

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The goal of the chapter is to show how the principle of “sustainability” evolved, to describe what the different aspects of it are, and how sustainability can be implemented.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Summit, was held at Rio de Janeiro from 3-14 June, 1992. Sustainability was discussed for the first time as the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled. A comprehensive program of action, Agenda 21, was adopted and was to be implemented by all governments. Sustainability for tourism, as for other industries, has three interconnected aspects: environmental, socio-cultural, and economic. The concept of sustainability and sustainable development will be discussed in detail. The aims, areas and benefits of Agenda 21, that was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (the Rio Earth Summit), will be demonstrated.

The relevance of Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) to a country with regard to sustainability and how the ideals could be applied will be discussed. Sustainability is also relevant in tourism because tourism must be economically viable, must not destroy the resources and environment it depends on, and must consider the social fabric of the host community.

After the 1995 World Conference on “Sustainable Tourism” Lanzarote, Spain, the “*Charter for Sustainable Tourism*” was prepared. It stated, *inter alia*, that: “*Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long-term, economically viable, as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities*”. This will be examined and how other authors expanded on the definition will also be interrogated.

A detailed description of 10 “*Steps to sustainable tourism*”, as developed by Department of the Environment and Heritage of Australia 2004, will be examined. These guiding principles and approaches of sustainable tourism, and how to achieve it, are very important aspects to be reviewed.

#### **2.2 ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability is “... *an economic, social, and ecological concept. It is intended to be a means of configuring civilisation and human activity so that society and its members are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving biodiversity and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals indefinitely.*

*Sustainability affects every level of organisation, from the local neighbourhood to the entire globe*". Put in simpler terms, sustainability is providing for the best for people and the environment both now and in the indefinite future. According to the 1987 Brundtland Report, sustainability is "*meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*" It is very much like the seventh generation philosophy of the Native American Iroquois Confederacy mandating that chiefs always consider the effects of their actions on their descendants down through the seventh generation of the future. The original term was "*sustainable development*", a term adopted by the Agenda 21 program of the United Nations. Some people now object to the term "*sustainable development*" as an umbrella term as it implies continued development, and so the objectors insist that it should be reserved only for developmental activities. Sustainability, then, is nowadays used as an umbrella term for all of human activity.

### **Types of sustainability**

- **Institutional sustainability:** that is, can the strengthened institutional structure continue to deliver the results of the technical cooperation to the ultimate end-users? The results may not be sustainable if, for example, the planning unit strengthened by the technical cooperation ceases to have access to top-management, or is not provided with adequate resources for the effective performance, after the technical cooperation terminates
- **Economical and financial sustainability:** that is, can the results of the technical cooperation continue to yield an economic benefit after the technical cooperation is withdrawn? For example, the benefits from the introduction of new crops may not be sustained if the constraints to marketing the crops are not resolved. Similarly, economic (as distinct from financial) sustainability may be at risk, if the end-users continue to depend on heavily-subsidised activities and inputs
- **Ecological sustainability:** that is, are the benefits to be generated by the technical cooperation likely to lead to a deterioration in the physical environment (thus indirectly contributing to a fall in production) or well-being of the groups targeted, and those of their society? (<http://www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Sustainability>). The downside of geotourism is that it may itself progressively destroy the very values that appeal to the ecotourist – especially in fragile environments.

According to Lee and O'Neil (2004:2), sustainability is: "*A synergistic process whereby environmental and economic and quality of life considerations are effectively balanced in project planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance in meeting the needs of the present without compromising the quality of life for future generations*". The concept is diagrammed in Figure 2.1.

The concept of sustainability in the figure above shows three circles that intersect with each other. The three components, 1) environment, 2) economic, and 3) social well-being must be in equilibrium, and this will imply that sustainability is being achieved.

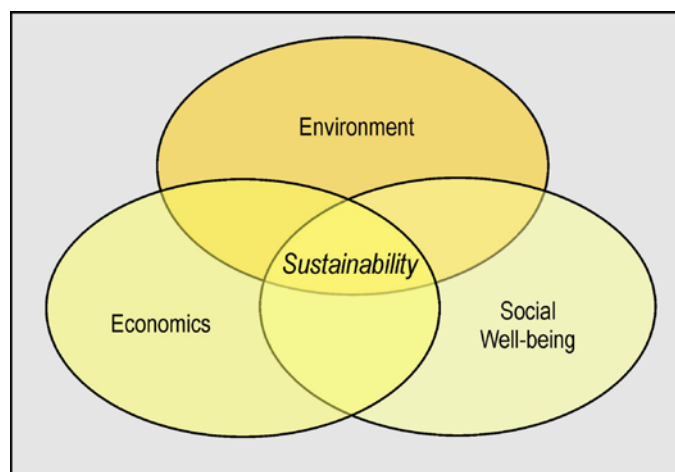


Figure 2.1: The concept of sustainability (Lee and O’Neil: 2004 as adapted by the researcher: 2008)  
 ([www.epa.gov/gmpo/lmrsbc/pdf/pres3\\_MRBA\\_framework.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/lmrsbc/pdf/pres3_MRBA_framework.pdf))

According to Cotter and Hannan (1999:171-172), some of the key principles of sustainability are:

- **Integration:** The effective integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in decision-making. An integrated approach means that decision making processes at all levels should include consideration of a broad range of environmental, social and economic effects. The separation of functions within councils can result in a decision-maker in one area overlooking impacts that would be readily apparent to people in other areas. Integration involves developing organisational processes that allow such impacts to be easily seen and considered across council departments before decision making occurs. Integration also suggests the effectiveness of working more closely and cooperatively with other organisations, including neighbouring councils, other levels of government and, most significantly, all sectors of the local community
- **Community involvement:** Recognition that sustainability cannot be achieved, nor significant progress made toward it, without the support and involvement of the whole community. A cooperative council/community approach, from the early stages through to implementation of a project, allows for resource sharing, and fosters a supportive and active community that perceives itself as owning both the problems and the solutions. The effectiveness of this approach is already recognised in many local authority programs such as those of waste minimisation or greenhouse-gas emission reduction. Community involvement is also essential to monitoring the state of the environment
- **Precautionary behaviour:** Where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation, such as taking measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Precautionary behaviour requires the

careful consideration of possible adverse environmental effects of planning, policy and practice. Where a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage exists, it would be imprudent and inadequate to wait for scientific certainty before acting. Precautionary behaviour implies a conservation ethic within councils' environmental planning and management frameworks to guard against future environmental degradation

- **Equity within and between generations:** Fairness and equal access to opportunities both in our lifetimes, as well as for future generations. This notion of equity implies the importance of maintaining both ecological integrity and the Earth's resources in order to provide for a certain quality of life, in both the short and long term. As such, present activities should not compromise the right of the present generation, or of future generations, to healthy and dynamic environments nor must they foreclose on opportunities. This approach involves asking, "*Is the current quality of life obtained at the expense of others, or of generations to come?*"
- **Continual improvement:** The declining environmental situation means there is an imperative to take immediate action to become more sustainable and to make continual improvement. Change will not occur all at once, however, it is important to make continual improvements, making the most of advances in technology and scientific understanding about what is sustainable, and of increases in community awareness of sustainability issues
- **Ecological integrity:** This requires the protection of biological diversity and maintenance of essential ecological processes and life-support systems. Recognising the interdependence of all parts of the natural environment, that nothing is separate from it, the protection of the natural environment in its many diverse forms is essential for there is a heavy dependence on it. For example, each region has a unique climate, geomorphology, biota and habitat qualities and patterns that determine the issues and responses to maintaining ecological integrity. Therefore, urban, rural and coastal councils may have significantly different perspectives in preserving ecological integrity in their own region. These could include maintenance and enhancement of vegetation, waterways, coasts and wildlife corridors as well as soil, water and air quality.

In the Australian context, Evans (2000) states that sustainability is seen to involve five elemental concepts, namely:

1. The integration of environmental and developmental aspirations at all levels of decision-making.
2. Intragenerational and intergenerational equity. This last is the fundamental ethical basis of sustainability.
3. Application of the precautionary principle or approach. The precautionary approach, as expressed in Principle 15 of the *Rio Declaration*, requires that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

4. The maintenance of biological diversity and biological integrity.
5. The internalisation of environmental costs. This requires new economic attitudes and mechanisms for measuring and evaluating the costs of maintaining balances of environmental inputs, outputs and effects at sustainable levels.

Each of the principles discussed above is clearly and directly referable to the conservation of natural heritage. Evans (2000) concludes that “... *to the extent that any human right to a whole environment carries with it a human duty to care for the environment, together with a parallel duty to care for nature and culture owed to present and future generations, sustainability principles and the stewardship ethic are tending to define such a human duty*”.

Crawford, Young and Miall (2002:1-4) describe the sustainability tree as a coherent conceptual framework for sustainability, by integrating the social, environmental and economic dimensions in a systems approach. Various stakeholders can use this tool when linking with others. This practical and useful approach is widely understood by all stakeholders, who can then appreciate how their particular interests and efforts link in with those of others. It is based on Australian and international principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). This starting point in generating consensus amongst internal and external stakeholders allows everyone to gain an appreciation of the different dimensions and components of the sustainability agenda. The ‘roots’ of the tree are science, ethics and values, and then progressing up the ‘trunk’ are the first order principles of ESD. The three main ‘branches’ are the triple bottom line that leads into the more detailed areas of strategies, plans, management systems and indicators. At the top of the tree, the ‘leaves’ represent the actions and interests of individual stakeholders.

The sustainability tree greatly assists in the communication and education of complex sustainability, ESD and Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) issues to diverse stakeholder groups. The metaphorical tree was constructed using differing hierarchical levels to represent the various dimensions of the sustainability agenda, from the core scientific principles through to individual actions. The process allows a ‘common language’ to be used by all stakeholders which then assists an understanding of the change management processes necessary to implement ESD. By mapping existing personal and organisational activities on to the sustainability tree, a gap analysis may be undertaken which can then inform the development of a coherent sustainability/LA 21 strategy. Linkages are clearly identifiable. The sustainability tree is scalable and adaptable to the differing needs of organisations. The EcoSteps sustainability tree is shown as Figure 2.2.

Crawford *et al.* (2002:1-4) states that organisations which start moving down the path of sustainability are undertaking a task that is at once both simple and complex. It requires the integration of sustainability concepts and systems into the frame of organisational and operational reality. It is a simple task because sustainability concepts and principles are becoming well known. It is also a complex task because it often requires re-thinking long held assumptions and often significantly re-designing systems, products and services.

Working out the optimal path towards ESD and sustainability is not easy for any organisation and many practical, organisational, cultural and political issues must be addressed along the way. Ultimately, the rewards are numerous including greater community engagement, greater operational efficiency, quicker and more accurate responses to community needs, more strategic focus on the future, appreciation of future generations' needs, for example.

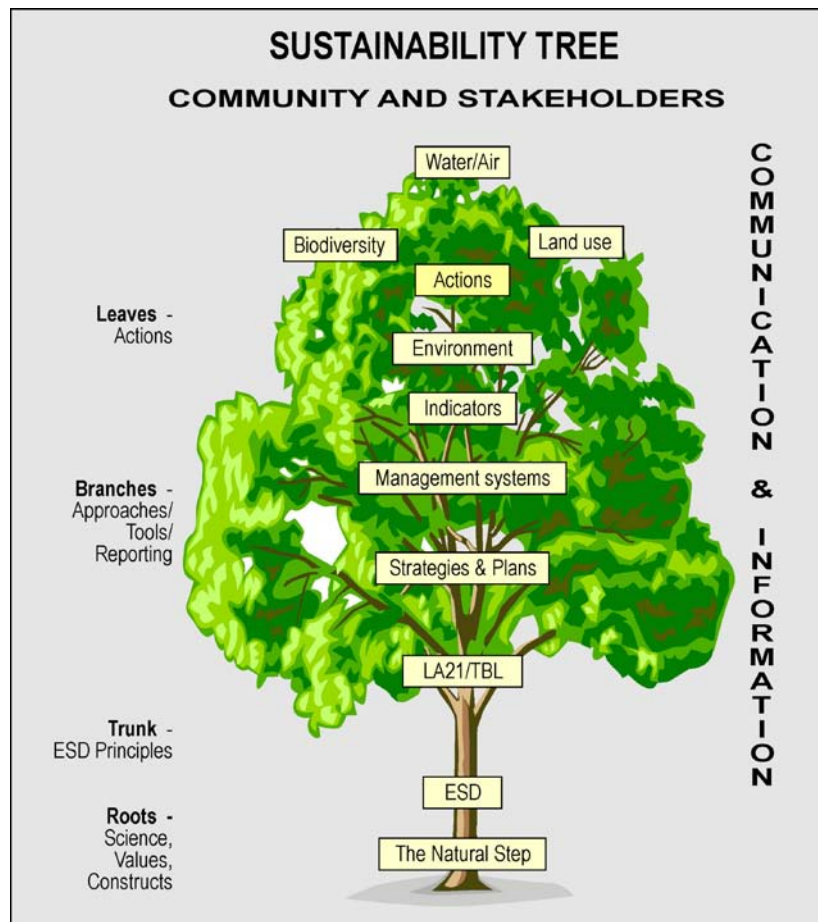


Figure 2.2: The EcoSteps sustainability tree (Crawford, Young and Miall, 2002:1-4)

In the agenda of the Sustainable Tourism Summit: Rhode Island 2006, (15 November 2006), sustainability was explained in the statement: *“Though the environment is a first priority, sustainability is not just about the natural environment! Sustainability and sustainable development is a systemic concept that embraces a variety of diverse and synergistic elements from the human and non-human environment. It embodies the parallel care of a diverse range of economic, social, ecological, cultural, community knowledge and infrastructure capabilities and assets that, through their synergy enhance the actions that regenerate and restore not only the ecology of place, but also the community of place”* (<http://www.sustainabletourism.com/summitagenda.pdf>).

