

Mountain tourism and the conservation of biological and cultural diversity

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1.0 Introduction

Mountains- homes of the gods, sources of life-giving waters, gigantic monuments of rock and ice - that for centuries posed as impenetrable boundaries, are increasingly falling vulnerable to humans' sporting endurance, to an onslaught of travelers seeking escape from cluttered lives, and to demands on natural resources and cultural institutions that far exceed capacities. Ironically, tourism -- that which brought laudable economic opportunities to here-to-fore isolated and undeveloped mountain regions - is turning mountains into "the world's highest trash dumps," into high altitude Disneylands that misrepresent and exploit mountain cultures with little gain for mountain inhabitants. Infrastructure development (roads, airports, hotels, communications, etc.) is opening mountain regions to mass tourism before proper tourism planning or management can take place.

Tourism is vital to the conservation and development of mountain regions. Mountain tourism constitutes 15-20% of worldwide tourism, or US\$ 70 -90 billion per year. The world's largest industry, tourism, has seen an increase in annual turnover of 4.7% over the 1990s, and is anticipated to grow at a rate of 4.1% annually over the next twenty years. Mountain tourism plays a significant role in national economies, relative to mountain economies' generally small contributions.

Tourism's impacts on mountain ecosystems and biological resources are of great concern, however, both at the local and global scales, because of the high degree of biodiversity and environmental sensitivity of mountain areas. Immense altitudinal changes and associated climatic conditions result in great variations in temperatures, precipitation, soils and vegetation, breeding a rich diversity of ecosystems.

Ironically, these same conditions impose inordinate stresses on natural resources, compounded by unrestrained human activities and development. Loss of biodiversity has environmental, ethical, health-related, and economic implications: e.g., many high altitude plants have medicinal properties that are important to mountain people's well-being, and have potential economic value that can boost mountain economies. The declining health of mountain ecosystems not only threatens the survival of highland species and economies,

but also affects downstream watershed management, water quality and supplies, agriculture, climate, wildlife migration patterns.

Cultural identities and diversity in mountain regions are also under threat by the economic, social and environmental forces associated with mountain tourism. Cultures long secluded by rugged terrain and isolation are suddenly "object matter" for camera-toting tourists. The knowledge and skills refined over generations by mountain peoples lose value in the face of high-tech mountain sports and demand for five-star hotel standards. A loss of cultural identity leads to increased social problems of crime, drugs, and the degradation of community values and religious practices that once held the society together.

Due to isolation and limited access (i.e., physical access, as well as access to education, markets, communications, etc.), many people living in mountain areas lack sufficient skills and the resources to invest in and benefit significantly from tourism. Mountain peoples tend to suffer social and economic marginalization because of ethnic and politically discriminatory attitudes, practices, and laws. Tired of the toils of mountain life and seeking better economic and educational opportunities, young people move to the city, compounding over-population and poverty in urban areas.

The purpose of this paper on mountain tourism is:

- To present the major issues being faced by governments, NGOs, communities and the tourism industry in the development and management of mountain tourism, particularly with regard to issues of sustainability, and conservation of biological and cultural diversity.
- To identify examples of tourism in various mountain regions which are successful at conserving biological and cultural diversity, and to extract and distill key components of these successes as "Best Practices."
- To understand the relationships between mountain tourism and broader objectives of mountain development and conservation, including gender and socio-economic equities, empowerment of mountain peoples through improved access to information and participation in decision-making processes, livelihood diversification, and improved access, communication, and infrastructure development.
- To recommend key actions with targeted outcomes for various sectors to achieve sustainable mountain tourism that conserves biological and cultural diversity and improves the well-being of mountain peoples.

2.0 Background and Concurrent International Tourism Discussions

Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 - "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development" was a great step forward towards realizing the significance of the world's mountains. This chapter, adopted by the UN Conference on

Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, states that the fate of the mountains may affect more than half of the world's population, and that particular attention should be paid to mountain resources, especially water and biodiversity. It recognized mountain tourism as an important component in sustainable mountain development and conservation, and acknowledged the role of The Mountain Forum and others in enhancing the position of mountains on the global environmental agenda.

