany; Mr. Jamie Sweeting, G Adventures/Planeterra Foundation and Sustainable Tourism International, USA; Ms. Jennifer Seif, Executive Director, Fair Trade Tourism South Africa; and Ms. Elizabeth Kennedy, Director Evaluation and Research, Rainforest Alliance.

[4] See programme at
http://www.cbd.int/business/GP%20meeting%20doc/Tourism%20and%20Biodiversity%20COP%2012%20(Sept%2025-14).pdf

B. ELEMENTS FOR PARTIES' CONSIDERATION AT COP 12

3.   The following topics are extracted as relevant options for Parties to consider for activities related to the links between biodiversity and tourism development, mentioned in the decision text proposed for COP 12:
    1. Sustainable consumption approaches on sustainable tourism for biodiversity;
    2. Criteria for identifying tourism and conservation hotspots and ways to integrate biodiversity into their sustainable development;
    3. Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem management into tourism development and the specific challenges of blue/green tourism for SIDS;
    4. Enhancing knowledge sharing, monitoring and reporting on tourism and visitation activities in protected areas;
    5. Optimizing financial and technical contributions of tourism to Protected Areas Systems
    6. Enhancing support to the application of the CBD Guidelines (revised User's Manual):
        o Providing updated advice on policies, programmes and tools;
        o Facilitating online assessing and reporting on conformity with CBD guidelines.

1. *Sustainable consumption approaches to tourism for biodiversity*

Parties and partners have reported on using various communication, education and public awareness tools for the general public and tourists on sustainable travel, including sustainable consumption promotion programmes (for instance the International Ecotourism Society's "*your travel choice makes a difference*" campaign), ecolabels, standards, and product and destination accreditation and certification schemes. Sustainability awards (such as the World Travel and Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow, the International Travel Bureau's ToDo award and the Sustainability Award of the Brazilian Tour Operators' Association, BRAZTOA) also identify and promote best practices and associate their brands to greener approaches and consumer recognition.

Some of the many tools used by Parties to support, through the promotion of sustainable consumption, less-impacting and alternative livelihood opportunities for indigenous and local communities (including traditional, extractive, rural and pastoralist communities) that are stewards of rich biodiversity areas include:

- Supporting the inclusion of biodiversity-related components in indigenous and community-based tourism products through incentives such as exchange networks (the Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Web-based award in 2010, the bio-cultural tourism "Potato Park" in Peru or the Indigenous Tourism Network RITA in Mexico) and the promotion of service and operation standards, in some cases supported by certification systems (such as "Fair Trade Tourism"), or the acknowledgement of champions such as through the UNDP's Equator Initiative (at least 7 of the 2014 winners provide indigenous and community-based tourism services) . Tourism operators can also assist indigenous communities to develop, market and manage complementing products such as accommodation and guiding services as a tool for conservation and community wellbeing (Posada Amazonas in Peru, Kapawi Ecolodge in Ecuador).

- Consumer guidance policy instruments (educational tools on ecotourism produced in the State of Sao Paulo) can help to set enabling conditions for biodiversity–friendly tourism, and support indigenous and local communities. Sustainability frameworks, such as checklists for minimum standards which can then also be used as marketing tools (*Alianza Verde* and the Green Deal in Guatemala), can help drive biodiversity-friendly practices and outcomes in the tourism industry. By highlighting quality and sustainability, NGOs such as the Rainforest Alliance and associated certifiers can help communities transition towards low-impact tourism, instead of opting for much more impacting extractive activities (for instance illegal logging and mining). More tools are described in section II of UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1.

2. *Identifying criteria for tourism and conservation hotspots and integrating biodiversity into their development*

Some natural landscapes and monuments (such as islands, beaches, estuaries, mountains or waterfalls, or joint natural and cultural heritage sites of unique beauty) can be considered as critical tourism and conservation hotspots where they offer notable tourism potential and opportunity and significant biodiversity that requires protection and management. Such areas would need to meet certain minimal conditions for tourism (such as accessibility, financing and tax incentives, a qualified workforce, public infrastructure and security proportional to tourism volumes) and for higher levels of biodiversity (as per existing scientific priority-setting systems such as hotspots or eco-regions, or via internationally accepted processes such as International Bird Areas, Ramsar, World Heritage or Biosphere designations) . As part of its work for 2015, the Secretariat will cooperate with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Secretariats of biodiversity-related international legal instruments such as the World Heritage and Ramsar Conventions, and the Man and Biosphere Reserves, and other relevant organizations to find common criteria to coordinate activities in tourism and biodiversity hotspots, and to define priority activities to apply the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in those areas.