In summation, McKercher (2003:3, 6-8) is of the opinion that, in principle, most people

support sustainability. However, in practice, sustainability has been difficult to achieve because it is so broad and complex. Indeed, two different ideologies have emerged:

- The first, arguing for economic sustainability as the dominant characteristic (that is, the *status quo*)
- and the second, arguing for ecological sustainability as the dominant feature.

If sustainability is considered in the context of a strategy, both economic and ecological considerations are needed and true sustainability cannot exist without addressing both concerns.

As a guiding strategy, this seems to make sense, particularly given that:

- The absolute tourism resource base is limited and will come under increasing pressure from modernization and from continued economic development
- More and more people are travelling each year, meaning:
  - Usage pressures will increase
  - The number of first time tourists who need to be educated in appropriate behaviour will grow.
- Consumers are becoming more sophisticated and worldly, and so are increasingly making ethical choices about their tourism purchases
- Ecotourism and cultural tourism represent low-cost product development opportunities for destinations
- Ecological and cultural assets are one of the few truly unique features of countries and regions, giving them a competitive advantage.

Few, if any tourism, products are truly sustainable and fewer, if any, destinations can be called sustainable. Tourism on a global scale seems now to be moving farther from sustainability than was ever the case before. The issue is particularly problematic in the developing world, and in those economies in transition from a demand economy to a market economy. Indeed, many newly emerging destinations promote sustainability but, adopt the same old practices with the same adverse effects that have been troubling tourism for decades. There are many successes and many failures.

Some of the reasons why there is such a gap between ideology and practice are:

#### **Economic**

- Improving the economic well-being of residents through economic growth and job creation is often a higher national priority than is conservation
- Tourism, especially large scale mass tourism, is pursued because of the foreign direct investment and the foreign exchange it generates
- Tourism is a means to attract foreign aid for large-scale infrastructure development, without ongoing funds for maintenance.

#### **Structural**

- A lack of a strong, national, sustainable, development framework under which tourism can fit

- A weak institutional framework with inadequate control mechanisms
- A failure to plan comprehensively for large flows of tourists to remote areas in relation to local resources, electricity and water supply
- Tourism is the only option for economic development, even though the area lacks assets required to be a viable destination.

### **Tourism**

- The environment and local cultures represent the easiest, low-cost and fastest way to develop tourism attractions and so they find themselves exploited
- A lack of understanding about what tourism is and how it works
- A lack of commitment by tourism operators to safeguard the local environment and host cultures
- The misguided belief that small is always good.

### **Social / Community**

- Communities pursue tourism without understanding fully its implications
- Tourism can be imposed on local communities by the dominant ethnic, cultural, or business group, or by political leaders.

Many of the structural issues are not under the direct control or influence of government tourism officials and members of the tourism industry. Academics, government officials, community leaders and the tourism industry can take an active role in addressing most of the remaining issues. A vision, commitment and a shared goal is necessary to achieve true sustainability. Government should take the lead, but in doing so, it must work in partnership with other levels of government, host communities and the tourism industry. This leadership will involve:

- Establishing national tourism objectives that reflect the unique character, opportunities and constraints in a country
- Developing a shared vision of what type of tourism is wanted and how to achieve that goal
- Establishing a policy framework to achieve those objectives
- Developing, in collaboration with others, guidelines, policies and practices for both new tourism projects and for the management of ongoing tourism activities
- Working with educational institutions and other organizations in education, training and development programs
- Providing a longer-term commitment to move from the current situation to a more attractive future position.

Therefore, adopting a strategic outlook and answering these six questions can set a country on the path to sustainable tourism:

1. What products should be offered?
  - High quality, ethical and sustainable that benefit local communities
2. What products should not be offered?
  - Low quality, mass and exploitative products that do not benefit local



communities

3. Which markets should be targeted?
  - Upmarket, affluent, educated, aware tourists. Target exclusivity and quality
4. Which markets should be avoided?
  - High volume, low yield markets
5. Which other destinations should be seen as competitors?
  - Other quality special interest tourism destinations
6. Which other destinations should not be seen as competitors?
  - Mass market, low quality destinations.

Weaver (2006:vii) summed up sustainability as follows: “*Sustainable principles must be applied to all human activities, and tourism, in all its forms, must be included in the general sustainable development of territories and nations*”.

### 2.2.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was first held at Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1972, and marked the emergence of international environmental law. The Declaration on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Declaration) set out the principles for various international environmental issues, including human rights, natural resource management, pollution prevention and the relationship between the environment and development. The conference also led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Program. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, also known as the Brundtland Commission, published a report: “*Our Common Future*”, in 1987. It was written by Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the pioneer of sustainable development, and it highlighted the idea of sustainable development (c.f. 2.2).

Cherqui (2005:5) believes that the evolution of the concept and the implication for the actors (Scientific and NGO’s, governments and nations, enterprises, and consumers) was proposed by Brodhag (2004:8). The important dates of sustainable development are summarised in Figure 2.3. The figure shows the evolution of this concept over time. It also clearly shows the actions of the different actors during the last thirty years. It may also be seen that the concept of sustainable development gave birth to new terms such as “*societal responsibility*” and “*economic, social and environmental performance*”. The linkage between environment and development was globally recognised in 1980 when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the “*World Conservation Strategy*” and used the term “*sustainable development*”. This concept came into general usage following the publication of the 1987 Brundtland Report. Regrettably, the definition is not operational and has created much antagonism and cognitive dissonance. This arises because sustainability is often taken to refer to processes that can be maintained indefinitely. This is not the case for economic growth and development, just as the world's exponential population growth is unsustainable. Development is thus *unsustainable* in this sense. If it were to mean *development of sustainability* rather than *sustainability of development*, there would be no

contradiction, but sustainability is clearly being used as an adjective here. The issue is resolved when it is realised that 'sustainable' has a different meaning in this context, being "...that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of the future".

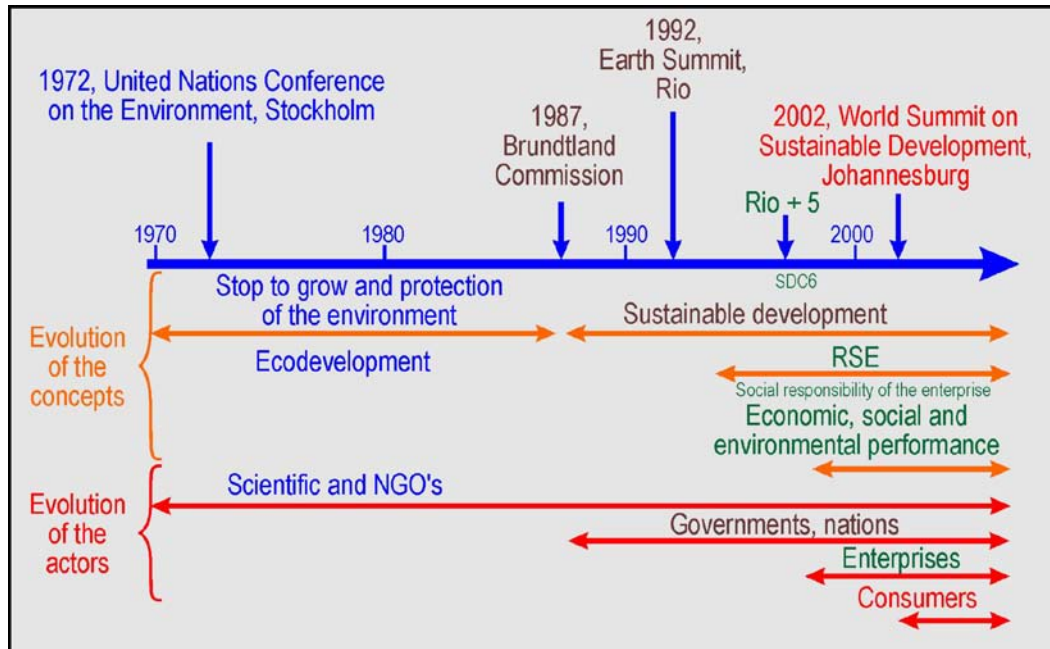


Figure 2.3: Important dates of sustainable development (Brodhag 2004:8). The text was translated from French by the author (2008)

**Note:** SDC6 is the “Sustainable Development Commission 6” which was held in Argentina during 1997.

The field of sustainable development consists of three constituent parts:

1. Environmental sustainability
2. Economic sustainability; and
3. Social-political sustainability.

### Scope and definitions

Sustainable development policies encompass three general policy areas: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability. Several United Nations texts, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, refer to the “interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars” of sustainable development as being economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

In the late 1980's, the concept “sustainable development” was introduced into the environmental debate. It is an expression of the interdependence between the three systems identified as basic to development: the economic system, the social system, and the

biophysical system. The last element can perhaps better be described as ‘the environment’. This interdependence is illustrated by Figure 2.4. The economy exists entirely within society, because all parts of the human economy require interaction among people. Society in turn, exists entirely within the environmental system. Although human activity is re-shaping the environment at an ever-increasing rate, society and its economic systems can never exist independently of the environment. The most common way of illustrating sustainable development is the “*three spheres/pillars*” diagram (Figure 2.4). True sustainable development is then development that meets the “*triple bottom line*” where all three systems interact on an equal basis that is shown as sustainable. This model can be useful in showing where the interrelationships exist; for example, the interrelated activities that lie within the environmental and socio-economic domains

(<http://www.sustainablesettlement.co.za/issues/susdev.html>).

The spheres of sustainable development are shown in Figure 2.4.

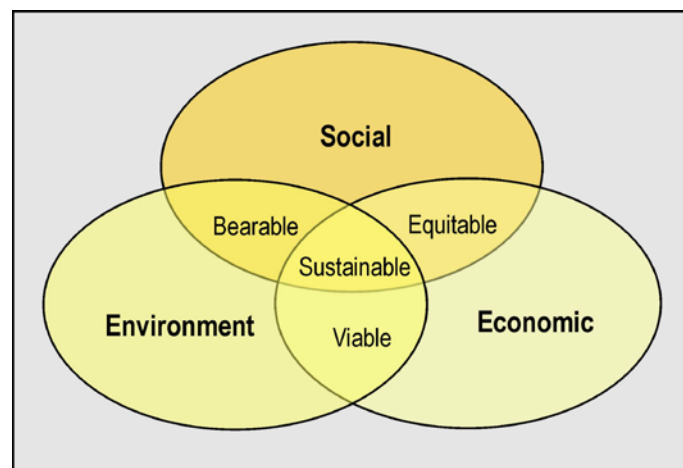


Figure 2.4: The spheres of sustainable development: at the confluence of three occupations  
([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable\\_development](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development))

Burr (2002:27) states that sustainability is an ‘ideal’ balance of capacities in all three systems and that will:

- Maximise goal achievement across the three systems at one and the same time through an adaptive process of trade-offs’,
  - For the more the three systems and goals converge, the more sustainable development becomes.

According to the Brundtland report (1997, as cited by Ham and Weiler, 2002:36): “...sustainable development is that economic growth and environmental conservation are not only compatible, but are necessary partners. The one cannot exist without the other”. Sustainable tourism that is developed and maintained in such a manner, and on such a scale, remains economically viable over an indefinite period and does not undermine the physical and human environment that sustains and nurtures it. It needs to be economic sustainable

because if it is not profitable, then it is open to argument whether it is environmentally sustainable. Tourism that is unprofitable and unviable will simply cease to exist.

Ritchie and Crouch (2003:167) stress that sustainable development must take place in a broader surrounding social, economic, environmental, cultural, legal and political system that provides the larger mega-policy framework that tourism must acknowledge, and must function within. When considering developing tourism, then specific strategies must be adopted in order to implement the policies defined by the destination vision. It is useful to specify a range of tourism objectives that operationalise the steps required to realise the destination vision.

