

## Nature conservation-based tourism management

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.19275/RSEP166>

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**Article Type:** Original/Research Paper

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### Article History

Received: 2 Sept 2023    Revised: 25 November 2023    Accepted: 1 December 2023    Available Online: 7 December 2023

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**Keywords:** environmental education, management, SDGs, socio-economic opportunities, sustainable tourism

**JEL classification:** Q01, Z32

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**Citation:** Milojkovic, D. & Eker, B. (2023). Nature conservation-based tourism management, *Review of Socio-Economic Perspectives*, 8(4), 17-24.

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### **Abstract**

Every state creates new opportunities by protecting its natural resources, both through maintaining the quality of human life and creating new economic opportunities. Since the first stages of life, human beings have mercilessly slaughtered nature and, have suffered widespread damage when it comes to today. This painful experience has made people start to tend to abandon their negative actions. The problem of the research is to look at the overall management possibilities with the conservation and protection of nature, while the subject of the research focuses on the possibilities of tourism management by preserving nature. The goal of the research scientifically explains the management of tourism that will be friendly to nature. The authors used analytical and hypothetical-deductive methods. The research contributes to the improvement of the achievement of goals of sustainable local socio-economic and tourism development based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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## 1. Introduction

In the life of human beings, protection, conservation, and sustainability are considered together, and the sources of problems are solved with this triple word. The living environment must be suitable for life to exist. This conformity can achieve by meeting the demands of human beings (Aslam, 2020). In this, we have to deal with natural resources.

Natural resources are natural assets found in the natural environment and made available to human beings. These are general resources such as fossil fuels (*coal, oil, and natural gas*), mines (*gold, silver, copper, and iron*), water, forests, agricultural lands, and animals. The existence of these resources, which are perfectly compatible with life, leads human beings to quality and healthy life. Conservation of natural resources is vital for the sustainability of the environment and the well-being of people. These resources include water, air, soil, forests, seas, minerals, fossil fuels, and biodiversity. The following steps can affect to protect and conserve natural resources:

1. *Use of renewable resources*: Renewable resources are constantly renewable and inexhaustible. These sources include solar energy, wind energy, hydroelectric energy, biomass, and geothermal energy. The use of renewable resources contributes to the conservation of natural resources and the sustainability of the environment.
2. *Sustainable agricultural practices*: Agriculture is an important user of natural resources. Sustainable farming practices preserve the fertility of the soil, conserve water resources, prevent erosion, and increase biodiversity. These practices include organic farming, agroforestry, soil management, and biodiversity conservation.
3. *Environmentally friendly energy sources*: Fossil fuels have an important place in the use of natural resources. However, the use of these resources leads to air and water pollution, climate change, and other environmental problems. Environmentally friendly energy sources can replace fossil fuels and contribute to environmental protection.
4. *Waste management*: Wastes are associated with the use of natural resources and may cause pollution of the environment. Waste management practices include waste reduction, recycling, and disposal. Proper management of waste contributes to the protection of the environment and the sustainability of the use of natural resources.
5. *Conservation of biological diversity*: Biodiversity is one of the most important components of natural resources. Conservation of biodiversity is achieved by protecting habitats, protecting species, and protecting ecosystems. Biodiversity must be protected in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and tourism.

Various methods and policies can be used to protect and conserve natural resources. Some of them can list as follows:

1. *Sustainable use*: Natural resources should use sustainable. This means using natural resources in a way that ensures their conservation in the future.
2. *Investing in renewable resources*: Investing in renewable resources is one of the best ways to conserve natural resources. This increases the sustainability of natural resources by reducing the use of fossil fuels.
3. *Education*: It is important to inform and educate society about the protection and protection of natural resources. In this way, people understand the value of natural resources and the importance of protecting them.
4. *Recycling*: Recycling is important for the conservation of natural resources. Recycling waste helps conserve natural resources by reducing their consumption.
5. *Laws and regulations*: Environmental regulations are important for the protection and conservation of natural resources. These regulations were created to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.

