

internet site review

www.unep.fr/scp/tourism

Tourism Sector of the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP)

After several decades of continuous growth, tourism has become one of the leading global industries. Apart from the obvious socio-economic advantages of tourism development, tourism activity is often perceived to have a number of negative effects, especially on natural environment in which tourism activity occurs. Tourism activity produces significant impacts on natural environment, resource consumptions and social system in destination. So it comes as no surprise that, in last decade, topics related to sustainable tourism development became dominant and very important in the international tourism community. Therefore, in this number of Tourism journal a section of UNEP (United Nation Environment Programme) web site, dedicated to sustainability in tourism, is presented.

According to the information published on their web site, the mission of the UNEP Tourism section is to mainstream the prin-

ciples of sustainable development in the tourism industry practices and to demonstrate economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits of sustainable tourism.

UNEP Tourism section defines its priorities as resource efficiency and sustainability in consumption and production, impact of climate change on tourism, development of clean energy systems for tourism industry, development of ecosystem management in fragile and protected areas such as coastal areas, deserts, wetlands etc., and land use planning in tourism. The main tools and instruments that UNEP Tourism section uses to accomplish those goals are advisory services to national tourism and environmental administration, capacity building for sustainable tourism development, implementation of different filed projects, dissemination of information thorough publications, events, booklets, information kits, etc. and building partnerships with other



national and international organization and association that share common goals.

Tourism section of UNEP web site is divided into several logically divided parts. First part named "Home" provides overview of the UNEP Tourism section activities and most recent news from the area of sustainable tourism development. On this part of the web site there are links to some interesting publication produced by UNEP Tourism sections such as "A three year journey for sustainable tourism" which is an overview of outcomes of the task force for sustainable tourism development and "Policy recommendations on sustainable tourism development".

Second section of this website named "Tourism and UNEP" provides definition of the term "Sustainable Tourism", which is very useful since this term is used very frequently and often in the wrong context by the people who do not understand the true meaning of sustainable development. This section of the web site also describes environmental, sociocultural and economic impacts of tourism development; it provides information about mission statement and objectives of the UNEP Tourism section and access to frequently asked questions.

Fourth section of this web site provides information about major topics that UNEP Tourism section is covering. Those topics include climate change, resource efficiency, ecosystem management, ecotourism, coastal management & SIDS, poverty alleviation, cultural diversity and knowledge and innovation. Every topic is briefly described and helpful links to other web sites related to those topics are also provided. Every topic is additionally divided into several subtopics, e.g. topic named "Tourism and Ecosystem Management" is divided into following subtopics: "Protected Area Management", "Islands", "Coral Reefs" and "Mountains".

In the fifth section named "Activities" there is an overview of the activities undertaken by the UNEP Tourism sector which include supporting governments, working with the tourism industry, motivating customers, development of sustainable tourism

partnerships, foundation of sustainable tourism task force, establishment of SIFT investment network and an overview of currently implemented or recently finalized projects of UNEP's tourism and environment programme. Here visitors can find out that one of the UNEP's most recent Tourism section projects is a project named "Green Passport" whose goal is to unlock the positive power of demand by raising the tourists' awareness of their potential to contribute to sustainable development by making responsible destination choices. Some other interesting projects described here include production of toolkit for hotel energy solutions, raising awareness on climate change and tourism etc.

One of the most interesting and most useful sections of this web site, from the tourism researcher's point of view, is a section named "Information Sources" which includes systematic overview of publications, working papers and latest news from the field of sustainable tourism development. All publications located in this section of the web site can be downloaded in pdf format free of charge.

The last section of UNEP's Tourism section named "Events" provides information about past and future events such as conferences and seminars from the field of sustainable tourism development.

From the technical point of view it can be concluded that this web site, although not very sophisticated, is very intuitive and easy to use. The web site has a modern and clean design, it loads very quickly, and there are no broken links. Although this web site is information intensive, navigation through the web site content is very easy thanks to the intuitive drop down menus and breadcrumbs, which all adds up to form very good browsing experience.

At the end, it can be concluded that this web site is a very useful web resource for governments, tourism industry professionals, consultants, students and any other visitors who would like to find out more about sustainable tourism development.

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