Jamieson and Noble (2000) hold the opinion that increasing evidence shows an integrated approach to tourism planning and management is now required to achieve sustainable tourism. Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of combining the needs of traditional urban management (including, but not limited to, transportation, land use planning, marketing, economic development, and fire and safety) with the need to plan for tourism. Some of the most important principles of sustainable tourism development include:

- Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community-inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development
- Tourism should provide quality employment to its community residents, and a linkage between the local businesses and tourism should be established
- A code of practice should be established for tourism at all levels - national, regional, and local - based on internationally accepted standards. Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impacts, and limits to acceptable change should be established
- Education and training programs to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established.

Sharpley (2005:268-270) is of the opinion that sustainable tourism development seeks to optimise the benefits of tourism to tourists (their experiences), the industry (profits) and local people (their socio-economic development) while minimising the impacts of tourism development on the environment. The aims and objectives of tourism development are:

- That conservation and sustainable use of tourism resources are seen as crucial. Therefore, tourism should be planned and managed with environmental limits and with due regard to the long-term appropriate use of natural and human resources
- That tourism planning, development and operation should be integrated into national and local development strategies. In particular, consideration should be given to different types of tourism development and the way they link with existing land and resource uses, and with socio-cultural factors
- That tourism should support a wide range of local economic activities, taking environmental costs and benefits into account, but that it should not be permitted to become an activity which dominates the economic base of an area

- That local communities should be encouraged and expected to participate in the planning, development and control of tourism with the support of the government and industry
- That all organisations and individual should respect the culture, the economy, the way of life, the environment and political structures in the destination area
- That all stakeholders in tourism should be educated of the need to develop more sustainable forms of tourism. This includes staff training and raising awareness, through education and marketing tourism responsibly, of sustainability issues amongst host communities and tourists themselves
- That research should be undertaken throughout all stage of tourism development and operation to monitor impacts, to solve problems and to allow local people and others to respond to changes and to take advantages of opportunities
- That all agencies, organisations, businesses and individuals should co-operate and work together to avoid potential conflict, and so optimise the benefits to all involved in the development and management of tourism.

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of UNESCO (2001:10-16) elaborates further this concept by stating that “...*cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature*”; for it becomes one of the roots of development understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. In this vision, cultural diversity is the fourth policy area of sustainable development

(<http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>).

**Economic Sustainability:** Agenda 21 clearly identified information, integration and participation as key building blocks to help countries achieve development by recognising these interdependent pillars. It emphasises that in sustainable development, everyone is a user and provider of information. It also stresses the need to change from the old sector-centered ways of doing business to new approaches that involve cross-sectoral co-ordination and the integration of environmental and social concerns into all development processes. Furthermore, Agenda 21 emphasises that broad public participation in decision making is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving sustainable development

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO>).

At Kennecott Utah Copper, USA, sustainable development is integral to the success as a fully integrated producer of copper cathode, molybdenum, gold, and silver, and to the social and financial investment the stakeholders and surrounding communities made in them. By anchoring the business strategy and daily practices in alignment with the concept of sustainable development, they are able to strengthen their operations and products and so to provide lasting benefits for their employees and stakeholders. The benefits include lower risks, improved efficiency and a superior reputation. Their mission, “*to maximize the long-term value of the resources under our stewardship*”, is supported by focused efforts in all

four pillars of sustainable development: economic prosperity, social well-being, environmental stewardship, and governance, which includes the management systems and processes that enable them to accomplish their goals in each of these areas. The four pillars of sustainable development, economic prosperity, social well-being, environmental stewardship and governance are shown in Figure 2.5.

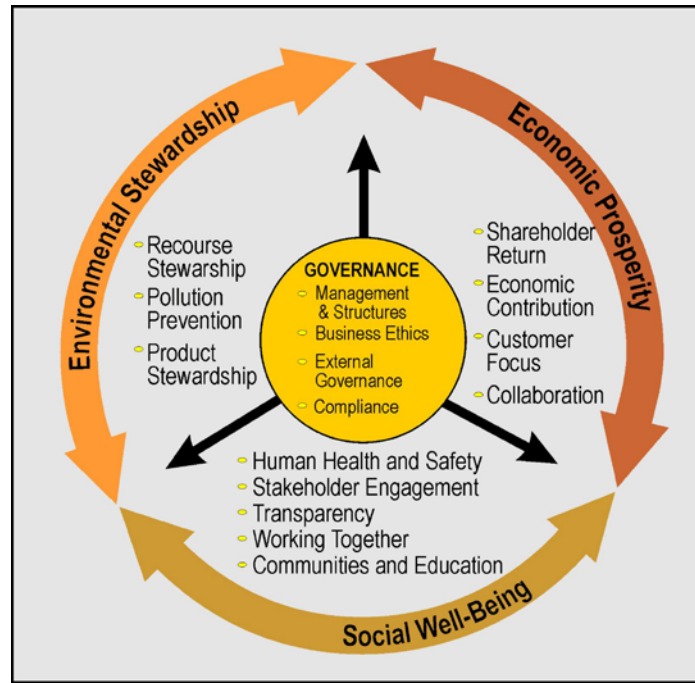


Figure 2.5: The four pillars of sustainable development: economic prosperity, social well-being, environmental stewardship and governance (Kennecott Utah Copper, USA, (<http://www.kennecott.com/?id=MjAwMDA3Mg>))

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD, 2006:2), states that social, economic and environmental sustainability do not emerge spontaneously. *“These conditions only emerge through deliberate strategic and operational interventions by government to achieve longer term durability of its policy programmes aimed at reshaping society in a more desired form. This can only be achieved through systematic attempts by government to achieve good governance outcomes that integrate the desired longer-term social, economic and environmental outcomes. These four integrated dimensions of sustainability must be clarified before one can develop a strategy to achieve sustainable governance”* ([http://www.environment.gov.za/nssd\\_2005/draft\\_chapters/NSSD Chapter 4 Framework for M E.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.za/nssd_2005/draft_chapters/NSSD_Chapter_4_Framework_for_M_E.pdf)). The NSSD provides an integrated framework for it views social, economic and ecosystem factors as being embedded within each other, and underpinned by systems of governance. Therefore, it identifies key areas for intervention based on an integrated analysis of trends in the four areas. Through this approach, the NSSD seeks to build on the definition of sustainable development by highlighting the importance of institutions and systems of governance in implementing the concept and in oversight activities. This approach is modeled in Figure 2.6.

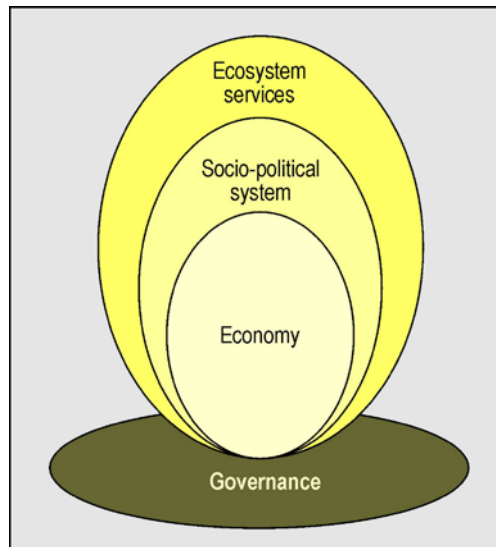


Figure 2.6: Social, economic and ecosystem factors embedded within each other and underpinned by systems of governance  
[http://www.enviropaedia.com/topic/default.php?topic\\_id=252](http://www.enviropaedia.com/topic/default.php?topic_id=252)

Sharpley (2005:179-180, 184-187) believes that the primary objective of many ‘sustainable’ rural policies is to minimise the negative consequences of tourism development and activity through appropriate resource planning and management. Thus, sustainable tourism is equated with sustainable resource use. The contribution of clusters/networks becomes more important as a means of generating regional competitiveness and positive economies for rural tourism businesses. The benefits are:

- Increased competitiveness
- Economies of scale
- A focus on co-operation and innovation.

Thus, for the realisation of a positive, symbiotic relationship between tourism and the countryside, tourism can contribute to the optimalisation of the development/regeneration of rural areas.

The model proposes that the successful management of the countryside should be able to recognise, satisfy and balance the needs of the conservation and commercial groups of actors within the broader tourism and rural development policies. This balance can be achieved by forming a partnership of relevant stakeholders. Appropriate central government policy and guidance is also an essential part of effective countryside management for tourism. Sharpley (2005:187) concludes that “... *in many rural areas, tourism has become the dominant, though often unrecognized, economic sector. Therefore, not only should tourism policy be synonymous with rural policy at national level, but also the effective management of the countryside for tourism is dependent on the marriage, through a governance process, of*

*broader (rural) policy with site- or destination-level business and environmental management*". The model can also be applied in the case of geotourism.

At the "3<sup>rd</sup> UNESCO International Conference on Geoparks", Osnabrück, Germany, 22-26 June 2008, Dowling (2008:19) stated that:

- Sustainability underpins ALL tourism development today including geotourism
- Sustainability means being economically viable, community beneficial, and environmentally responsible
- Sustainability is only achieved through appropriate planning and management.

## 2.2.2 SUSTAINABILITY AND LOCAL AGENDA 21

Agenda 21 is a comprehensive program of action adopted by 182 governments at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) at the Earth Summit on 14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. It provides a blueprint for securing the sustainable future of the planet. It identifies the environment and developmental issues which threaten to bring about economic and ecological catastrophes, and a strategy was formulated for a transition into more sustainable practices. Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) was first described in Agenda 21 as the global blueprint for sustainability that was agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (the Rio Earth Summit). Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 identifies local authorities as the sphere of governance closest to the people. It calls upon all local authorities to consult with their communities to develop and implement a local plan for sustainability, a 'Local Agenda 21' (<http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/la21/index.html>, [www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/a21.one.pdf](http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/a21.one.pdf)).

Salan (2002: 2) describes LA 21 as a process of change aimed at providing a sustainable future. To change organisations and communities requires knowledge, political will, resources and funding but also a whole range of skills and professional expertise seldom found in local government. According to the Sustainability Unit, Environment Australia the LA 21 is a program that provides a framework for implementing sustainable development at the local level. The aims are to build upon existing local Government strategies and resources (such as corporate plans, vegetation management plans, and transport strategies) to better integrate environmental, economic and social goals (<http://www.ea.gov.au/esd/la21/>).

Cotter and Hannan (1999:167-170) record that Agenda 21 was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Summit meeting in 1992. In the Agenda, there are three primary goals toward sustainable development: relevant national level policies and strategies, integration of decision-making processes and community involvement. Agenda 21 is divided into four sections, and subdivided into 40 Chapters. A summary of each section follows:



- **Section I – Social and Economic Dimensions, Chapters 2-8.** This Section examines the adverse social and economic issues and outcomes of unsustainable development and resource use
- **Section II – Conservation and Management of Resources for Development, Chapters 9-22.** This section deals with the “sectoral issues” chapters of Agenda 21
- **Section III – Strengthening the Role of Major Groups, Chapters 24-32.** This Section focuses on local empowerment and alliance building between various social partners to ensure all major groups are actively involved in all program areas of Agenda 21
- **Section IV – Means of Implementation, Chapters 33-40.**

The LA 21 development process is just as important as the final plan or strategy. It is vital that during the process, open discussion and debate about what is important to the whole community should take place. Everyone must work together to reach a shared vision/goal and the development of successful partnerships between government, industry and community groups. During the flexible and ongoing development process, Local Government plays an important role by:

- Helping communities to understand sustainability
- Encouraging debate on sustainability issues
- Leading the LA 21 planning process
- Improving government’s own operations
- Forming strong local partnerships
- Implementing action within the community to make their area more sustainable.

There is no fixed model for LA 21. The program should be relevant to the local Government and community involved in its development, and should address the specific environmental, economic and social issues that they face. The pace, size and scope of the program should be decided in consultation with the community.

To get started the LA 21 process, it may be helpful to:

- Research various approaches and outcomes
- Seek political and management commitment
- Develop an inventory of existing council strategies and activities
- Undertake a simple assessment of the current state of the area
- Tailor the LA 21 process to the local council requirements
- Emphasise that LA 21 builds on existing council strategies and resources
- Develop a preliminary budget and roles for staff provide a report to council on the steps in moving forward.

An effective LA 21 process should result in:

- A strong partnership between the local Government and its community
- Ongoing community involvement in decision-making

- Integrated decisions which take into account all foreseeable economic, social and environmental considerations
- A long term sustainability action plan that is successfully implemented and periodically reviewed
- Changes that promote greater sustainability and better environmental outcomes for the community

(<http://www.ea.gov.au/esd/la21/>).