Existing and accepted categories at international level can be used as long as they are equipped with the appropriate legal, institutional and capacities to manage existing and future volumes of tourism and visitation to avoid negative impacts on hosts, the natural environment and biodiversity. Geotourism sites, natural monuments and pilgrimage areas, as well as indigenous areas, in which tourism is accepted and appropriately regulated within limits of acceptable change may also be considered. It is critical not to duplicate existing technical spport and capacity-building systems, nor to focus in promoting any specific "brand" to the detriment of others, and to work in cooperation based on accepted systems, common needs and the complementary competences of each agency, while keeping doors open for innovation and expansion of networks. There is a need to agree on scientifically-based criteria to identify priority areas, and to set programme and project goals, preferably at regional and subregional levels, avoiding duplication of efforts or competition for common resources. Ideally, the approach to tourism within hotspots should ensure that it is considered as part of a wider sustainability approach also involving business, society and NGOs, with integrated sustainable development and ecosystem managment goals, always with a view towards the livelihood needs of affected local communities (i.e. destinations).

3. *Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystems into tourism development and the specific challenge of blue/green tourism for islands*

As acknowledged at the UN's Rio + 20 conference, tourism has been a consistently growing economic sector, with global and increasingly multipolar distribution and a direct interest in offering its clients access to nature (including clean and healthy ecosystems and a stable and visible population of charismatic species). By extension, the tourism industry is directly interested in a well-managed system of public and private protected areas prepared to receive visitation within standards of service and environmental quality, and in technologies and procedures that allow management of the impacts (financial, social, and environmental) of its operations. When unregulated development and management of tourism impacts sites with particularly sensitive biological and cultural diversity in devastating ways, losses will affect all stakeholders.

The economy-only approach for tourism development of the 70s and 80s resulted, in many cases, in the almost complete deterioration of the environment on which massive destinations relied to attract tourists, and thus in significant losses for all involved. This led to "Destination Life Cycle"analysis to identify sustainable models for socially acceptable and economically empowering destination and resort development, limiting harm to environment. Many of the assumptions that since the 1990s have

influenced public policy in tourism development (such as that eco-tourism, community-based-tourism or independent travel are inherently sustainable, while all-inclusive, cruise and packaged tourism are not) simply are not substantiated in practice, and relevant questions today include how to make a destination's core business sustainable, and which political framework conditions in a destination are conducive to sustainable development.

The existing User's Manual lists a number of policy tools (such as construction incentives for green land-use planning, tax reduction for sustainable technology imports, softer loans for green infrastructure, marketing support for green products, etc)5. Mainstreaming also includes providing decision-makers in development, financing, planning and business with scientifically sound and relevant information on issues related to their sphere of influence. In the proposed decision text, CBD Parties are also asked to consider adopting text to invite relevant research bodies to undertake studies of the cumulative impact of tourism on sensitive ecosystems and of the consequences for biodiversity of sustainable livelihood initiatives including tourism, and to disseminate their results.

CBD SIDS Parties such as Jamaica have amassed significant experience from sustainability programmes at large-scale resort development for instance in Montego Bay. The Mea'ai Samoa public private partnership programme, on the other hand, promotes the flavours of the organic locally produced food while also contributing to the welfare of the communities. Samoa's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment supports an effective waste management system with quantitative minimisation goals and pilot bio-gas projects. Policies and incentives such as local carbon offset initiatives are planned to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies. Sustainable tourism development is a priority in Samoa's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), and the country has completed its assessment under the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's Early Adopter Programme.

The SAMOA Pathway document adopted at the 3rd UNSIDS in Apia requests all CBD Parties to support SIDS in designing and implementing policies that promote responsive, responsible, resilient and sustainable tourism while conserving their natural, built and cultural heritage, especially ecosystems and biodiversity. It also calls on SIDS to diversify their tourism products and services, ranging from large-scale tourism projects with positive economic, social and environmental impacts to the development of ecotourism, agri-tourism and cultural tourism (http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1537). The document also calls attention that UNEP's Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism can leverage the expertise of, inter alia, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, the Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism of the World Tourism Organization and other United Nations bodies, as well as the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, to establish island-based food and sustainable tourism support initiatives based on community participation.