"Challenges of the 21st Century," prepared for the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Special UN General Assembly began to formulate a direction for addressing mountain tourism issues:

"...Development of policies and plans must be based on a realistic assessment of the relative social and environmental compatibilities of different tourist and other economic activities, and involve local communities and other stakeholders at all stages from initial definition to implementation." (Mountain Agenda 1997)

In spring 1998, Mountain Forum conducted an electronic conference on the topic of *"Community-Based Mountain Tourism: Practices for Linking Conservation and Enterprise."* During the conference, 460 stakeholders and interested individuals from Africa, Asia, Australia and the Pacific, Europe, South America and North America participated or provided case studies.

In 1999, the Commission for Sustainable Development held its Spring Session on Tourism and reviewed case studies and discussed how environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources can become integral components of development in the tourism industry (Mountain Agenda 1999).

Local Agenda 21 action plans have now been underway for nearly a decade. A study has been carried out, under the direction of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics to determine how tourism has been addressed in Local Agenda 21s as they are drawn up and implemented by local authorities (Vourc'h in UNEP 2001). The study is forthcoming (available in April 2002). The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg will evaluate the achievements and obstacles in implementing Agenda 21 over the last ten years, while looking at further action needed to achieve sustainable development.

International tourism organizations, including World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and World Tourism Organization (WTO), have an important role in raising awareness about issues of sustainable tourism and have committed to that task. Others, including UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO and ICLEI address tourism as a tool for sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Concurrent to the celebration of International Year of the Mountain, this year 2002 has also been designated as the International Year of Ecotourism. Throughout 2002, and culminating in the Global Summit on Ecotourism in Canada (May 2002), ecotourism planners will gather around the globe to share experiences and draw up recommendations on many of the same issues facing mountain tourism professionals: e.g., how to measure and mitigate impacts of tourism on biodiversity and indigenous cultures, equity in benefit sharing, development of industry standards, the roles of various stakeholders in tourism management, and the importance of the participatory approach in building sustainability.

3.0 Commonalities and Differences across Mountain Regions

Whereas the nature of mountain tourist destinations and activities varies widely across the globe, from mammoth ski resorts in the European Alps and North American Rockies to horse-back riding among the nomads of Central Asia, such diverse contexts share many common issues of mountain tourism development and management; variations occur in terms of scale and specifics, reflecting the socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts, and to a lesser degree, natural settings.

It is useful to recognize commonalities in mountain issues when looking for other mountain tourism experiences from which to learn, while it is important to understand differences when prescribing actions. The following summarizes and generalizes major points of commonality and differences relevant to planning for sustainable mountain tourism:

Relative Variations and Commonalities across Socio-Economic¹ and Political Contexts

¹Socio-economic factors generally reflect opportunities associated with wealth, education, access to information and technology, and the level of infrastructure development including transportation access, communications, electricity, etc. These might be classified as conditions associated with developed and developing countries or mountain regions.

- *High intensity vs low intensity tourism:* "High-tech" recreational tourism activities utilizing motorized equipment or major infrastructure (such as alpine skiing, snow-mobiling, off-road-driving, mountain biking) generally have more immediate and intensive impacts on the natural environment than do lower intensity recreational activities (e.g., hiking, camping, mountain climbing). Many developing countries now strive for these high-tech, higher-investment, potentially high-return (also high-risk) tourism activities that also have high adverse environmental impacts (high energy needs, road construction, etc.). Planning for mountain tourism must assess the short and long term environmental

impacts of development, and give priority to tourism activities that benefit local people while generating sustainable revenues and support for conservation.

- *Monitoring and management:* Tourism managers in developed countries generally have access to better monitoring equipment and a database for scientific management, whereas tourism management in developing countries often relies upon good "people skills." Managers in developing countries have fewer opportunities to training and education in tourism management.
- *Local participation and management:* The existence of an indigenous population living within protected areas is common in mountain regions of developing countries, and presents both opportunities and challenges. Local people need to be engaged in mountain tourism from planning to enterprise development, and empowered (legally and communally) to conserve the mountain resources that tourism depends upon. Local participation is equally important in developed countries, where multiple use recreationists and cattle ranchers vie for space in over-crowded open space lands.
- *Inaccessibility and remoteness:* Remoteness and inaccessibility are no guarantee of protection from large numbers of tourists: Mt. Everest suffers from the effects of up to 4-500 mountaineers and local staff in a single day. Accessibility, both in terms of physical access and affordability, are important mechanisms for managing tourism's impacts. Managed access is an important tool for mountain tourism, but needs to be balanced with maintaining equitable opportunities for benefit sharing and monitoring of impacts to determine when increases or decreases in access are warranted.
- *Absence of mountain tourism plans, regulations and enforcement:* Unfortunately, a commonality across nearly every locale and culture is the lack of current (or any) tourism development and management plans for mountain regions. Mountain parks often have resource management plans that are based on a heavy regulatory process, whereas funding and staff for implementation are lacking. Guidelines for planning for sustainable tourism are needed.