Cotter and Hannan (1999:1-188) prepared a guide entitled “*Our Community, Our Future: A Guide to Local Agenda 21*”. Cotter *et al.* (1999:7-9) state that local governments in Australia and around the world are increasingly becoming lead agencies for sustainable development. They are developing and implementing systematic approaches to provide for the long-term future, in terms of the health and well-being, of rural communities and the environment that supports them. The guide was prepared to provide local councils and the communities they represent with guidance and direction in planning and implementing a LA 21 approach. It is aimed at:

- Individuals and groups who want to know how to gain commitment from key decision makers to establish a LA 21
- Councils that have committed to sustainable development, and need guidance on how to commence a LA 21
- Councils that have started to develop a strategy or who are actively working towards sustainable development but who need further direction, perhaps on a particular aspect of their work
- Councils that are progressing well and want some further ideas.

Action areas in a LA 21 process are:

- **Action Area 1:** Preparing the ground by identifying council structures, strategies and resources to be used to develop a LA 21 with the support of the council, staff, including senior management, and the community
- **Action Area 2:** Building partnerships by establishing an understanding of the community and developing ways and means of extending awareness and involvement in LA 21
- **Action Area 3:** Determining vision, goals, targets and indicators by setting out what the council and the community wishes to achieve, ideally broken down into goals with indicators and targets
- **Action Area 4:** Creating a local action planning document by preparing a statement of actions that the council will undertake in order to realise each target. This includes timeline, budget and responsible officers for each action
- **Action Area 5:** Implementing, reporting, monitoring and reviewing by considering whether the actions are helping to achieve the targets, whether progress is being made towards the goals and whether any aspect of the LA 21 needs changing.

The Action Areas cover the basic activities of a LA 21, which include:

- Involving the entire community in preparing a long term sustainable development action plan through representative community involvement
- Determining the vision, goals, targets and priorities for action, taking an integrated approach
- Working in partnership with all stakeholders to achieve those goals
- Monitoring and reporting procedures, including the use of local indicators to track progress and to allow participants to hold each other accountable to the action plan.

A key element of a LA 21 is improvement of the frameworks and systems used for planning, policy-making and implementing because they can be more influential and enduring than specific actions, which will change regularly. The exact approach that should be taken by each council will vary depending on its particular circumstances (resources, history of working on sustainability and involving the community, and the level of commitment). The types of issues that a community focuses on will also vary from council to council (<http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/la21/manual/index.html>).

Cotter and Hannan (1999:175-176) state that benefits to a local authority of implementing a LA 21 are the following:

- **Change is managed more effectively.** Local authorities are always faced with change. This includes increased community expectations, delegation of powers from higher levels to local government, and revenue limitations. A LA 21 can help councils deal with change. A LA 21 is a cohesive force, bringing together future planning needs with new structural realities. It allows a local council and its community to develop a locally appropriate means of managing change towards a desired future
- **More effective policy is developed.** Improved planning and better corporate structures are likely to result from the long-term focus of LA 21 and its emphasis on the integration of environmental, economic and social policies and community involvement. With sustainability as the goal, reconciling the apparently competing pressures for economic development, environmental protection, and a more equitable society should be a priority for the council
- **Capacity to meet community needs is enhanced.** Council is more likely to meet the needs of its community when taking an integrated approach and dealing seriously with the answers to questions such as:
  - What does this community value?
  - What is to be left for the next generation?
  - How are these goals to be achieved?
- **The community achieves greater cohesion.** Lack of community cohesion - rapid urbanisation, reduced services in rural areas, high neighbourhood crime rates - can be addressed by involving people in decisions about their future. Community ownership

of the Local Agenda 21 process does not necessarily change people, but it can work towards long term change for greater community cohesion

- **Regional links are strengthened.** Sustainability requires cooperation across the many organisations that are responsible for related issues such as air quality, transportation, regional industry and so on. Stronger regional links can lead to benefits in other areas
- **Costs are saved.** Effective policy integration and good long-term planning can save resources, and therefore money. Cost savings can also be made through practices such as ‘life cycle’ costing of products, for example, council buildings, and by audits of paper, water and other resources
- **Healthy and vibrant communities are fostered.** By seeking to address economic, environmental and social issues, LA 21 encourages creative solutions, for example, providing opportunities for attracting new future-focused industry (such as energy efficient manufacturers or industry that uses recycled materials) to increase sustainable jobs in the area
- **Relevance is maintained.** LA 21 provides the opportunity to capture the imagination of the local community, and to stay relevant to them. Rather than just servicing the community, local authorities can play a greater role in community development.

(<http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/la21/manual/pubs/manual.pdf>)

From the above-mentioned discussion a question can be asked: *“Is there not a danger that geotourism may dilute the biological emphasis of what is mainstream ecotourism – so that geotourism is seen as more eco-friendly than ecotourism”?* The researcher reckons that research in the future is necessary to answer this.

At the *“Sustaining our Communities”* International Local Agenda 21 Conference in Adelaide, Australia, Beck and Crawley (2002:2-5) stress that LA 21 was developed at the Earth Summit as a blueprint to aid countries around the world to implement sustainable development. Local government is one of the nine ‘major groups’ named in LA 21 as being fundamental to achieve sustainable development. It recognises that most environmental challenges have their roots in local activities and therefore local governments are encouraged to promote local environmental, economic and social sustainability by translating the principles of sustainable development into strategies that are meaningful to local communities.

A LA 21 program comprises systems and processes that integrate environmental, economic and social development. Founded on strong partnerships between local government and the community, the progress towards local sustainable development is guided by the preparation of a long-term strategic action plan that integrates existing policies and programs and an agreed future direction. It provides the basis for debate on, and awareness of, sustainable development at the community level. It also challenges people to form their vision of a sustainable future and demonstrates that going through this process is as important as and as fundamental to, the outcome. Establishing the effectiveness of community participation in achieving LA 21

outcomes involves an understanding of what it is trying to achieve. The LA 21 processes are broadly built on the Rio principles of co-operation, building local capacity for change, equal rights and empowerment. More specifically, LA 21 involves:

- Managing and improving the local authority's own sustainability performance
- Integrating sustainable development aims into local government's policy and activities;
- Awareness raising and education
- Consulting and involving the general public
- Partnership
- Measuring, monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainability.

To change organisations and communities requires knowledge, political will, resources and funding, but not much has happened so far with service delivery. There is not a whole range of skills and professional expertise within local governments and municipalities currently because many skilled people left the country. Although the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place in Johannesburg in 2002, very little has been done to implement the outcomes.

### **2.3 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

According to Kusters (2008:3) sustainable tourism has been defined by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in 1998 as “...*tourism which meets the needs of present visitors and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems*”

According to the UNEP and UN-WTO report (2005): “*Making Tourism More Sustainable: a guide for policy makers*” (as cited by Kusters, 2008:5-7) there are 12 aims for sustainable tourism:

- Economic viability
- Local prosperity
- Employment quality
- Social equity
- Visitor fulfillment
- Local control
- Community wellbeing
- Cultural richness
- Physical integrity (landscape, planning)
- Biological diversity
- Resource efficiency
- Environmental purity.

Five policy instruments for sustainable tourism are necessary to achieve it:

1. **Measurement instruments:**
  - Indicators and monitoring
  - Identifying limits
2. **Command and control instruments:**
  - Legislation, registration and licensing
  - Land use planning and development control
3. **Economic instruments:**
  - Taxes and fees
  - Financial incentives and agreements
4. **Voluntary instruments:**
  - Guidelines and code of conducts
  - Management system
  - Certification
5. **Supporting instruments:**
  - Capacity building
  - Marketing and information services.

One needs successful niche markets for the above-mentioned conditions.

Burr (2002:6) says that tourism causes the following to be made available:

- Conveniences for the visitor - transportation and tours
- Food, lodging, hospitality, and other support services
- Economic incentives to finance conservation and recreation
- Political support for recreation and conservation from visitors.

According to the United Nations Education Program (UNEP) of 2004, sustainability, for tourism, as for other industries, has three interconnected aspects: environmental, socio-cultural and economic. Sustainability implies permanence; therefore sustainable tourism includes optimum use of resources, including biological diversity, minimisation of ecological, cultural and social impacts, and maximisation of benefits to conservation and local communities. It also refers to the management structures that are needed to achieve these. However, some organisations prefer to speak of sustainable *development* of tourism, rather than sustainable tourism, for two main reasons:

- For tourism to be sustainable, it needs to be integrated into all aspects of development
- Some aspects of tourism, such as long-haul air travel, may simply not be sustainable with current technologies and best practices.

([www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/policy/principles.htm](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/policy/principles.htm), <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sustainable-tourism/about.htm>).

The World Conference on 'Sustainable Tourism' was held in Lanzarote, Spain in 1995. The organisers stated, "*The application of the principles of the Rio Declaration to tourism is of fundamental strategic value, in view of the importance of tourism. The growing specific*

*weight of tourism as a major consumer of natural resources in the world economy is beyond dispute*". Two documents were published after the conference, a "*Charter for Sustainable Tourism*" (<http://www.insula.org/tourism/charte.htm>) and "*The Sustainable Tourism Plan of Action*". In the first document, the declaration is an appeal to the international community and defines sustainable tourism in the framework of LA 21. Sustainability for tourism was given as "*Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long-term, economically viable, as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities*" ([www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/charter.html](http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/charter.html)).

Swarbrooke (1999:13, as cited by Ritchie and Crouch, 2003:36) gives a very good definition of sustainable tourism as "*...tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community*".

In a paper on geotourism, Patzak (2000) stated that that sustainable tourism should:

- Be ecologically bearable in the long term. Within the legal framework of national legislation or regulations, a UNESCO Geopark shall contribute to the conservation of significant geological features which provide information on various geoscientific disciplines such as: all solid geology, economic geology and mining, engineering geology, geomorphology, glacial geology, hydrology, mineralogy, palaeontology, petrography, sedimentology, soil science, stratigraphy, structural geology and volcanology
- Be based on the diversity of opportunities offered by the local economy
- Contribute positively to local economic development (creation of local employment)
- Consider its effects on the cultural heritage and traditional elements of each local community
- Mutually involve and respect all actors both public and private (co-operation)
- Improve the quality of life.

Murphy (1998:175) believes that "*It is not very different from the view that we do not inherit the Earth from our forefathers but borrow it from our children, and the old philosophy that something should be left for future generations. As such, sustainable development builds on the old principles of conservation and stewardship, but it offers a more proactive stance, that incorporates continued economic growth in a more ecological and equitable manner*". Thus, sustainable development is a pre-requisite for sustainable tourism. Tourism can be ideally suited for a leadership role in sustainable development, given its multidimensional nature and private/public sector duality. Initiation of this role is a next step in the evolution of sustainable tourism development. To do so, the various stakeholders must be brought together.

A very useful summary of the relationship between sustainable tourism and other terms is shown in Figure 2.7.

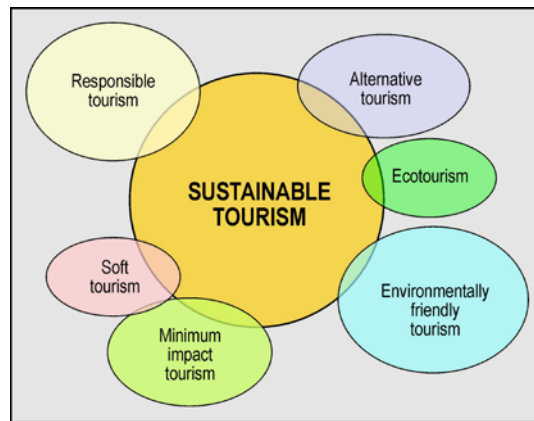


Figure 2.7: The relationship between sustainable tourism and other terms (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003: 36)

This is an insightful summary of the key issues that are part of the ongoing debate whether or not sustainable tourism is truly a practical approach to tourism management in general and a viable philosophy of tourism destination management, in particular. Sustainable tourism can be linked to virtually all issues that have an influence on it, that is, physical environment, stakeholders, management, marketing, public sector, industry, taxes, other forms of tourism, education, infrastructure, the list is virtually endless. Even so, the key issues in the sustainable tourism debate are shown in Figure 2.8.