In addition to these methods, many different policies and practices can use to protect and conserve natural resources. The important thing is that society, governments, and businesses work in cooperation for the sustainable use of natural resources. Sustainable use of natural resources prevents the depletion of resources and offers the opportunity to use them for future generations. For this, the environment and natural life should be protected during the use of natural resources. Human beings cannot do this alone. This happens with effective environmental policies. These policies ensure the protection of the environment while supporting the sustainable use of resources.

Our world is confronted with the effect of technology every day. This can sometimes be positive and sometimes negative. Undoubtedly, positive technological developments prevent the depletion of resources by providing more efficient use of natural resources. It is important to raise awareness in society about the protection and care of natural resources. When society understands the value and importance of protecting natural resources, it takes action for the sustainable use of resources. For this purpose, cooperation and partnerships are established. These partnerships can be established between businesses, governments, local communities, and non-governmental organizations supported by academia, research and development institutions, financial organizations, and media.

## 2. Literature Review and Development Hypothesis

Protected areas are recognizable for their natural values, “aesthetic beauty, landscapes, and waterscapes that inspire the arts, humanities, and literature” (Verschuuren et al., 2021, p.8). Laarman and Durst (1987) were the first that defined nature-oriented tourism proceeding from education, recreation, and adventure as special elements related to tourism. Nature resource deterioration, increasing road accidents, disturbing animals in their habitats, and various other problems can cause by nature-based tourism development (Liddle, 1997) and at the same time, this form of tourism is “effective in promoting the protection and management of natural areas for long-term sustainable economic development” (Namazov, 2021, p. 9). Spreading awareness among society about the conservation and protection of nature is the duty of each individual (Sengwar, 2015). Tourism can contribute to each of the seventeen SDGs but it especially targets the following three goals (Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015):

- Goal 8 - *Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all* meaning that tourism is one of the managing forces of global economic growth, providing 1 in 11 jobs worldwide, giving access to respectable job opportunities particularly to youth and women.
- Goal 12 - *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns* focusing on the development and implementation of tools that monitor the sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism, which creates jobs, and promotes local culture and products.
- Goal 14 - *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development* keeping the healthy marine ecosystems and promoting a blue economy through becoming the tourism development a component of Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

With a consistent, organized, and enterprising approach to the SDGs and effective relationships with the stakeholders, the tourism and hospitality industry are the leading players in the achievement of the SDGs (Jones et al., 2017). According to the survey conducted by the UN Global Compact Network Spain and the World Tourism Organization, among the challenges in the tourism sector concerning SDGs implementation is the environment (United Nations Global Compact Network Spain | World Tourism Organization, 2016). Since tourism can generate impacts on ecosystems, the efficient management of resources and support measures against climate change have to be promoted (United Nations Global Compact Network Spain | World Tourism Organization, 2016). Management related to environmental impact and environmental quality and environmental marketing activities contribute to increasing the destination’s environmental competitiveness (Mihalič, 1999; Milojković & Milojković, 2022, Trišić et al., 2023). By managing the relationship between visitors’ needs and environmental impacts, the degradation of nature resources caused by the development of tourism can be on an ecologically acceptable level (Wolf et al., 2019; Milojković et al., 2023a). Just the adaptive management of the relationship between visitors’ needs and environmental impacts can contribute to the right estimate of destination carrying capacity (Cole, 2019). “The shift from environmental education to education for sustainable development –2005-2014 is the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – has even further confused the identity of environmental education and its placement in the curriculum” (Gough & Gough, 2010, pp.5-6). The objective of the United Nations was to embed the sustainable development concept in education on the global level. According to Bernard Hérodin and Peter Zühlsdorff claimed that “to understand the complexity of environmental issues is a path to sustainable development”, the concept of sustainable development, as a process of social change, should be integrated into the education processes all over the world (PRO EUROPE, 2005, p.4). Based on Kanté’s (2004) statement that “environmental damage, which represents a financial loss for the rich, is a much more serious matter for the poor, leading to the loss of their livelihood”, it means that investment in the protection of the environment can contribute to the reduction of poverty. Individual lifestyles of the richest countries in the world are associated with the extension of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and “in the more equal rich countries, people on average consume less, produce less waste and emit less carbon”, which means that equality is better for the environment (Dorling, 2017). The social-economic environment consists of the economic systems and the social structures that impact the distribution of resources, money, and power in a community and around the world and shape how communities and individuals can gain the resources needed to meet their basic human needs (CHE, 2023). Socio-economic opportunities in a certain location can be achieved

by implementing strategic tourism planning and development through systemic and systematic destination management (Milojković, et al., 2023b).