How Mountain Tourism Issues Vary among Mountain Cultures
Cultures vary across mountain regions, influencing how local peoples are affected by tourism, such as:

- Tourism in sacred mountain areas: Visitors of any religious background and both genders are welcome at some sacred mountain areas while not at others; behavior or dress appropriate at one site may be inappropriate at another. Tourism plans must respect local beliefs and practices by consulting with local experts and practitioners.
- Home-stays: In some cultures, mountain households were traditionally open to travelers, serving up free hospitality and a meal, as the

forerunner of mountain tourism. Other cultures have restrictions about people of other religions or ethnicity staying or taking a meal in their home. Such issues affect a culture's (or household's) ability to partake in small-scale enterprises such as home-stays and need to be reflected in tourism plans.

- Cultural Vulnerability: Some cultures hold onto their basic cultural values well in the face of tourism, while others do not. Cultural factors may be at play, or circumstances such as strong community or religious leadership or education. It is important to understand the cultural factors at play in planning for successful tourism management.

4.0 Issues

The following summarizes the major impacts of tourism in mountain areas, directly and indirectly, related to conservation of biological and cultural diversity²:

²Cultural diversity: The viable existence of discreet indigenous cultural identities, values and systems (ie, beliefs, structures, roles, customs and practices, etc.)

Biodiversity Conservation Issues of Mountain Tourism

In seeming contrast to their mighty images and abundant variation, mountain environs are extremely fragile and highly susceptible to disturbances to their delicately balanced ecosystems. Such vulnerability is compounded by the fact that high altitude, a harsh climate, thin soils, steep topography and in many places low precipitation, hamper vegetation growth and re-growth: it takes trees up to 60 years to mature at high elevations. Besides being repositories of high concentrations of endemic species and vital reservoirs of genetic diversity, mountain regions also function as critical corridors for migrating animals and as sanctuaries for plants and animals whose natural habitat have been squeezed or modified by natural and human activities.

Thus, unmanaged tourism (including infrastructure and facility development, and human activities associated with tourism) can exert a high degree of impact on sensitive mountain environments, here-to-fore buffered from disturbance by remoteness and isolation. These impacts include:

- Removal of vegetation both on a large scale (i.e., for roads, land clearance for ski areas or hotel construction, etc.) or small scale (i.e., collection of plants, trampling and disturbance to sensitive vegetation by uncontrolled tourists), even by well-meaning "ecotourists" watching for wildlife or studying plant-life.
- Disturbance to wildlife and reduction of wildlife habitat area: Mountain tourism is fast growing: tourists (and tourism infrastructure) are going

further into remote and isolated high altitude areas. Tourism managers "sell" opportunities to view wildlife, which, unless properly managed, can interfere with wildlife critical needs and life cycles. Some wildlife may respond by retreating; others become accustomed to humans and human food.

- Wildlife poaching and trade in wildlife parts is sometimes masked by the increased presence of tourists in wilderness areas where local people work as tour guides or porters and smuggle illegal wildlife parts out for sale.
- Increased incident of forest and grassland fires from tourist activities: A tossed cigarette is all it takes. With increased numbers of visitors, unaccustomed to high fire dangers, forest fires are a real and serious impact of tourism in mountain areas.
- Degradation of forests from cutting of timber and fuelwood for tourism: The increasing number of local trekking lodges in the high Himalaya promotes firewood cutting by the local people, resulting in forest degradation (Bhattraï 1985, Puntenney 1990). Firewood is used to cook food and provide hot showers to tourists. Trekking porters uproot high altitude shrub to burn for cooking and keeping warm, causing serious damage to the exposed slopes (Byers 1999). The number of tourists, with porters and staff, visiting the Everest region each year is four to five times the local population; hence more pressure is exerted on the forest, particularly outside of park boundaries where forests are unprotected. Impacts are evident down slope as well, i.e., soil erosion and reduction in land productivity. Moreover, the villagers are compelled to spend more time in meeting their own needs of firewood from a rapidly receding forest.
- Improper and inadequate garbage and human waste management: Tourism generates a high volume of garbage and waste which mountain communities are unprepared to process. High altitude temperatures inhibit the natural decomposition of human wastes at base camps. Improperly sited toilets pollute mountain streams, affecting water sources downstream as well as the sanctity of sacred lakes and streams. Garbage piles up outside trekking villages and ski villages alike, and is dispersed by wind.
- Simplification of agro-diversity: Sustainable practices that promote agrobiodiversity become geared to tourism market demands, creating a chain effect on cropping patterns, loss of soil productivity and soil erosion, and ultimately destruction of habitats and ecosystems.