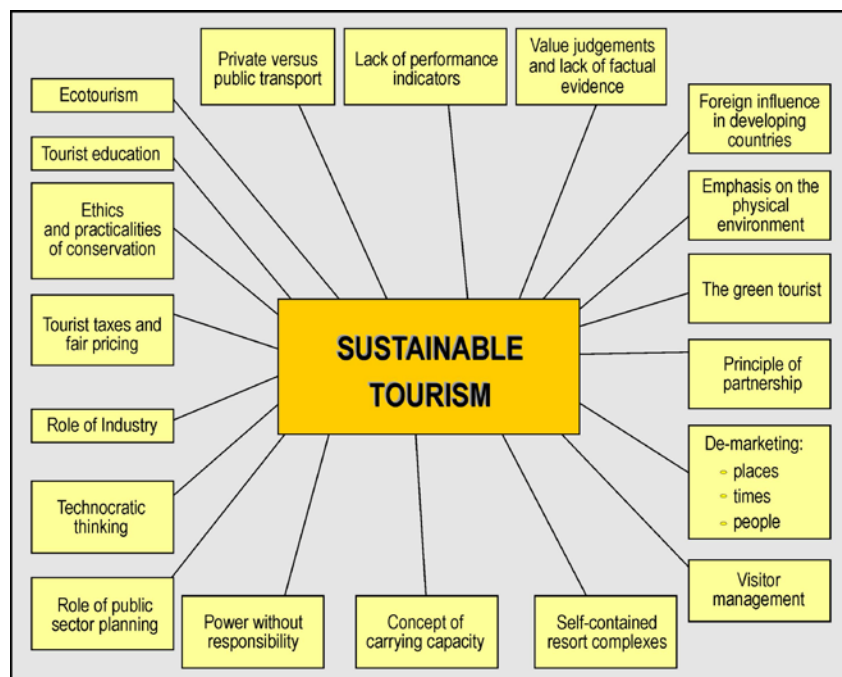


Figure 2.8: The key issues in the sustainable tourism debate (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003:37).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO:1998) defines sustainable tourism as tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs



can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. During the recent past, sets of principles have been developed to try to operationalise this idea. The principles identify sustainable tourism as having four pillars: economic, ecological, cultural, and community sustainability. Guidelines have been developed for each of the four pillars.

McKercher (2003:4-5) believes that economic sustainability is profitable in both the immediate and the long term when:

- Partnerships are formed throughout the entire supply chain, from micro-sized local businesses to multinational organisations
- Internationally approved and reviewed guidelines for training and certification are used
- Ethical and environmentally conscious behaviour is promoted among the tourism clients
- Tourism products are diversified by developing a wide range of tourist activities;
- Some of the income generated is contributed to assist in training, ethical marketing and product development
- Financial incentives for businesses that adopt sustainability principles are provided.

Ecological sustainability is development that is compatible with the maintenance of essential ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources when:

- Codes of practice are established for tourism at all levels
- Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment and monitoring of cumulative impacts should also be established
- National, regional and local tourism policies and development strategies that are consistent with overall objectives of sustainable development are formulated
- Environmental impact assessment studies are conducted to establish baselines
- The design, planning, development and operation of facilities incorporate principles ensuring sustainability
- Tourism in protected areas, such as national parks, is incorporated into and subject to sound management plans
- The actual impacts of tourism are monitored and researched
- Acceptable behaviour among tourists is codified
- Responsible tourism behaviour is promoted.

Cultural sustainability increases people's control over their lives and is compatible with the culture and values of those affected. Further, it strengthens the community identity because:

- Tourism can be initiated with the help of broad based community input
- Education and training programs to improve and manage heritage and natural resources can be established
- Cultural diversity can be conserved
- Land and property rights of traditional inhabitants are respected

- The protection of nature, local and the indigenous cultures and especially traditional knowledge is guaranteed
- Indigenous leaders and minority groups are worked with to insure that indigenous cultures and communities are depicted accurately and respectfully
- The community's ability to maintain and use traditional skills are strengthen, nurtured and encouraged
- Tourists are educated about desirable and acceptable behaviour
- The tourism industry, itself, is educated regarding desirable and acceptable behaviour.

Local sustainability is designed to benefit local communities and generate or retain income in those communities because:

- The community should maintain control over tourism development
- Tourism should provide quality employment to community residents
- Businesses should be encouraged to minimize negative effects on local communities and to contribute positively to them
- An equitable distribution of financial benefits throughout the entire supply chain should be ensured
- Financial incentives for local businesses to enter tourism must be provided
- Local human resource capacity must be improved.

([www.devstud.org.uk/studygroups/tourism/resources/mckercher.pdf](http://www.devstud.org.uk/studygroups/tourism/resources/mckercher.pdf))

Ritchie and Crouch (2003:44-49) contend that there are four primary pillars of sustainable tourism: ecological, economic, socio/cultural and political/governance environments. Appropriate policy and management solutions must underpin each of them if true sustainability is to be achieved.

### **Ecological sustainability**

The local ecology or natural environment is a major attraction for many destinations. Indeed, the experience of a unique environment often represents the core of a destination's tourism product. For many destinations, these natural phenomena represent the lifeblood of their tourism industries. Any decline in their value will have an adverse effect on the destination's attractiveness. The local must develop its own residents have most at stake in the protection and conservation of their natural environments. The tourism industry has also an important role to play by ensuring that any tourism development minimizes harm to the ecology, and by providing economic incentives, such as funding, that encourage preservation and protection of the environment. Each destination strategy for sustainable tourism development and, by this action, play the role of steward.

### **Economic sustainability**

Economic sustainability is the second pillar. Here, tourism must demonstrate support of a

viable economic base. Thus, any tourism strategy must be capable of meeting the economic needs and aspirations of residents over the longer term. Considerations that may be influential in determining economic sustainability are:

1. Spreading costs and benefits evenly
2. Utilising local labour
3. Providing job security
4. Offering the opportunity to earn wages, salaries and benefits.

### **Socio-cultural sustainability**

To be sustainable, a tourism development strategy for a destination must also address socio-cultural impacts and this focus should be reflected in the destination's vision and goals. Kotler *et al.* (1993:81) as cited in Ritchie and Crouch (2003:47) propose a strategic market planning orientation. The five stages of the strategic market planning orientation are:

- **Place audit.** What is the community like today?
- **Vision and goals.** What do the residents want the community to become?
- **Strategy formulation.** What broad strategies will help the community to reach its goals?
- **Action plan.** What specific actions must the community undertake to carry out its strategies?
- **Implementation and control.** What must the community do to ensure successful implementation of the developed plan?

### **Political sustainability**

Unfortunately, political sustainability is rarely identified as one of the pillars of sustainability. In democratic countries, sustainability principles and their implementation are well-accepted, but this is not the case in totalitarian regimes. Although the four pillars of sustainability act as an interdependent system, if sustainability of the tourism product is to be achieved, every one of the pillars must be in harmony with each other. Every destination must examine its ability to maintain all dimensions of sustainability if the destination is to develop true competitiveness.

Abdullaev (2006:1) developed the Concentric Circles Model of Sustainable Tourism. This model consists of three concentric circles of sustainability. The centre of the model is the intergenerational equity (IE) for the main objective of the sustainable development as stated in Brundtland Report requires development “...without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The aim of IE cannot be pursued without sustaining capital stock (First circle - sustainability of local capital stock). This includes environmental, socio-cultural and economic capital. For sustainability of local capital stock, the interactions between capital stock and stakeholders, and interactions within stakeholders shall be sustainable (second circle - equity of stakeholders). In order to reach such equilibrium, sustainable strategies must be implemented (third circle: sustainability of strategies). The outer circle of the model consists of tools for sustainable strategies, such as planning,

management, integration into local economy, partnership and cooperation, assessment, training and education, and research. These tools are organised sequentially and are shown in Figure 2.9.

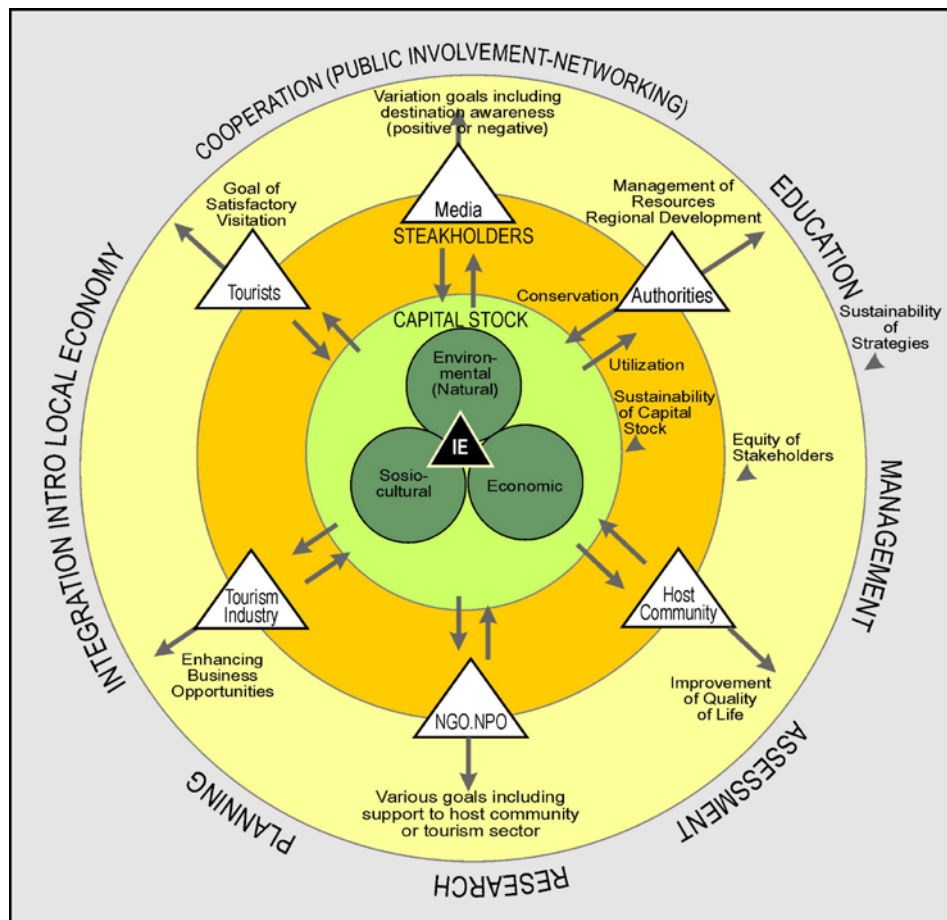


Figure 2.9: The concentric circles model of sustainable tourism (Abdullaev: 2006:1)

When implementing sustainable tourism, the sustainable strategy flow is shown in Figure 2.10.

Spilanis and Vayanni (2004:273) opine that, according to the WTO, all tourism activities, be they geared to holidays, business, conferences, congresses, or fairs, health, adventure or ecotourism itself, must be sustainable. *“This means that the planning and the development of tourism infrastructure, its subsequent operation and also its marketing should focus on environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability criteria, so as to ensure that neither the natural environment, nor the socio-cultural fabric of the host communities will be impaired by the arrival of tourists. On the contrary, local communities should benefit from tourism, both economically and culturally. Sustainability implies those enterprises, as well as the communities in which they operate, have something to gain from tourism”* (Yunis 2001, as cited by Spilanis and Vayanni, 2004:273). Spilanis *et al.* (2004:273-274) conclude

that “... we consider as sustainable any form of tourism that, in a given area, alters the conventional tourist product so that it is a more economically profitable and/or a more environmentally friendly product. The evaluation of tourism activity can be based on two criteria: first, the tourist performance per capita, which relates to the added value and the employment created per tourist, as well as the consumption of water and energy and the production of wastes per capita; and, secondly, the scale of the activity compared to the carrying capacity of the host area. Even if the performance per capita is improved, every area has its own environmental, social and economic limits that cannot be surpassed”.

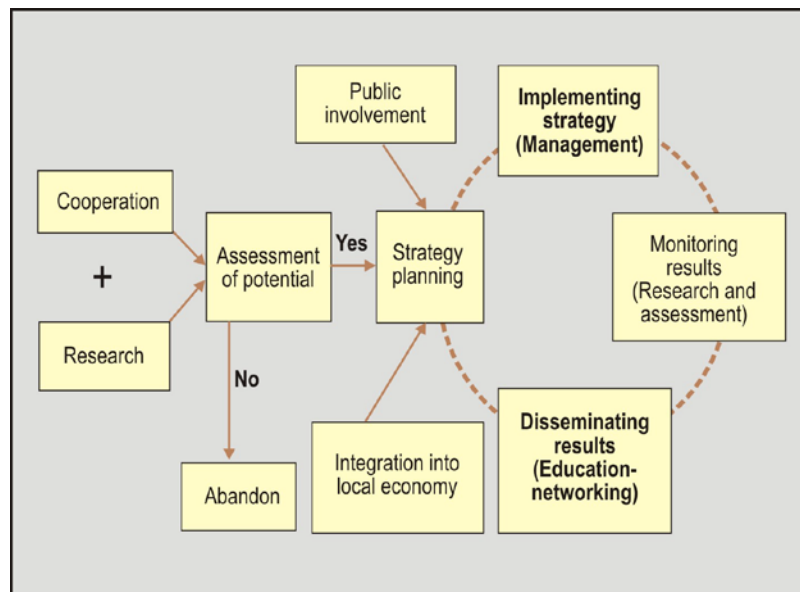


Figure 2.10: Sustainable strategy flow (Abdullaev: 2006:1)

The primary concern of sustainable tourism is to support the balance within the ecological environment and to minimise the impact upon it by mass-market tourism. The use of this term is evolving as it is also used to describe the impact of mass-tourism on cultural and historic resources ([www.massculturalcouncil.org/issues/tourismglossary.html](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/issues/tourismglossary.html)).