The transversal nature of the tourism sector makes it a good prospect for developing and scaling up "virtuous cycles" of related biodiversity conservation activities. Among others, UNEP's Tourism Programme and its Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism initiative help identify optimal approaches to be used for biodiversity conservation in the sector. In order to respect regional conditions and capacities, these approaches need to be nuanced to address the specific needs for instance of Caribbean SIDS or southern Africa CBD Parties.

4. *Enhancing knowledge sharing, monitoring and reporting on tourism and visitation activities in protected areas*

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5 See control measures for the integrated management of tourism and biodiversity, https://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf, page 101.

Currently, IUCN's World Database on Protected Areas is the most comprehensive global spatial dataset on marine and terrestrial protected areas. However, it lacks (as most other similar ones at global and regional scale) information on tourism volumes and related revenues, visitor satisfaction levels, assessment of impacts and, as appropriate, corrective actions taken. Thus, there is a need for CBD Parties and associated park agencies and supportive centres to improve their reporting on recreation and visitation levels and other tourism activities in protected areas, as well as impacts and relevant management processes in ecologically sensitive areas in future national reports under the Convention and as part of Parties' and other Governments' input to databases and the clearing-house mechanism related to work on the programme of work on protected areas such as IUCN's WCPA and other relevant mechanisms.

5. *Optimizing financial and technical contributions of tourism to Protected Areas Systems*

When considering initiatives and trends in the Parties' actions to build the capacity of national and subnational park and protected area agencies to develop partnerships with the tourism industry, as a means to contribute financially and technically to the establishment, operations and maintenance of protected areas, experts generally agree that there is a need to greatly expand research and information sharing. Significant experience has been gathered on tourism concessions, public-private partnerships, payback mechanisms and other forms of payments for ecosystem services, in complement to public budgetary allocations and without prejudice to public mandates and obligations toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. A wide range of experiences is also available, involving public, non-profit and private conservation agencies, academic institutions, and organized communities, to improve visitor services and adequately protect the natural and cultural heritage of protected areas, and increase public support for their conservation. Concessions and other related public-private partnerships are one part of possible answers, particularly in cases where government conservation agency budgets and payrolls are limited. Wherever possible, private sector investments should be centred outside park boundaries to reduce their impacts and maximize local economic benefits. On the other hand, governments are often challenged to access the necessary capital to implement visitor impact management infrastructure, provide the excellent customer service, great flexibility in hiring and recruitment, good marketing and communication skills necessary to react rapidly to changing tourism demand; thus, depending on each case, different arrangements of for-profit and non-profit partners of government conservation agencies are often much better suited to fill these niches.

Innovative financial instruments based on tourism and visitation such as entrance and service fees, concessions and licenses already are the largest market-based source of revenues to park systems globally. However, the replication and adaptation of the existing appropriate technologies within the CBD is still incipient, and although associated management costs are significant, tourism can contribute much more than it does today to the sustainable management of systems of protected areas. Cases from Germany, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Botswana and Canada, among others, prove that investments in the quality of park tourism in nature destinations generate much higher benefits to surrounding communities, including decent job creation and business opportunities, than direct tourism revenues to parks themselves.

Private sector leaders such as Inkaterra and its *Asociacion* in Machu Picchu, Peru, or the Canadian operator G Adventures and its associated Planeterra Foundation, leverage benefits to ecosystem management in destination, supporting hundreds of researchers, organizing conferences, attracting volunteers, training thousands of local residents and guides, and mobilizing external resources for complementary work, for instance through partnerships with the Inter-American Development Bank, or the International Finance Corporation an agency of the World Bank. Often, national and subnational governments such as the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil, or the Peruvian Natural Protected Area Services, can support these initiatives by creating policies that provide the regulatory framework and incentives (technical, financial or just by institutional recognition) for these leaders and champions to be successful and invite replication.