### 3. Research Methodology

For the analysis of nature conservation-based development opportunities, three hypotheses were set:

- *The awareness of society about the protection and care of natural resources contributes to taking action for the sustainable use of resources.*
- *Environmental education programs have an important role in sustainable tourism partnership development and conservation of natural resources.*
- *Management of the relationship between visitors' needs and environmental impacts contributes to nature conservation-based tourism development.*

The research methodology includes analytical and hypothetical-deductive methods, and the application of a content analysis method that implied an extensive analysis of the literature and good examples of international practice in the field of sustainable development, sustainable tourism, and protection and conservation of natural resources. The research analyses the interdependence of factors of nature conservation-based tourism development by getting the results and proposing recommendations.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

#### Tourism gains in the conservation of natural resources

Human beings can create many opportunities for life by acting jointly in the protection and protection of natural environments. One of them is undoubtedly tourism. Sustainable tourism aims to leave a healthy environment for future generations by preserving the sustainability of these resources while carrying out tourism activities using natural resources. Therefore, sustainable tourism development on protected natural resources is important to maintain environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Conservation of natural resources includes ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism activities in terms of economic, social, and environmental aspects. The following principles should consider for sustainable tourism development in protected natural resources: tourism activities in protected natural areas should continue without disturbing the natural ecosystem of the area.

Conservation of biological diversity and natural ecosystems should be a central component of tourism planning. This is based on social and cultural compatibility. Sustainable tourism in protected natural resources should also include the preservation of local communities and cultural values. The involvement of local people, contribution to the local economy, and preservation of local cultural heritage are important parts of sustainable tourism development. Interacting between different cultures and communities helps develop social and cultural cohesion. This is important for understanding and respecting the different behaviors, beliefs, and values of different cultures and communities. Social and cultural compatibility is the feeling of comfort and acceptance of a person or a community in another culture or social environment. This is an essential ability to interact between different cultures and communities.

It should ensure that the local people benefit from tourism activities fairly and equitably. If an activity does not provide economic sustainability, it cannot be efficient. Tourism activities should create benefits for the local economy, support local businesses, and encourage local employment. Tourism income must be distributed equitably to the local economy. Tourism activities should aim to minimize environmental impacts in the use of natural resources, water, energy, and waste management (Bertan, 2009). Water and energy conservation, waste reduction, and recycling practices should be part of sustainable tourism development in protected natural resources. All this can only achieve with effective and field-oriented training.

#### Ensuring sustainability of natural resources

Economic sustainability is a concept that aims to use natural resources efficiently, manage production and consumption processes without harming the environment, and support the long-term economic well-being of society. Economic sustainability can be achieved in the following ways:

1. *Productivity increase:* Productivity increase means the ability to produce more products or services using fewer resources. This is important to increase economic sustainability because less resource use lowers costs and increases profitability.
2. *Low-carbon production:* Low-carbon production is a method designed to manage the production process without harming the environment. This reduces the use of fossil fuels and reduces the carbon footprint, reducing the impact on the environment (Sun et al., 2021).

3. *Green technologies*: Green technologies are technological innovations for a sustainable future. These technologies can be used in renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, waste management, water management, and many more.
4. *Long-term planning*: Long-term planning is a critical factor for increasing economic sustainability. A sustainable future is difficult to achieve without the long-term goals and strategies of businesses, societies, and governments.
5. *Innovation*: Innovation can increase economic sustainability through the discovery and implementation of new ideas. Innovative products, services, and business models can foster economic growth and align with the environmental and social factors necessary to achieve a sustainable future (Callaghan et al., 2021) (Gülhan, 2016) (Smith et al., 2001).