According to The National Geographic Online, (<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/whatis-sustour.html>), sustainable tourism has the following features:

- It is informative. Travellers not only learn about the destination, they learn how to help sustain the character of the destination while deepening their own travel experiences. Residents of the destination learn that the ordinary and familiar (to them) may be of interest and value to outsiders
- It supports integrity of place. ‘Destination-savvy’ travellers seek out businesses that emphasise the character of the locale in terms of architecture, cuisine, heritage, aesthetics and ecology. Tourism revenues, in turn, raise local perceived value of those assets
- It benefits residents. Travel businesses do their best to employ and train local people, to buy local supplies, and to use local services

- It conserves resources. Environmentally-aware travellers favour businesses that minimise pollution, waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals, and unnecessary night-time lighting
- It respects local culture and tradition. Foreign visitors learn about and observe local etiquette; including learning at least a few courtesy words in the local language to use as the situation arises. Residents learn how to deal with foreign expectations that may differ from their own
- It does not abuse its product. Stakeholders anticipate development pressures and apply limits and management techniques to prevent the "loved to death" syndrome. Businesses cooperate to sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, scenic appeal, and local culture
- It strives for quality, not quantity. Communities measure tourism success not by the sheer numbers of visitors, but by length of stay, money spent, and perceived quality of experience
- It means great trips. Satisfied, excited visitors bring new knowledge home and send friends off to experience the same thing - which provides continuing business for the destination.

To make a positive contribution to sustainable development, tourism must fulfil ecological, cultural and economic criteria. In many areas, sustainability can be achieved only by controlled tourism. Tourism can also contribute through the financing of social institutions or nature conservation measures. Many national parks and conservation areas would not be economically viable without visitors. Botanical gardens, forest walks, whale watching, farm visits, zoos, etc., can also create income. With astute management, tourism can create income for the local inhabitants. It can also create awareness in the tourists, as well as for local people.

Baumgartner (2002) posits that there are six dimensions of sustainable tourism: ecological, economic, socio-cultural, goal tourism areas that use a Local Agenda 21 process, institutional and tourism core areas. Diagrammatically, sustainability in tourism can be depicted by a pyramid with five corners. The bottom corners are: economic prosperity, optimal need satisfaction of guests, intact culture, intact nature and resource conservation, subjective good health of the locals and respective workers. The apex is the right to plan of future generations. Sustainable tourism development is the implementation of ideas for integrative tourism where the six elements are combined in a common and future orientated development of a region. By this action, the goal of sustainability is coupled with an implementation strategy like the Agenda 21. The sustainability pyramid is shown in Figure 2.11.

In the document, "*A Road Map for Sustainable Tourism in the Nordic Countries:24*", that was prepared in 2003 it was stated that "*(B)ased on the general definition for sustainable development, sustainable tourism has been perceived as simultaneously encompassing the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects in the long-term planning of the sector*

*development. In order to achieve such balanced development integrating and respecting basic principles such as the precautionary principle, intra- and inter-generation equity, and the responsibility for the preservation of the environment and natural resources for future generations is necessary” ([www.norden.org/naering/sk/BtG%20Final.pdf](http://www.norden.org/naering/sk/BtG%20Final.pdf)).*

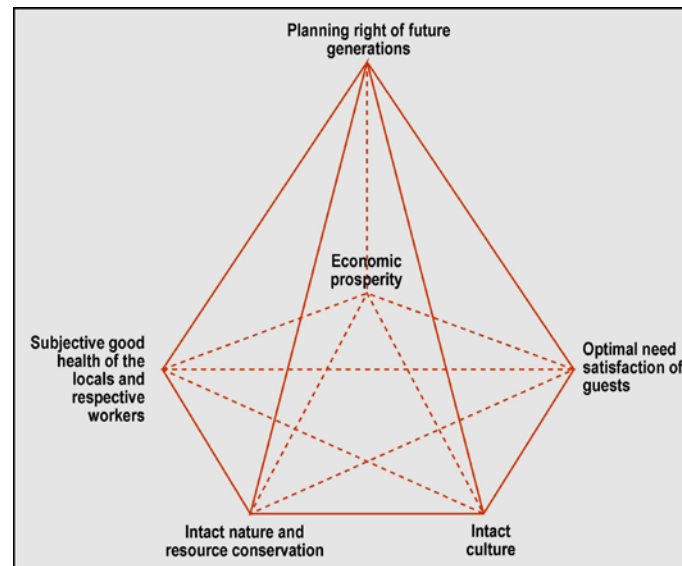


Figure 2.11: The sustainability pyramid (Müller: 1999, adapted by Baumgartner: 2000(b). The text was translated from German by the researcher (2008)

Sustainability in travel and tourism means ensuring markets in which the industry can thrive economically and can generate jobs, creating frameworks for education, training and social development, and protecting and enhancing the cultural and natural environment. A balance must be sought between the three pillars of sustainable development. This balance can be achieved with strong legal support, investment and regulatory frameworks ([http://www.wttc.org/promote/pdf/Sustainability of EU Tourism.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/promote/pdf/Sustainability_of_EU_Tourism.pdf)). Geotourism can provide an opportunity for one to attain relief from possible overuse of ecologically sensitive areas.

In a presentation to the National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development in Bishkek, Kyrgystan, 5-9 November, 2003, McKercher (2003:3-5) said that tourism is most ideally suited to adopt sustainability as a guiding philosophy. The reasons for this are:

- Other than transport fuel, tourism does not consume additional non-renewal resources
- A community’s resources, for example, its culture, traditions, shops, leisure facilities, represent the core resources base for tourism
- Tourism usage of resources, both natural and cultural, should be non-consumptive, making them renewable
- Tourism represents one of the few economic opportunities available to remote communities
- Tourism provides real opportunities to reduce poverty, to create employment for

disadvantaged people and to stimulate regional development

- Tourism has been proven to revitalize cultures and traditions
- Tourism can provide an economic incentive to conserve natural and cultural assets
- Tourism fosters greater understanding between peoples and a greater global consciousness.

Historically, however, much of tourism has been unsustainable because:

- Tourism is a fierce competitor for resources - the provision of cultural and ecotourism opportunities for tourists may have meant that local residents were displaced
- The needs of tourists are different from those of local residents and, thus, serving tourists may again not suit the needs of local residents
- Few people understand tourism and what is required to develop successful tourism products, meaning that many countries have made unwise investments in tourism
- Tourism is often imposed upon local communities, particularly rural or minority communities, at levels and at rates that causes great social disruption.

Sustainable tourism seeks to achieve the optimum balance between economic benefits and the social and environmental costs. It is also environmentally educative.

Harris, Griffin and Williams (2000:177) conclude that sustainable tourism acknowledges the fundamental links between long term (strategic) planning, conservation of the environment, economic gain and profitability from tourism operations, and social equity. An appropriate tourism policy and plan, on a holistic and integrated basis, is required by all stakeholders. Success is based on:

- Maintaining and improving levels of natural capital stock through accurate and objective assessment of resources
- Controls to observe carrying capacities
- An adequate investment in resource efficient ancillary services
- Opportunities for all parties to contribute, particularly local involvement
- Raising public understanding and promoting intergenerational equity
- Effective environmental policies, tourism management plans, and equitable economic and employment benefits
- Long-term monitoring, assessment and feedback.

In particular, protection or enhancement of the coastal environment, promotion of the economic wellbeing of coastal communities, preservation of the distinctive, coastal, local culture and the promotion of maximum visitor satisfaction should be encouraged. Better networks are needed to both apply the results of research, and to promote and share good practice. Sustainability must be fully recognised as a vital part of coastal tourism policy and decision-making, and its success (or otherwise) needs to be measured, judged and broadcast. To realise quantifiable gains, a proactive approach from the tourist industry will be required, along with a more responsible approach by tourists to their interactions with the natural and



built environments. Hunter (2002:6): believes that for sustainable tourism to occur, it must be closely integrated with all other activities that occur in the host region.

The concept of sustainability is fundamental to the South Australia Tourism Plan 2003-2008. The sustainable tourism strategy is guided by twelve clear principles, based on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (that is, on economic, social and environmental factors). The TBL strategy demonstrates that sustainable tourism is characterised by:

**1. Being different**

The key to successful and sustainable tourism is achieving a *clear sense of difference* from other competing destinations. This can be achieved by basing development and marketing on the *attributes and strengths* of the destination.

**2. Achieving authenticity**

The attractions most likely to be successful, and those with the greatest enduring appeal, are those which are *genuinely* relevant to the history, industry, culture lifestyle and natural resources of the district.

**3. Reflecting community values**

This means representing the past, present and future aspirations of the local community in a *living and dynamic way*, rather than embalming the past. This involves listening to and responding to the community.

**4. Understanding and targeting the market**

Understanding the broad market *trends* and the *needs* of specific segments is critical. This involves the development of specialised products based on the inherent attributes of an area.

**5. Enhancing the experience**

People's motivation for travel is to seek something they cannot experience at home. The *'bundling' of attributes* enhances the appeal of a place, and the likelihood of visitation.

**6. Adding value**

Adding value to existing attributes achieves a *richer tourism experience* and helps to diversify the local economy. This can include accommodation, sales outlets, conference facilities and dining in association with established industries.

**7. Respecting natural and cultural values**

Sustainable tourism development derives its form and appeal from these qualities, and adds to the special nature of the destination and in particular respects *ecological processes*.

**8. Achieving conservation outcomes**

A mutually beneficial alliance can be achieved between tourism and conservation. That is, through *understanding and enjoyment* come *greater appreciation and empathy, advocacy and protection* for the resource.

**9. Having good 'content' ('telling the story')**

Tourism development can interpret (can present and explain) natural, social, historic and ecological features. *'Telling the story'* provides a more rewarding experience and helps conserve the destination.

**10. Achieving excellence and innovation in design**

Good design respects the resource, achieves conservation outcomes, reflects community

values and is instrumental in telling the story. It is not just about form and function, but also about invoking an *emotional response* from the visitor.

### **11. Providing mutual benefits to visitors and hosts**

Tourism is not encouraged for its own sake. It is an economic and community development tool, and must take into account the *benefits* that both the host community and the visitor seek.

### **12. Building local capacity**

Good tourism businesses do not stand isolated from the communities in which they operate. They become involved with the community, and collaborate with other businesses and stakeholders to build a *positive and self-sufficient capacity* ([http://server-au.imrworldwide.com/cgi-bin/b?cg=&ci=sa-corporate&tu=http://www.tourism.sa.gov.au/tourism/plan/sustainable\\_tourism\\_principles.pdf](http://server-au.imrworldwide.com/cgi-bin/b?cg=&ci=sa-corporate&tu=http://www.tourism.sa.gov.au/tourism/plan/sustainable_tourism_principles.pdf)). To build local capacity at a Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprise's (SMME's) level, the improvement of the SMME's capacity to perform will result in economic growth through institutional capacity building and human resources development. It will encourage:

- Customer orientation
- Involvement of people
- Leadership
- Continuous improvement

(<https://www.sabs.co.za/pdf/Business.../Siyakhulapresentation.ppt>).

## 2.3.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Burr (2002:1-60) discusses the "*Sustainable Development and Use of Our Natural Resources for Recreation and Tourism: The Ideal and the Reality*" in a very informative MS<sup>©</sup> PowerPoint<sup>©</sup> presentation. Burr's findings are viewed from several perspectives, those of:

- Conservation, recreation, and tourism
- Tourism impacts
- Tourism and community development
- Sustainability and sustainable development and use
- Sustainable tourism development (STD)
- Obstacles to the achievement of STD
- Feasible approaches and best chances for success.

His findings can be used as a model for the sustainable development of geotourism development in South Africa.

Burr (2002:20-24) is of the opinion that sustainable tourism development is:

- Tied to sustainable use - that careful and sensitive economic development is possible without degrading or depleting natural resources needed by present and future generations
- Promotes intergenerational responsibility.

Burr (2002:31-32) reckons that there are obstacles to the achievement of sustainable tourism development because:

- It is not possible to maximise all goals at the same time through an adaptive process of trade-offs
- Conflict almost always exists between and among inter- and intra-system goals;
- As a result of values, choices are made as to which goals are more valuable and which should receive higher priority
- As a result of the latter point, different development strategies assign different priorities to the systems and their goals
- The concept of sustainable development provokes groups at different levels to set a wide spectrum of goals, and then attempts to reconcile them.

Holmberg and Sandbrook (1992, as cited by Burr, 2002:33) believe that there is no shortcut to sustainability for patterns of sustainable development must be built from the bottom up, showing what can be achieved at local levels and then working to disseminate positive experiences. In conclusion, Burr (2002:34) states that for sustainable tourism development, there must be a balance between a degree or type of development that will bring economic and other benefits to a community, and the point at which that development starts to feed on, rather than sustain, the very elements of its basis.