Cultural Issues of Mountain Tourism

Cultures and traditional ways of mountain life are changing every day due to the modernizing effects of education, communications, entertainment, travel, employment, tourism, etc. It is difficult to isolate the effects of tourism on mountain cultures, and even more difficult to "prescribe remedies" to the

deterioration of customs and beliefs. Mountain peoples must have a say and a stake in the state and future of their cultures.

Tourism can provide them that stake by giving value (and income) to the maintenance of authentic cultural features, such as architecture, dance and song, food, dress, historic knowledge and handicraft skills. Well-conserved mountain cultures can be a unique attraction to tourists, and the attention of outsiders can even promote cultural pride and a desire to restore authentic cultural heritage. There is a fine line, however, between sustainable cultural tourism and over-commercialization of culture, demanding local participation and commitment to authenticity, equity and careful management.

Unless properly managed, tourism can contribute to the erosion of mountain cultures and associated values, such as:

- The dissolution of distinctive cultural attributes and features, including loss of native languages, disappearance of traditional dress, ignorance of traditional architectural styles and functions, use of legends, beliefs and rituals, support for holy sites, etc..
- Loss of traditional cultural values (e.g., honesty, lack of crime, reciprocity, importance of religion, importance of family/community, systems for assuring equity and well-being among the community, etc.)
- Changes in gender roles that affect the maintenance of cultural traditions, e.g. cultural or religious practices that require or are traditionally taken on by males are now neglected (see below).
- Unmanaged tourism also increases exposure and exploitation of children, creating a culture of begging, which in turn undermines pride and a sense of economic independence.
- Tourism can be deceptive in its message to the poor local communities of the developing countries. Burch (1984) reflected "... the poor region or nation sees the tourists as a representative of values and behavior appropriate to wealthy regions and nations. This model provides no examples of hard work, but rather the image that laziness and excess consumption are the practices that lead to improved levels of living".
- Sacred mountain sites important to both highland and lowland cultures are crumbling for lack of care, due to the breakdown of traditional community support systems and religious beliefs. In many places, tourism policies are not geared to the special needs and spiritual characteristics of sacred mountains and their caretakers.

Socio-Economic and Political Issues of Mountain Tourism

- Political and legal systems have a strong effect on the way mountain tourism and conservation is undertaken, both by government and by individuals. The political "culture" of a country sets forth the

mechanisms and openness by which mountain communities participate in and benefit from mountain tourism.

- Local populations living in and around mountain parks often bear the burdens of tourism e.g., increased garbage and security risks, inflation, etc. but receive little benefit from tourists' park entry fees for much needed local development and conservation.
- The breakdown of traditional socio-economic systems, skills and markets (e.g., cooperative farming, rotating loans, handicraft production and market demand, etc.) has reduced the viability and opportunities for diverse livelihoods in mountain areas. As mountain tourism has grown, and other sources of livelihoods and market demand have declined, some mountain economies are becoming overly dependent on tourism. Agricultural communities have given up their sustainable practices and the cultivation of a variety of products and have converted to growing single, often exotic crops that tourists buy. If and when tourism declines - or exotic crops fail -- economies (and agro-diversity) suffer inordinately.
- Whereas tourism provides jobs and investment opportunities, it tends to benefit households and investors who already have significant assets. The trickle-down benefits from tourism to poorer, uneducated households are generally limited to menial labor jobs, some farming and food production, and minimal profits from time-consuming handicraft production. Market demand, or operator-imposed "quality standards" (e.g., high standard accommodations, English speaking guides, even environmental regulations) further restrict involvement by poor households. Likewise, economies of scale and market connections favor large "chain" hotels and tourism service providers, who generally come from outside the region. Small-scale, locally own enterprises find it hard to compete.
- Lack of tourism management (e.g., control of the number of lodges or operators, enforcement of environmental standards, etc.) and an over-supply of tourism service providers in a limited market, bring about over-competition and price wars, wherein service quality, labor practices, and environmental protection measures retreat.