Reducing environmental impacts is critical for the protection of natural resources and a sustainable future. To this end, the following methods can be effective:

1. *Use of renewable energy sources*: The use of fossil fuels harms the environment and causes global climate change. Renewable energy sources can help reduce these negative effects. Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and biomass provide environmentally friendly energy production.
2. *Waste management*: Managing waste effectively can help reduce environmental impacts. The amount of waste can be reduced by using methods such as waste reduction, recycling, composting, and landfilling.
3. *Energy efficiency*: Energy efficiency reduces energy use and can help reduce environmental impacts. By using energy-efficient lighting and appliances in businesses and homes, they can lower their energy bills and protect the environment.
4. *Sustainable agriculture*: Sustainable farming practices can use to reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture. Agricultural activities can be made less harmful to the environment by methods such as reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, doing organic farming, protecting the soil, and using water resources effectively.
5. *Transport*: Transport is a major source of environmental impacts. Environmental impacts can be reduced by using fewer vehicles, choosing public transport, cycling, or walking. By using electric or hybrid vehicles, transportation that is less harmful to the environment can be achieved.

These and similar methods can help reduce environmental impacts and contribute to a sustainable future by protecting natural resources. Education and awareness play an important role in a sustainable future (Akbar et al., 2017). People must be conscious and aware of the environment for the protection of natural resources and sustainable tourism development.

Education and awareness play an important role for a sustainable future. For people is necessary to be conscious and aware of the environment for the protection of natural resources and sustainable tourism development. The following steps can be used to increase education and awareness:

1. *Education*: Providing environmental education in schools and the community can make people aware of the environment. In schools, lessons about sustainable development can give; students can inform about the protection of natural resources and environmental problems. Educational events in businesses and public spaces can also be organized.
2. *Awareness*: Awareness means that people are conscious of the environment and sensitive to the protection of natural resources. This can be achieved through awareness-raising campaigns, social media, and other means of communication involving large segments of society. For example, informative posters and brochures on environmentally friendly behaviors can be prepared.
3. *Sharing good practices*: Sharing good practices for sustainable tourism development can raise people's awareness. For example, sharing the work and certification process of the hotels that have obtained sustainable tourism certification can help other businesses in the tourism sector to take a step toward sustainable tourism.
4. *Participation*: Community participation is important for the protection of natural resources and sustainable tourism development. By holding public events and meetings, people can express their views and share their opinions on these issues. Thus, social awareness of sustainable tourism can create. This confirms the first hypothesis.

### **The role of education in the conservation of natural resources and the development of sustainable tourism**

Education plays an important role in sustainable tourism partnership development and the conservation of natural resources. Environmental education programs can organize for target audiences, stakeholders in the tourism sector, and local communities (Akbar et al., 2017). These programs may cover topics such as the importance of natural resources, their protection, sustainable tourism practices, waste management, energy efficiency, and water conservation. Training can take place through schools, universities, tourism businesses, and local communities. In another way, awareness campaigns can be organized to inform the public about the protection of natural resources and sustainable tourism practices. Messages for target audiences can be disseminated by using different communication channels such as media, social media, brochures, and posters. On the other hand, local communities should be actively informed about the conservation of natural resources and sustainable tourism practices and should be included in the training. It should be ensured that local people understand the importance of natural resources and contribute to tourism activities. In addition, sustainable tourism projects that take local knowledge, experience, and cultural values into account can be developed by involving local communities in the decision processes. Stakeholders in the tourism sector should receive training on the conservation of natural resources and sustainable tourism practices. Hotel operators, tour guides, tour operators, travel agencies, and other tourism stakeholders can be trained to protect natural resources and adopt sustainable tourism practices. Developing certification and ethical standards in the tourism industry, providing tourism stakeholders with protection of natural resources, and sustainable tourism practices, are one of the applied methods. This confirms the second hypothesis.