Cronin (1990, as cited by Burr, 2002:35) says criteria for sustainable development are:

- Adherence to ethical principles
- Involvement of the local population
- Allowing the local population an element of control
- Being undertaken with equity in mind.

In the document “*Managing tourism and biodiversity. User’s manual on the CBD guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development*” of 2007, sustainable tourism development is described ([www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf):12-14).

*”Sustainable tourism should: contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity; contribute to the well being of local communities and indigenous people; include an interpretation/learning experience; involve responsible action on the part of tourists and tourism industries; be appropriate in scale; require the lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources; respect physical and social carrying capacities; involve minimal repatriation of earned revenue; be locally owned and operated (through local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural people)”.*

This, then, embraces two, interrelated, elements of the sustainability of tourism:

- Assurance that the conditions are right for tourism to continue as an activity in the future

- The ability of society and the environment to absorb and to benefit from tourism in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations. This includes everything from mass tourism to the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. A suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Therefore, sustainable tourism should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute key elements in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserving both their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributing to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are equably distributed, that includes stable employment and income-earning opportunities as well as social services to host communities, thus contributing to poverty alleviation.

The informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building is required by sustainable tourism development. It must be understood that the achievement of sustainable tourism is a continuous process. This process requires constant monitoring of the impacts and, whenever necessary, the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures should be introduced.

Sustainable tourism should also:

- Maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction
- Ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists
- Raise their awareness about sustainability issues
- Promote sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Tourism can support sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in several ways. Three of these are:

- The promotion of the economic value of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use through stimulation of tourism - particularly where this creates local employment and uses local products and services as it may help to reduce the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources
- The promotion of conservation by raising awareness amongst visitors, and by raising the profile of biodiversity conservation at national and local levels
- Generation of additional funds from tourism for conservation.

Tourism has the ability to grow rapidly but the unmanaged growth of tourism can generate unsustainable pressures that damage or destroy biological diversity and ecosystem processes, as well as a cultural heritage. The net result will be the loss of various environmental services and consequent damage to, or distortion of, social cohesion and the economy of the affected area. The voracious market for tourism, and also for the services and supplies that are required to meet the operational requirements of the tourism sector, could place major pressures on local environments and communities.

Tourism can also add to the costs of managing biodiversity, as investment is necessary to manage and maintain tourism facilities in order to prevent damage to sensitive areas, while the very presence of visitors can present serious problems for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Thus, tourism must be managed with care. The costs in relation to impacts on biodiversity must be assessed and these balanced against the benefits of tourism. Ways must be found for local people and communities to benefit from tourism linked to conservation because this helps to graphically demonstrate the benefits derived from the resources conserved.

The environment requires joint action, with inputs from Governments, site managers, local communities and other stakeholders, to achieve the type of that helps both to protect biodiversity and to conserve it. Because tourism to protected areas is already very established, appropriate plans should ready, depending on the level of use (transpiring or anticipated).

If tourism is already well established in an area, the key management options are to find ways:

- To minimise the damage caused by existing tourism to sensitive sites
- To direct new tourism (and, if possible, to redirect existing tourism) to less sensitive sites.

In order to generate funds and support conservation, tourism should be managed in ways that are compatible with biodiversity conservation. The available evidence shows that:

- Only at a few sites can revenues raised from tourism provide a major portion of site management costs
- For most sites, tourism is unlikely to provide a major source of revenue for site management, and so will not necessarily provide sufficient revenue to cover the costs incurred by the site in connection with the management of tourism and of tourism-related impacts.

The above discussion of tourism development can be applied with success to geotourism in South Africa.

## 2.4 STEPS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

In 2004, the Department of the Environment and Heritage of Australia developed a document "Steps to sustainable tourism" in planning for a sustainable future for tourism, heritage and the environment (<http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/publications/sustainable-tourism/pubs/steps.pdf>). The ten steps are shown in Figure 2.12 below.

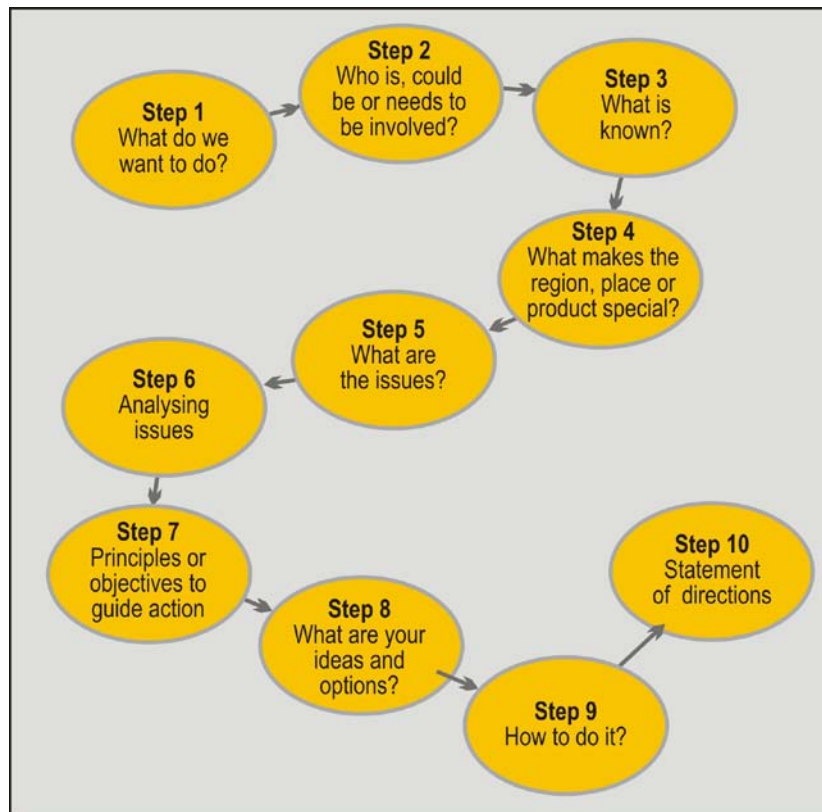


Figure 2.12: The 10 steps for sustainable tourism plans

(<http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/publications/sustainable-tourism/pubs/steps.pdf>)

This document is a tool to use when managing and developing regions, places and tourism products. The document is designed to be of use to tourism operators, heritage and environment managers, community groups and others with an interest in places, regions and associated tourism products. The document stresses that, to achieve sustainable tourism requires motivation, determination and a systematic approach. The underlying principle of the guide is the need to recognise and protect the values of special natural and cultural places in order to enhance tourism product development and the management of places in the long term. The guide stresses a very important aspect and says, “(A)chieving sustainable tourism requires motivation, determination and a systematic approach. (Following the 10) Steps (approach) offers a tool or process to assist in this task that has been developed and tested in partnership with both tourism and heritage interests. The process, set out in 10 steps, integrates the needs of tourism, the environment and heritage when developing a tourist destination, a tourism product or managing a place”. Sustainable tourism is a long-term goal

to make a region, place or tourism product special and perhaps unique. Proper planning is the starting point if this goal is to be achieved. A thorough documentation of the ten steps will produce a sound basis for a plan, whether the plan be for a place, region or a tourism product. A checklist can be used to help with review of the task at hand. It can also be used to review or update existing plans.

An adaption of the Department of the Environment and Heritage of Australia "*Steps to sustainable tourism*" document follows, tailored to South African needs.

### **STEP 1 - WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

This step will help to define the aims and understand the context.

- **What are the aims?** A clearly defined aim will guide the work ahead. It can be as simple as desired, and can be worded many different ways, such as in a vision statement, mission statement or statement of purpose. Investment of even a little time in making sure this statement is tight, clear and achievable is most desirable
- **What is the context for the particular region, place or project?** To help in better understanding the context of the region, place or project, the scene will need to be set in a brief overview statement.

### **STEP 2 - WHO IS, COULD BE, OR NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?**

This step will help to identify stakeholders, will consider when and how people should be consulted and involved, and lastly will determine how to develop effective working relationships.

This step is important as it will underpin all future steps and will need to be revisited and updated continually.

- **Who are the stakeholders?** Determine who is, who should, or who could be involved by listing all potential stakeholders
- **How to consult and involve people.** Informing and involving people can be challenging and time consuming but can make a huge difference to successful projects, plans and tourism products. Consultation processes can be targeted at the key stakeholders for specific purposes, or might be designed to generally inform the community, build support and so seek willing involvement
- **Developing partnerships.** Successful tourism often requires resources that no one organisation can offer, and so partnerships can be an effective tool when dealing across tourism and heritage issues. They can help to build support, and to coordinate rather than duplicate, efforts. Taking a partnership approach early in the process, may help when seeking approvals and may ensure that all the right information is available as a project progresses.

### **STEP 3 - WHAT IS KNOWN?**

This step will help to identify existing studies or sources of information relevant to the process or project, can locate and summarise available information on the current and potential market for tourism, and thereafter determine the heritage assets, their heritage values and themes. Information is a powerful tool and drawing together relevant data will provide a solid grounding for future decisions. While seeking for material on planning and managing tourism at heritage places, and the current and potential tourism market, it may be found that much useful information already exists.

- **Where to look.** Books, newspaper articles, sound recordings, council records, tourism brochures, annual reports, tour operator records, park management plans and research reports could all be examined for relevant information and data
- **Other sources.** They are many sites giving environmental and heritage information available on the internet

To finalise this step, consider the information that has been collected and reviewed. A draft will have a summary of 1) the key sources of information, 2) the natural and cultural heritage assets of the region, and 3) the current and potential market for tourism. This data can be used to 1) inform all stakeholders of what information is available and what it indicates, 2) show what underpins the process, and 3) outline what information exists and what more needs to be obtained.

### **STEP 4 - WHAT MAKES THIS REGION, PLACE OR PRODUCT SPECIAL?**

This step will assist in identifying what is special about a particular region, place or product, establish how well its special values are recognised and currently communicated, and will finally establish whether further potential exists to use these special values in tourism and interpretation. Tourism, heritage and local community interests could benefit from developing a common understanding of what is significant so that a unified approach to presenting local and regional heritage to visitors is developed.

- **Identifying natural and cultural heritage values.** Natural and cultural heritage sites are often the key assets for tourism. The unique qualities of a place, or its values, can be a large part of a tourism business and its key selling points. Understanding the values of heritage places is essential for effective product development, planning, marketing, management and interpretation
- **Identifying other values.** Other values, aside from those formally recognised by heritage specialists, are also important. These may be the less tangible aspects that make a place, region or experience special to the local community or to visitors. They may relate to its cultural, community, recreational and economic uses



- **The tourism perspective.** Stories based on heritage values, particularly those provided by local people, are often what make a place attractive to visitors. These stories are also what visitors take away with them and share with others when they return home. The combination of values, stories and landscapes, can create a total ‘experience’ for the visitor.

## STEP 5 – WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

This step will help to identify and understand the key issues affecting the region, place or product under consideration. It is about identifying all the important issues or factors that might affect what happens in the future. This means speaking with people and examining the information collected to date. Tease out important matters that are still unresolved or that will affect the place, region or tourism product.

- **Ways to identify issues.** Identify issues clearly and thoroughly. Where necessary, consider using professional skills and approaches, such as those offered by facilitators experienced or trained in techniques for working with stakeholders and identifying issues
- **Identifying issues.** To help consider and cover the range of issues relevant to both tourism and heritage, it may be useful to consider:
  - Consumer/visitor experience
  - Community experience
  - Environment/heritage management and impacts
  - Infrastructure issues
  - Market/marketing issues
  - Tourism product availability
  - Economic cost/benefit issues
  - Training/capacity building
  - Strategic and resource context
  - Approvals and regulation.

The researcher reckons that the link between sustainability and environmental education is integral to each other.

- **Handling conflicts.** It is important to identify areas of potential or actual conflict, as these can reappear later as barriers to progress or action. Looking beyond the conflict of different ideas and people and getting to the root cause can often help to resolve the issue. Conflict is sometimes inevitable. It can make ideas or projects unworkable, but it may also present opportunities for innovative solutions. Various methods of conflict resolution and mediation processes exist. Rather than focusing on the particular individuals and their views and perhaps creating an adversarial situation, there are ways of working with interests to acknowledge views, explore issues and develop solutions cooperatively.

## STEP 6 – WHAT ISSUES NEED ANALYSIS?

Now that the issues have emerged from the last step, further clarification must be sought as to the current state of the project. Important issues need to be fully understood if the right decision is to be made about any particular course of action. Concentrate efforts on analysing priority issues. If resources are limited, it may be necessary to make a judgement based on available information and analysis. Analysis may simply be a matter of presenting a reasoned judgement about an issue with justification of how that position was arrived at, and citing the data or information supporting this.