Gender Implications of Mountain Tourism

Gender roles and relations often change when tourism enters the local mountain economy. Guiding or transport jobs take men away from the home for long periods of time; some, such as the Sherpas of Nepal, face high risk in mountaineering work, and never come home. The absence of males adds considerably to women's already heavy burdens of household, child-rearing, agriculture and resource-collection tasks. The additional responsibilities, combined with a relatively low socio-economic status afforded women, and their lack of "economic worth" without earned wages, holds women back even further from pursuing education, careers and political involvement, and can

have an adverse impact on her health, longevity and in some ways, her children's welfare.

In some mountain areas and cultures, however, tourism has availed higher socio-economic status and independence for women. Their skills in hospitality, cooking, and care giving to travelers are valuable commodities in tourism. Trekkers in Nepal ranked cleanliness and "friendliness of hostesses" as the priority factors in selecting a lodge. Women also have key roles to play in conservation of natural and cultural resources: village women in Nepal keep the villages and trails free of litter, recognizing the importance of a clean environment to tourism. As these uneducated women gain confidence and economic power, they are becoming more active in community life, taking on leadership roles, and raising their status in the communities (Lama 2000).

5.0 Measuring the Impacts and Benefits of Mountain Tourism: What is known and unknown

Countries throughout the world are developing or becoming interested in tourism as a tool for biodiversity and cultural conservation and sustainable development. Yet many are facing the same questions and dilemmas, including:

- How to balance the demands of tourism with protection of natural and cultural resources?
- Can sustainable tourism generate the revenues national governments need and have grown dependent upon from mass tourism, and will the market support it?
- How to build a tourism industry that improves livelihoods of rural peoples and involves them in conservation?

Their reasons for concern are well founded: there is not little information readily available, nor case studies from which to learn, that address these points.

A number of international organizations and programs are currently involved in assisting countries with these challenges. The Biodiversity Planning Support Program (BPSP) of UNEP/UNDP/GER provides assistance to national biodiversity conservation planners, and is undertaking a study that looks to incorporate "global best practices" for integrating biodiversity into the tourism sector. A compilation of national case studies from 12 countries has been gathered, including several mountainous countries (Canada, Chile, Kazakhstan, Mexico, and Peru). The Convention of Biological Diversity has also called for the collection of best practices in sustainable tourism. (Ceballos-Lascurain in UNEP 2001)

Constraints to better understanding tourism impacts, markets, and effectiveness as a tool for conservation and development include:

- Accurate measurement and assessment of impacts are constrained by prohibitive costs, lack of technological and human capabilities, time and accessibility factors, and standardized easy-to-use biodiversity assessment and monitoring methods. Instead, impacts of tourism on the environment are commonly measured using qualitative or proxy indicators; e.g., how local people's attitudes have changed toward conservation and how much they have reduced their consumption of forest fuelwood. Such feedback is important in demonstrating progress toward the objective of biodiversity conservation, but does not tell us how the biodiversity of the forest has been affected.
- As little as is known about tourism's impacts on biological systems, the effects of tourism on mountain cultures and peoples is much less understood.
- Current market demand for mountain tourism is not well known, in part due to the variations in the use of terms such as nature, adventure, and ecotourism, thus skewing polling results. The potential growth in mountain tourism is high, but again, that depends on how it is measured. Increasing numbers of domestic tourists in countries like India and China are just beginning to travel to the mountains, and with such large national populations, shifting trends can have monumental and immediate impacts on tourism destinations. Internationally, tourism trends are highly volatile and sensitive to bad press or security concerns.
- A basic precept of sustainable tourism is that stakeholders who benefit from tourism (e.g., earn income from, or realize other non-economic advantages) will be motivated to conserve the natural and cultural setting that tourist pay to see, thereby assuring stakeholders a sustainable livelihood, tax base, revenue source, etc. This may be working, yet hard evidence is difficult to ascertain -- success stories need to be collected and shared.

In short, much remains unknown about the success of mountain tourism in addressing issues of sustainability, and biodiversity and cultural conservation. Where studies are underway, the results need to be documented and shared to inform policy as well as on-the-ground management and marketing decisions.

