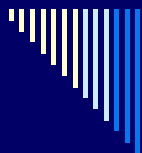


DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN THE ARAB REGION

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Defining Ecotourism

The term Ecotourism emerged in the late 1980s. Since then it becomes a debated term and defined in different ways, by different groups of people with different agenda.

IUCN definition “Environmentally responsible travel to natural area , in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (Accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples”



Characteristics of Ecotourism

- Low-impact on the natural, cultural resources
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of local culture and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision making
- Educational components for both traveler and local communities



Why Ecotourism in the Arab Region?

- Offers vast historical, cultural, and natural resources
- Birth place of ancient civilizations and world religions
- Dense collections of archeological monuments and ruins
- Rich tradition of urban culture
- Geography of the region includes a diverse range of natural form



Tourism in the Arab Region

- Currently the Arab Region is expanding its tourism industries across a number of tourism segments. These includes Heritage and nature based tourism, business and travel conferencing, beach and sport –oriented leisure activities, and family oriented vacations



Tourism in the Arab Region

- The world tourism Organization's long term forecast, 2020 vision, projected that The Middle east region (which exclude North Africa) would have the highest regional growth rate of tourist arrival at 7.1% doubling its market share from 2.2% in 1995 to 4.4%in 2020. And from 1995 to 2000 Middle east tourism arrivals grew at a rate of 12.2%



The Arab Region

- Effort to promote tourism development in the region must consider the possible risks, negative impacts that tourism development and increased tourism generate.
- A primary goal of tourism should be the production of a unique sense of place rooted in cultural, historical, and environmental features



Arab Region Cont, ..

- The region needs to develop a new strategy to face all these challenge
- One of the strategy is to consider the development of Ecotourism projects
- However, Ecotourism is acomplex tourism product. Not all natural environments are attractive for tourism.



Strategy for Development

Thus, before developing strategy for Ecotourism several issues need to be addressed.



- The role of Ecotourism
- Abundance of ecotourism resources
- The availability of visitors to eco-sites
- Commitment to ecotourism
- Benefits from ecotourism



Strategy Cont.,,,,

Questions related to strategy for Ecotourism development



- What has motivated the interest and commitment to developing a strategy for ecotourism?
- Who are the principal participants?
- Should ecotourism be a stand alone strategy?



Strategy Cont.,,,,,,



- Is Ecotourism a viable strategy in the region, and every where in the region?
- Will any national ecotourism strategies be independent and competitive or integrated across the region and cooperative?
- What are the necessary strategic capacities



Community Based Ecotourism



- Refers to ecotourism enterprises that are owned and managed by the community.
- It Involves conservation, business enterprise and community development.
- Many local communities have a strong tradition of respect for natural environments that needs to be fostered and not undermined by too much emphasis on economic value



CBE Cont.,,,,

Objectives



- Generate financial support for protection and management of natural areas
- Generate economic benefits for resident living near natural areas
- Generate support for conservation among the resident
- In many cases cultural conservation, poverty alleviation and community empowerment



CBE Cont.,,,,,,

Preconditions for devolving CBM Ecotourism



- Attractive land escapes and biota
- Aware local community
- Effective community decision-making
- Ecosystem that absorb a managed level of visitation without damage
- No obvious threats to indigenous culture and tradition
- An initial market assessments

CBE Cont.,,,

Issues



There are also Important issues that should be taken in consideration for the development of community based Ecotourism projects

- Participation
- Management
- Decision Making
- Partnership

CBE Cont.,,,,,,,

Statements



- The generation of community benefits is not easy. It requires political will, expertise, and a willingness on the part of tourism policymakers to go well outside the range of their traditional concerns.
- Fundamental characteristic of community-based ecotourism is that the quality of the natural resources and cultural heritage of an area should not be damage and, if possible should be enhanced by tourism.



BR in Arab Countries

□ **Algeria**

Tassili N'Ajjer
Kala
Djurdura

□ **Egypt**

Omayed
Wadi Allaqi

□ **Lebanon**

Al-Chouf

□ **Sudan**

Radom
Dinder

□ **Jordan**

Dana

□ **Morocco**

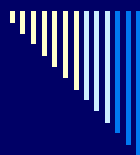
Amajir

□ **Tunisia**

Djebel Bouhedma
Djebel Chambl
Ichkeul
Zembra and Zembretta

□ **Yemen**

Socatra Island



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