- **Market analysis.** A number of market-related issues would have emerged in the previous step. A market analysis is an analytical summary of how the region, place or product fits into the marketplace. It takes into account the saleability or profitability of a product or service, based on information about the product and the potential market. It may include an assessment of how the region, place or tourism product compares with existing competition. Is there competition for a similar market? What are the strengths of those markets? What does the product being developed have? Is the market big enough to share? How can a region, place or product be presented in the marketplace to maximise the fit between what it offers and what the customers want?
- **Heritage conservation analysis.** In Step 4 the factors that make the place special were identified, its heritage values
- **Situational analysis.** This is a description of the context in which tourism is currently occurring. It will include the main determining factors such as the seasonal or geographic flow patterns and the functional relationships at play. Understanding the situation is the first step in designing the response. It involves an analysis of needs and assets, an understanding of what works well and what does not and of the capacity of those involved. Including neutral parties in situational analysis helps to build a better understanding of the context or situation
- **SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).** This is a very standard way to help identify and consider the issues identified in Step 5. A SWOT analysis is a simple and useful part of many types of strategic plans, including business plans. In this process, the present strengths and weaknesses of the situation and future possibilities for opportunities and threats are considered. Addressing the weaknesses and threats can lead to their becoming strengths and opportunities. This analysis will help gain an overview of key issues, and will help to articulate issues that may not otherwise have been revealed. It is useful to undertake SWOT analysis after information from issues identified in the last step has been collected and considered.

Some possible SWOT analysis questions that can be asked are shown in Table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1: POSSIBLE SWOT QUESTIONS**

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the destination a currently popular tourism product?</li> <li>• What aspects of the environment or heritage are being well managed?</li> <li>• Are knowledgeable people working in tourism and heritage management?</li> <li>• What are the strengths of the staff or people involved?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an opportunity to promote the natural and cultural assets to tourists?</li> <li>• Are people in the community interested in working in tourism and heritage management?</li> <li>• Could tourism utilise underused infrastructure?</li> <li>• What opportunities are there for partnership and collaboration?</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are current approaches to interpretation looking a little ‘dated’, or in need of revision?</li> <li>• Are there physical factors of the place or region that make visitor management difficult?</li> <li>• Are there particular factors that present problems for marketing?</li> <li>• What does evaluation and feedback indicate could be done better?</li> <li>• Is there a lack of training or capacity?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What threats are there to the heritage values of the place or region?</li> <li>• What threats are there to the physical condition of heritage places?</li> <li>• What threats are there to the livelihood or ongoing economic or social viability of the local community?</li> <li>• What threats are there to the viability of the business?</li> <li>• What threats are apparent from an analysis of potential risks?</li> </ul>

- **Cost–benefit analysis.** This is a relatively simple and widely used technique. As its name suggests, simply add up the value of the benefits of a particular approach or idea and then subtract the associated costs.
- **Priority analysis.** Priorities may be determined in many different ways, but a simple way is to look at the importance and urgency of the issues and set them out on a chart. Ideally, an analysis of this nature should be done with a group of stakeholders so that a common understanding of the key issues is developed. This will help point towards particular options and future courses of action, and will help to build agreements between stakeholders on possible future directions.

**STEP 7 – WHICH PRINCIPLES OR OBJECTIVES WILL GUIDE THE PROCESS?**

This step will help to develop a clear written statement to guide future actions, such as a set of principles, a set of objectives or both, and then gain agreement on these principles or objectives from key partners or stakeholders. Now that an understanding of tourism and heritage values and the key issues at play has been gained, consideration must more specifically be given to what is to be achieved. This should be a balance between looking after heritage and developing tourism if, and where, appropriate. It is very important that

principles or objectives are agreed to by key stakeholders and that they have a high level of ownership. Implementation of the principles works best when stakeholders feel they have played an important part in the development of the plans.

- **Principles.** In some cases, a general set of principles is the most appropriate way to guide the direction and breadth of future work. Principles can be expressed in the form of guidelines, as protocols or policy statements. For example, a tourism business might develop a set of responsible tourism principles, or a set of protocols might be developed with indigenous communities covering issues relating to indigenous heritage and tourism
- **Objectives.** Setting objectives is one of the most common ways of planning. Objectives are sets of short statements that can be likened to goal posts. They are something to aim towards, and will give a clearer focus to the plan and efforts. An objective should be written in clear language, be specific, measurable, realistic, and have a time frame. They form an important part of many planning documents, including business plans.

## **STEP 8 - WHAT ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND OPTIONS ARE TO BE CONSIDERED?**

This step will help to further refine ideas and if necessary develop options, to work through ideas and options with key stakeholders and decision makers, and lastly to seek agreement on preferred options with necessary partners or key stakeholders. This step will help to clarify ideas and options, to make decisions and prepare all concerned to take action.

- **Developing ideas.** As this process has been worked through, many ideas will have emerged or will have been put forward by the stakeholders. These ideas will now be brought forward, and their potential working shown. Specific ideas can be bundled into packages or groups of actions. Account must be taken of key issues, and steps taken to ensure the maximisation of opportunities and the management of any threats. If clear ideas and options do not emerge at first, they will need to be developed through discussions, brainstorming sessions, focus groups or workshops
- **Analysing issues further, if needed.** When developing ideas or options, it may be discovered that there is not a clear picture of some important elements. If so, it will be necessary to return to Steps 5 and 6 to gather more information or to further analyse the situation. If there are several possible scenarios, each scenario must be tested in light of the market analysis. It may be necessary to conduct specific market testing of the ideas or product
- **Developing recommended option(s).** Once the ideas have been tested, and any extra information that is needed has been gathered, the preferred options may be developed. These should be backed up by a clearly reasoned statement supported by the information that was collected in the steps thus far. These options can then be presented in a proposal, feasibility study or strategic plan. Good communication and

people skills can make a difference when it comes to persuading others of the benefits of the recommended option(s)

- **Seeking agreement on preferred option(s).** Negotiating over the best course of action can be complicated by possible tensions between competing interests, beliefs and views. Different stakeholders are likely to have different, but equally legitimate, priorities. At this point, it is important to focus on the positive mutual interests that can link tourism, heritage conservation and communities and that can form the basis for cooperation.

## STEP 9 - HOW TO DO IT?

This step will help to:

1. Develop actions to implement the ideas, proposal or preferred option
2. Present them in a clear and logical form
3. Ensure they are included in other relevant plans and strategies
4. Develop monitoring and evaluation methods, and
5. Consider additional factors that will influence achieving the objectives.

The preferred options or ideas from the previous step now need to be turned into actions that can be implemented. Making new projects or ideas happen may involve many stakeholders, organisations and groups. Even if implementation is the responsibility of one organisation or business, it will probably be necessary to gain the support or approval of others. Whatever the situation, a clear implementation plan is essential. This not only makes sound business sense but also is standard practice in project management. This plan can also be called an action plan or a work plan.

In addition to developing the plan, each participating organisation may need to look at its own planning documents to ensure that the implementation plan links to existing planning documents. The sample format covers the important implementation issues. For each objective, list the proposed actions needed to attain the goal as follows:

This step will help to:

1. What needs to be done? (proposed action strategy)
2. Who should be responsible and involved
3. What is the sequence and timing?
4. What resources are needed?
5. How will this action or strategy be monitored and evaluated?

- **Additional factors.** These factors that are crucial to address include:
  - **Strategies for political support.** Consider and include actions that help build political support for what is wanted to be achieved. Lobbying can be a legitimate and necessary activity
  - **Communication.** Good mechanisms for communicating are vital in bringing together diverse interests and helping them to work together. Consider and

include any actions or activities that will make this happen. Too often these communication activities are not given the resourcing or attention that they deserve

- **Capacity building.** While training and staff or community development may be included as an objective of the plan, it may also be desired to think carefully about whether or not implementing the plan will need specific training or capacity building. What support or additional capacity do individuals or groups need to participate and play an effective role in implementation?
- **Making links:** Consideration needs to be given to how different activities can link together to create a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. Often the most efficient use of resources comes from ‘piggy-backing’ on other initiatives and pursuing activities with multiple outcomes
- **Staging.** Consider how actions can build up in stages over time to reach the desired result. At times it may be necessary to reach one stepping stone before reassessing where to go next
- **Influence.** Gain the support of other key players and influence other plans or activities to increase the ability to make a difference. Ways of gaining support need to be considered and included in the planning and activities.
- **Keeping on track.** Any strategic plan, development plan or action plan or action plan needs to be followed and referred to regularly to ensure continued relevance. The best way to use a plan is to constantly check and report on progress
  - **Performance measures or indicators.** These can be used to monitor progress and identify what is being achieved. They help to demonstrate how well an organisation, program or strategy is meeting its objectives or if actions are not proceeding as planned. They can also show where performance can be improved. Performance indicators can use both qualitative and quantitative information. They should be relevant to the program’s desired outcomes and objectives, be quantifiable, verifiable and free from bias. Indicators can be relatively simple, cheap and easy to measure
  - **Monitoring and reporting.** Build into the implementation plan key points at which to check progress. It is a good idea to give formal progress reports to the group with responsibilities across both tourism and heritage interests. This will help keep attention on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. Timeframes for monitoring and reporting are important and should be carefully thought through. Enough time must be allowed to determine if the outcomes are successful or whether a significant impact has been made. If unforeseen obstacles arise, it may be desirable to report them sooner rather than later to avert future negative consequences. Consideration of the time required to collect and collate monitoring data must be made
  - **Evaluating and reviewing.** The plan should also include a timeframe (three to five years is typical). A major evaluation and review should be conducted at the end of this time. This evaluation may lead to the plan being refreshed or the process being repeated to produce a new plan. Keeping track of progress means that

efforts can be redirected and management continually adapted to suit changing circumstances.

## **STEP 10 - STATEMENT OF DIRECTIONS**

This step will help to prepare a brief statement summarising the outcomes of the process and of proposals, identifying the key heritage and tourism assets, key issues, and agreed actions and future directions. By writing a plan, this step is akin to the conclusion or executive summary. It summarises, in as succinct a form as possible:

- The key heritage and tourism assets of the region, place or product
- The key issues
- The agreements and outcomes reached between parties.

This is a very practical tool to use as a guideline when planning and developing the future geosites, geo-areas and geotourism products in South Africa.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

Chapter Two explained the concept of sustainability and how it was defined, developed and structured subsequent to the Rio 92 conference. The concept was described as an economic, social and ecological issue. The key principles of sustainability are integration, community involvement, precautionary behaviour, equity within and between generations, continual improvement and ecological integrity. The Local Agenda 21 document, a comprehensive program of action, was adopted at the conference. Sustainability in a Local Agenda 21 context has three primary goals toward sustainable development: relevant national level policies and strategies, integration of decision-making processes and community involvement. Sustainability has several benefits: managing change more effectively, more effective policy development, enhanced capacity to meet community needs, greater community cohesion, stronger regional links, cost savings, a healthy and vibrant community and staying relevant. For tourism to be sustainable, it needs to be integrated into all aspects of development.

The EcoSteps sustainability tree is a new tool showing where stakeholders links to each other and was proposed by Crawford, Young and Miall (2002). A useful diagram by Cherqui (2005) shows the evolution of sustainable development over time. The four pillars of sustainable development: economic prosperity, social well-being, environmental stewardship and governance were developed. The relationship with sustainable development followed. Economic, environmental and socio-cultural considerations need to be well understood in the successful planning, development and management of tourism. There are three aspects underpinning sustainable tourism: economic, social and environmental and a political aspect. In developing sustainable tourism, three stages can be identified in the formulation of a strategy: 1) Analysing conditions, problems and opportunities, 2) Identifying objectives and making strategic choices and 3) Developing policies and action programs.

In South Africa, the NSSD (2006) provides an integrated framework for it views social, economic and ecosystem factors as embedded within each other and underpinned by systems of governance.

Geotourism was discussed as was how other authors expanded on the definition. Political/governance environments were added as another pillar to sustainability additional to the existing ones of ecological, economic, and socio/cultural. It was also demonstrated that sustainability must be integrated into planning, policy, management, use of resources, conserving the environment, economic gain, profitability from tourism operations, and social equity. Therefore, tourism is ideally suited to adopt sustainability as a guiding philosophy. An appropriate tourism policy and planning on a holistic and integrated basis should be agreed by all stakeholders. Abdullaev (2006) developed the Concentric Circles Model of Sustainable Tourism (CCMST) where the centre of the model is the intergenerational equity (IE) as the main objective of the sustainable development by using local capital stock,

*”Steps to sustainable tourism”* was a document of the Department of the Environment and Heritage of Australia (2004) in developing a plan for the sustainable future for tourism, heritage and the environment. It is explained in detail as it could be applied in South Africa with practical guidelines for the future planning and development of geosites, geo-areas and geotourism products in South Africa.