6. 0 Tourism as a Tool for Integrated Conservation and Mountain Development

Some of the same characteristics of mountains that hinder development and conservation, such as isolation, limited access, ruggedness, altitude, climate, etc. are also qualities that make mountains attractive places for tourism, and also help to protect bio- and cultural diversity. One way to keep mountain tourism activities within an appropriate scale and impact level is to build upon

the natural strengths and assets of the area and the people living there. This "asset-based approach" also reinforces the concept of promoting a "unique (tourism) selling point" or UPS.

By learning to value mountain tourism assets as the basis for a mountain tourism economy, tourism stakeholders come to realize the importance of conservation of those assets and of proper tourism management. In this way, tourism serves as a "tool" for conservation and development, that is, mountain tourism can provide livelihood opportunities and income which serve as economic and other incentives to conserve the natural environment and traditional cultures that tourists come to see.

Planning for Sustainable Tourism

The issues outlined above, assessing the critical impacts of unmanaged mountain tourism, with the serious repercussions of a loss of bio- and cultural diversity, suggest a pressing need to identify steps for attaining sustainable mountain tourism. Measures of sustainability look at:

- Does tourism contribute to sustainable mountain development
- Who benefits, in economic terms, from mountain tourism
- Are biophysical resources of mountains degraded due to tourism activities
- Does tourism affect mountain communities and societies positively or negatively³

³Mountain Agenda 1999 (CSD)

Another important factor in planning for sustainable mountain tourism is stakeholder participation - particularly by mountain peoples, but also by government policy makers (in tourism as well as tourism-related issues), NGOs, the private sector, and ideally, the mountain tourist (or mountain tourism market). Experience has now shown that strong stakeholder participation throughout the planning, implementation, and management of mountain tourism and equitable benefit sharing will affect a more positive result in terms of sustainable practices, and well-conserved biological and cultural resources.

During the international electronic conference on *"Community-Based Mountain Tourism: Practices for Linking Conservation and Enterprise,"* successful practices were those that:

*"...Appear to be creating a more equitable distribution of tourism opportunities and benefits. All are based on the principles of local control, partnerships, sustainable development, and conservation. Although these practices are derived from specific case studies, many of them have the potential to be applied globally in mountain areas."*⁴

⁴*"Community-Based Mountain Tourism: Practices for Linking Conservation with Enterprise"* Synthesis of an Electronic Conference of the Mountain Forum, April 13-May 18, 1998 Conference participants also identified and described various actions that policy makers and practitioners can implement to facilitate sustainable and equitable mountain tourism.

*"The case studies provided indicate that community leadership and a favorable national or regional policy environment are two central components of successful community-based mountain tourism initiatives. Policies and actions that link conservation, enterprise development and community control in mountain tourism have the potential to address one of the most important challenges facing the 21st century-sustainable management of mountain resources and a sustainable future for mountain populations."*⁵

⁵Ibid

These experiences and components of sustainable mountain tourism are also reflected in the sampling of Best Practices from around the world, summarized in [Appendix A](#).

7.0 Best Practices for Mountain Tourism

In the first draft of this paper on mountain tourism for circulation and review, examples of Best Practices are drawn primarily from the Himalayan region, as well as from Sichuan (China) and Kyrgyzstan. During the email conference review of this paper, examples from other mountain regions will be made added, enabling the final paper to present a more balanced geographic perspective.

Best Practices are organized in the following headings. Issues of scale are addressed within these three main sections, e.g., local level implementation practices are isolated from national level.

- I. Best Practices in Policy Development and Implementation
- II. Best Practices for Practical Implementation
- III. Existing and Potential Partnerships in Mountain Tourism

Please see [Appendix A](#) for the description of Best Practices.

8.0 Linkages with Other Mountain Development and Conservation Themes and Initiatives

Infrastructure and Access Needs of Tourism and Sustainable Mountain Economies

Mountain tourism is clearly linked to the development of sustainable mountain economies as well as global concerns of biodiversity and cultural conservation,

as laid out in the above sections. One factor only minimally addressed, however, which is critical to both to the development of mountain tourism and economies and conservation, is the issue of infrastructure impacts and capacities. Infrastructure comprises the basic physical facilities necessary for mountain tourism to function, including buildings, transportation, communications, energy, water and waste management systems. New tourism infrastructure can, however, cause harm to mountain communities, as well as to mountain environments both during construction (e.g., earth movement) as well as subsequently (e.g., an increase in population and related resource needs, pollution, etc.) Paradoxically, new infrastructure that initially supports tourism can bring enough negative cultural and environmental changes so that mountain regions are no longer desirable to tourists (Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).

