

## Ecotourism... A New Way to Travel

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### Abstract

Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism that has been defined as “ecotourism which actively contributes to the protection of natural heritage” according to the World Ecotourism Summit. Ecotourism is a means of development for both local populations and the protected areas concerned. The main component of ecotourism is the use of natural resources as a strategy for sustainable development and as a component of tourist attractions without causing damage and damage to the environment.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism; Nature heritage; Tourist; Impact on the economy and the ecosystem

### Introduction

When we talk about ecotourism, or what we also call green tourism, we hear a vocabulary related to the adventures and discovery of nature: we leave, from the ecosystem to rural tourism without forgetting the reserves nature, green and ecological spaces and national parks [1].

Ecotourism has been defined by the International Society of Ecotourism as a responsible journey in natural environments where the resources and well-being of the people are preserved. The characteristics of this trip otherwise, is the fact of preserving the environment and values the natural heritage. Ecotourism is in full expansion and expansion in the world since it is in some countries fairly developed and in others not so much [2].

As an example, we can cite the case of Canada to the city of Montreal which has created a charter called Géo-tourisme Montréal [3]. This ecotourism charter has been signed by three organizations that make up its executive: Heritage Montreal, Tourisme Montréal and the World Center of Excellence for Destinations (CED). In Morocco, there are some successful experiences in Marrakech, Mirleft, Ifrane, Ouarzazate and Merzouga that have more or less succeeded in integrating the ecopotential and geotourism of the Atlas and Sahara in their circuits. For example, the landscapes of the Anti-Atlas are visited by 3 to 5 million tourists a year [4].

Given the problems of mass tourism, ecotourism has many positive points and advantages. The latter has become a very important activity in natural areas around the world [1].

Ecotourism would like the protection of biodiversity, travel and venture into the natural heritage by respecting it and take advantage of ancillary activities that can generate economic benefits while maintaining these places and natural spaces [5].

The birth of the term “ecotourism” is somewhat ambiguous in the sense that we do not know where it comes from, there is no consent on its origin [6].

According to some authors, it appeared for the first time in English in an article by Romeril in 1985. Although, the Mexican ecologist Ceballos-Lascurain used the Spanish word ‘ecoturismo’ earlier. Yet Budowski, for an article written in 1976, is generally cited as the pioneer of the very concept of ecotourism [7].

Some authors believed that there was a rather conflicting relationship between tourism and the environment, which can be two difficult variables [8].

The table gives an overview of some of the definitions commonly found in the literature on “ecotourism”. We can thus notice that according to the authors, their times, the definitions tend to vary [9].

### The Importance of Ecotourism

Twenty years ago, we noticed that all forms of tourism have grown quite a lot and especially when we talk about nature tourism, ecotourism, especially in the tropics and according to Drumm and Moore [1].

The essential destinations and holiday destinations of customers of the 28 ecotourism operators working abroad and based in the United States, show the following preferences: Central America with 39%; South America with 25%; North America with 18%; Mexico and the Caribbean with 5%; Other sectors with 13% [10].

As a result, ecotourism is growing and an annual demand reaching 10% and 15% according to the OMT. The public who participate in ecotourism is warned of the fragility of the environment, and he becomes aware of the ecological issues, plus he is very curious to know the endangered species, the threatened habitats and wants to understand the stakes of the conservation of the ecosystems through its own field experience [1].

Throughout the years, ecotourism has evolved over time and has been an important tool in the protection of nature and conservation of protected areas because of the support provided by travelers who have a sense of adventure and of discovery in a totally new and improbable place [11].

However, the main stakeholders in ecotourism, namely protected area managers and the tourism industry, have had difficulty in agreeing on the implementation of the different projects. Both parties needed a time of adaptation to understand their mutual operation. Thus, the term “ecotourism” was used wrongly and for all kinds of activities that did not respect the fundamental principles of an eco-tourism project such as the involvement of communities in the development of the

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project and the equitable distribution revenues. On the other hand, if we use the term in its full meaning, it covers a very important strategy of conservation, and this, with a view to sustainable development.

### Impacts of Ecotourism Hard Ecosystems

Ecotourism is a concept that is not just about animating people to make trips that respects protected areas, it's more than that, the purpose of which is to highlight the following verbs; preserve, conserve, defend, the natural areas that make up our planet and above all, begin by educating current generations about the importance of the environment and natural resources. Environmental education can attract a large number of visitors to unique sites, and also increase the awareness of these tourists to the beauties of the landscape.

These eco-tourists then became more alert to the need to protect these places, sometimes encouraging them to work in this direction [2], be put in place by the population concerned, so that it recognizes the importance of a park in improving its well-being and quality of life. Once again, we note the importance of local community involvement and responsible practice in a participatory governance system adapted to ecotourism.

The long-term conservation of an ecosystem is the fundamental ecological goal of ecotourism Gunn and Scheyvens.

Ecotourism is a realistic concept as long as it is well known and respectful of the host site support capacity, and to be able to set up effective planning and control systems [3].

### Impacts on the Economy

Ecotourism is an activity that can have economic spinoffs and generates significant local and national revenues. Ecotourism also creates jobs for people living near protected areas and parks. conservation. Ecotourism may be an opportunity for regions to defer their economic activities while defending and protecting their natural resources. Ecotourism is still experiencing a disordered economic development.

The seasonal nature of the activities can lead to an economy of dependency if ecotourism is not used as a springboard to generate other economic activities that can function outside periods of tourist affluence [3]. Local communities need to be compromised in setting up tourism projects, as only they know what level of tourism they are willing to receive and the degree of involvement they wish to have in this project. Thus the economic objectives of ecotourism can be summarized as the production of diverse and profitable activities in the long term. The economic activity resulting from this industry is

considered here as an essential component of the sustainability of a community. If tourism does not have lasting effects for the community, the industry itself will not be viable.

### Conclusion

Drumm mentions that local communities view ecotourism as an accessible development option that improves their living conditions without selling their natural resources or compromising their culture.

According to the World Tourism Organization, it has been estimated that about 7% of total international travel expenditure is attributable to nature tourism. When tourism in general grew at an annual rate of 4%, trips to the wild grew at an annual rate of 10 to 30%.

The key to a balanced ecotourism is to effectively manage the tourist sites that are protected and national parks to keep their real values and especially those tourism businesses help protect local and natural resources for better results and satisfactions for tourists and to continue its value.

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