### **The role of management in nature conservation-based tourism development**

The precondition of management in nature conservation-based tourism development is the building of trust and mutual appreciation between stakeholders in the destination (Verschuuren et al., 2021). The role of management is to raise the awareness of environmental and cultural values amongst the community and their relevance to destination management organization including its role in recovering biodiversity and conserving natural and social values. Destination Management Organizations should be closely linked with environmental and cultural institutions (Štetić and Šimčević, 2017). The application of the cluster development concept in the tourist destination, managed by the destination management organization, will enable the synergy of actions of the public, private, and educational research and development sectors, with the support of financial organizations and the media (Milojković, 2013). Destination management organization, as a cluster management organization, can contribute to nature conservation through planning, organization, leading, control, monitoring, evaluation, regulatory measures, funding, awareness raising, environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity, and sustainable use of natural resources (Sunu, 2003; Milojković, 2013). In the first phase of management - planning the development of a tourist destination, it is necessary to incorporate activities that will contribute to achieving SDGs, primarily the growth of the employment rate especially among youth and women; the promotion of local culture and products; monitor the sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism; and keep the healthy ecosystems and promoting a green economy. According to Milojković et al. (2023a, p.1) management of tourism “should take into account the differences that exist concerning indoor and outdoor activities between tourists of gender, age, marital status, number of children, education, work status, and annual personal investment for tourist travel and vacation”. “Management should develop activities based on natural values, well-being packages, tourist-guided mountains, countryside, and urban easy and medium walking trails strongly focusing on existing and potential users of walking tours” (Milojković et al., 2023a, p.15). Management of the relationship between visitors’ needs and environmental impacts can contribute to nature conservation-based tourism development. This confirms the third hypothesis.

### **5. Conclusion**

The destroyed nature does not become rapidly healthy; it is not an easy and cheap process. It takes time and a huge investment, actually more time and funds than it was used during nature resources exploitation. It almost looks like the underground and above the ground have taken their share of this destruction. As a result, every field has started conserving. There is a desire to apply sustainable development concepts in every sectoral area. The protection and sustainable use of natural resources is very important for the sustainability of the tourism sector. Natural resources provide an important attraction and resource for tourism activities. Therefore, increasing tourism by protecting and using natural resources sustainably can provide benefits both in terms of environment and economy. Conservation of natural resources in an area can increase the attractiveness of the area and increase the motivation of tourists to come to the area. Protected natural areas can enable tourists to become acquainted with their natural beauty, diversity of local flora and fauna, and environmentally friendly tourism activities.

However, the sustainable use of natural resources is also important for the continuity of tourism activities. For example, intense tourism activities on natural resources may disrupt the natural balance of the region and cause

environmental pollution. Therefore, priority should be given to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources during tourism activities.

Increasing tourism by preserving and using natural resources sustainably is also important for the economic development of the region. Tourism activities can increase employment in the region, create a market for local producers and contribute to the local economy. The United Nations adopted seventeen main goals for sustainable tourism in 2015 (The Sustainable Development Agenda, 2023). The World tourism organization has a leading role to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals which are focused on poverty reduction, health, education, and the environment until 2023 (The WTO and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2023). These will help illustrate how sustainable tourism can provide a solution to some of the global challenges facing the industry today.

As a result, the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is important for the sustainability of tourism. Sustainable use and conservation of natural resources to increase tourism can provide environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Only by increasing the awareness and knowledge of society about protection and natural resource conservation, actions for the sustainable use of resources will be realised. Environmental education programs are drivers for sustainable tourism development and natural resource protection. Partnership collaboration between various stakeholders from public, private, and academic sectors in the destination is a key to success for responsible and sustainable tourism destination management. The management of the relationship between visitors' needs and the environment is important for nature conservation-based tourism development. Respecting the SDGs in the tourism and hospitality industry is possible for destinations and stakeholders whose development and growth are based on the strategic management approach. Authors highly recommend the implementation of the concept of cluster development, as an integral and innovative tool for local economic development, for achieving harmony between visitors', stakeholders', and nature' needs.

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