Lack of accessibility is a defining characteristic of mountain locations. In market terms, however, roads are the means for linking the tourist to the product. Therein lies the paradox. The negative impacts of road development on mountain environments can be considerable. Poor planning for road development can cause serious impacts on mountain ecology and water regimes (Dasmann and Poore 1992 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998). With access to the outside world, communities may be faced with rapid and often negative cultural and social shifts. Short-term profiteering, an alienation from the traditional land base, and increased economic marginalization are common negative effects experienced by communities newly reached by roads (E. Byers 1995 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).

One pitfall in tourism planning is when tourism capacities are determined by road and infrastructure engineers and not by tourism planners. All too often, roads are built with assumptions of much larger needs than the mountain environment and socio-cultural components of mountain communities can handle. Instead, roads and infrastructure should be developed to serve the capacity required by well-planned mountain tourism, with protection of the mountain environment and communities in mind. Infrastructure should avoid sacred sites and areas that local community members wish to keep private (Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998) and should be planned and sited to protect important scenic resources of mountain areas.

Tourism's Role in International Conventions on Mountain Development and Conservation

It is evident that tourism will remain one of the fastest developing industries in the world, with significant, direct and mounting impacts on the sensitive ecological and cultural values of mountain areas. Such concerns are driving a growing interest in the concepts and practices of sustainable and eco-tourism. As such, tourism plays a major role in the implementation of international

conventions on environment, human rights, trade and benefits, and indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage protection.

A number of international organizations mentioned above (see Background) are actively engaging governments and civil society organizations, and developing guidelines for sustainable tourism in mountain areas. Issues of awareness, education, institutional capacity and willingness, socio-economics, cultural and gender perspectives, and above all, political will at local, national and global levels remain as issues to be addressed.

Whereas each of these organizations and conferences has its own specific responsibility and objectives, it is important that all communicate and collaborate in the formulation and implementation of remedial actions to complementary tourism needs.

9.0 Key Actions and Targets

I. Sustainability of Mountain Tourism

National or Provincial Level Governments Actions

Planning for mountain tourism should be undertaken by governments, with the aim of producing a five to ten year sustainable mountain tourism plan that addresses national/provincial level policies and strategies, as well as regional and local action plans for tourism development and management. Local plans should be developed by communities, assisted by NGO or government as needed, and coordinated with neighboring localities. Such plans should build upon the uniqueness and assets of individual sites, with the aim of spreading visitors throughout the area in order to share opportunities for benefits and to minimize impacts, while collaborating to promote regional destinations for repeat or longer-stay visits. Domestic and regional tourism markets should be recognized and cultivated.

Tourism development planning should be integrated with other community development and conservation plans in order to promote a diversification of livelihood opportunities in mountain areas, rather than an over-dependence upon tourism.

Stakeholder participation in tourism planning should involve every sector, including key government officials (in tourism and related offices, at national to local levels), NGOs, trade associations, private sector, community members and organizations. A policy of decentralization of decision-making is needed to support the participatory approach, giving legal authority and responsibility to various stakeholders for tourism management and plan implementation. Policies should promote full opportunities for women, and broad representation

of stakeholders from socio-economic, and ethnic or cultural sectors, in planning, decision-making and benefit sharing.

Mountain tourism planning and decision-making should take into account the true value and full economic and environmental costs and benefits of mountain resources in calculating the economic returns of development initiatives in mountainous areas. A portion of tourism revenues should be invested in the conservation and restoration of natural and cultural mountain resources, and to benefit communities affected by tourism impacts.

Mountain tourism policies and development regulations should promote equitability in tourism development opportunities (such as tourism taxes, conditions of development linked to local employment or responsibilities for community development, etc.) that are transparent and achieve widespread benefit sharing from tourism.

Local investment opportunities should be protected through government policy and regulations, financial and technical assistance, training and skill development, etc. to promote small-scale, locally owned tourism enterprises.

All mountain tourism development should meet sustainability standards, in terms of minimizing impacts on biological resources and ecosystems diversity, while promoting conservation of mountain cultures and improving the well being of mountain peoples.

Infrastructure (including roads and other transportation means, electricity, water, etc.) should be phased over time to serve planned mountain tourism and other mountain development needs while staying within environmental and social capacities as determined by comprehensive community development plans and environmental assessments of individual development proposals. Infrastructure should be sited, scaled, and designed to be compatible with the natural and cultural environment, and to protect scenic views.