6. Enhancing support to the application of the CBD Guidelines via a revised User's Manual

In decision XI/6, Parties requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate regular and systematic reporting by Parties on the application of the CBD Guidelines and to continue to engage Parties, relevant organizations and other partners in the compilation and dissemination of relevant tools and guidance, information on capacity-building programmes and best practices on the links between tourism and biodiversity. One of the available tools is the associated User's Manual of the CBD Guidelines. The original User's Manual is quite technical in its approach and some of its content requires updating. A significant problem not sufficiently addressed in the original version is the three different ways in which its content can be applied:

- Overall policy making for tourism and biodiversity
- The preparation of plans for areas/destinations, as a basis for managing tourism development which takes account of biodiversity, and
- The handling of individual tourism development projects/proposals to avoid/ minimise harm to biodiversity.

In this light, the manual can be better presented as introducing a set of tools, applied sequentially or individually at different stages in area planning or project assessment. A review of the User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines should also consider how its content can facilitate regular and systematic reporting by Parties on their application. The Secretariat is also pursuing the improvement of the CBD websites on tourism, and notably their interactivity, which will also address how the User's Manual will be presented on them. Side events at COP 12 will also provide an occasion for the validation of its content, and for brainstorming on the diverse Web-based and social media, as well as the interactive features that can be made available to Parties and partners in applying the Guidelines. Further, one of the overall objectives of any follow up activities in 2015 and beyond is to enhance the interactivity of the CBD websites on tourism and improve their interface with users.

It is proposed that the revised Manual will have the following sections:

1   Status and purpose of the Guidelines
- Origin, background and status of the Guidelines. Requirements and conditions for application of the Guidelines, their target public and notification/reporting processes on their use.
- Main purpose of the Guidelines and their application with respect to tourism and biodiversity policy formulation, planning and management for sustainable tourism in vulnerable ecosystems, tourism project assessment and implementation in vulnerable ecosystems.
- Formulation of the User's Manual as an evolving process.

2   Tourism and biodiversity
- Biodiversity and sustainable tourism concepts, current understanding and international policy positioning.
- Outlining the relationship between tourism and biodiversity – negative and positive impacts. Key issues affecting the relationship (reflecting issues raised in UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1).

3   Governance and management structures and approaches
- Institutions and stakeholders to be involved at different levels, effective governance structures. Requirements and processes for policy integration.
- Fostering a participatory approach – key role of stakeholders with emphasis on the private sector.
- Area planning and management for effective assessment and control of development, supported by legislation and other instruments.

4   Baseline information
- Key aspects of the biodiversity, cultural, social, and economic/tourism situation (state, pressures, etc.) to cover in information gathering and reporting.

5. Plan formulation – vision, goals, and objectives
- Staged processes in plan development.
- Working together to identify vision, goals and objectives, plans at different levels and for different types of area, capacity issues.

6   Tools and instruments for control and management
- Covering a range of command and control, economic, voluntary and other tools, with links to legislation and control measures.

7   Impact assessment, including project notification and determination
- Building on existing manuals on Impact Assessment requirements and procedures, also considering possible impacts of tourism and notification processes.
- Requirements for notification of proposed tourism development projects, including how this may relate to area plans, initial dialogues and previous informed consents, and decision-making processes.

8   Management and mitigation
- Including additional aspects of management, seeking to increase positive benefits for biodiversity from tourism for instance on funding of protected areas, community engagement and promoting alternative livelihoods.

9   Monitoring, reporting and adaptive management
- The use of indicators and monitoring, encouraging reporting and using adaptive management approaches.

10 Capacity building and communication
- Considerably expanding and developing current content, considering capacity building and strong coverage of stakeholder communication processes.

The following actions could further improve the tourism and biodiversity content of the CBD webpages, and the quality of their display on the CBD website:

- An e-learning platform could be offered for disseminating the User's Manual content; materials could be used by Parties (and other user communities) to create their own content/courses and share with others;
- A "conformity" measurement tool (checklist) can be created with indicators that reflect the application of the CBD Guidelines. This tool could store the data entered and be used (anonymously) as a benchmark tool in the Convention's Clearinghouse Mechanism;
- Add new interactive features (such a chatrooms, online seminars and feedback options) on the CBD website to create opportunities for Parties to exchange their experiences and difficulties in terms of the User's Manual.

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