A regulatory system should be developed that coordinates the review and approval of tourism development proposals among relevant government offices to assure that tourism concerns are addressed.

Government tourism planners should work with neighboring jurisdictions where appropriate to promote transboundary tourism as a unique attraction with opportunities for tourism development and benefits in remote regions.

Development Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations⁶

⁶International, regional, national or local level NGOS

Dissemination of good examples (e.g., of Local Agenda 21 implementation), Best Practices and legal instruments for sustainable mountain tourism development through information exchanges, establishment of sustainable tourism site networks, guidelines, etc.

Formulation of sustainable tourism standards for mountain regions, and guidelines (developed with stakeholder input) for assessing and monitoring impacts of mountain tourism on biodiversity and culture, dissemination of examples of labeling, certification, incentive-based and other options for monitoring and maintaining sustainable mountain tourism standards.

Enhance the conceptual and practical capabilities of mountain tourism stakeholders through education and training, learning exchanges, awareness raising, skill-based training, and by valuing local knowledge and traditional systems of social and environmental management and development of educational materials for the public, decision-makers and stakeholders to promote better understanding of sustainable mountain tourism.

Through education, example, and role modeling, NGOs should promote the equitable involvement of women and all socio-economic and cultural sectors in planning for mountain tourism.

Development organizations should work in partnership with local NGOs, and should provide institutional strengthening training and opportunities, to enhance local NGO capacities and skills in sustainable tourism management, while valuing indigenous knowledge and relationships.

Research Organizations

Research organizations should work with national governments, development agencies, private sector and local communities to identify and prioritize research needs related to sustainable mountain tourism. Priority should be given to developing systems for monitoring and evaluating the biophysical and cultural impacts of tourism, and in cost-benefit analysis of sustainable tourism vs. mass tourism as well as the valuation of nature and cultural conservation in various mountain contexts. Such information is needed for convincing governments, financial institutes, investors, tour operators, etc. of the viability of sustainable approaches.

Marketing research specific to mountain tourism is needed, in particular addressing issues such as willingness to pay (e.g., for sustainable and conservation practices) and demand for sustainable services and products. Market research guidelines should be developed to help isolate issues of mountain tourism. Research should be conducted by and with mountain communities; findings should be made available to mountain tourism

communities, operators and managers through appropriate networks and information channels, assisted by NGOs and trade associations.

Researchers and practitioners from different mountain regions should come together (with financial and practical support) to facilitate exchange of experiences and know-how regarding the challenges of including tourism in strategies for sustainable mountain development.

Tourism Industry

Codes of Conduct are effective means of educating visitors and users of mountain tourism areas of appropriate behavior that minimize impacts on the environment and culture, while contributing to improved local livelihoods. The mountain tourism industry (e.g., local or national tourism trade associations) and international tourism organizations should work with local communities to develop codes of conduct to address local issues and needs.

Working with NGOs and government bodies (see above), tourism businesses and associations should contribute expertise to the development of sustainable tourism standards and integrate such concepts and practices of sustainability, both environmental and socio-cultural, into practices and development design in mountain regions.

II. Equitable Distribution of Benefits and Opportunities among Mountain Tourism Stakeholders, and Improved Well-Being of Mountain Peoples

Distribution of benefits and economic opportunities from mountain tourism seeks to achieve two primary goals: to serve as incentives for stakeholders to conserve mountain resources as the basis for sustainable mountain tourism (and therefore must be widely shared in order to motivate widespread conservation action); and to improve the well-being and provide livelihood opportunities of mountain peoples in an equitable way, also helping to stem out-migration.

Benefit and opportunity sharing should be linked to concrete conservation actions that beneficiaries commit to undertake, e.g., beneficiaries who reduce fuelwood use can receive tourists booked through the local tourism management committee.

Benefit sharing should be planned and implemented as a part of all mountain tourism development. Benefit sharing systems that are founded in indigenous practices may be most appropriate, and should be planned in an open participatory manner.

Legal and customary practices that limit certain populations' access to information, education, financial assistance, skills development opportunities, etc. and therefore opportunities for participation in mountain tourism -

particularly for women and minority ethnic sectors - should be reviewed and revised, with full participation of local communities and relevant NGOs.

Mountain tourism that values the skills and knowledge of mountain peoples and the attributes of mountain settings should be encouraged and given priority in order to promote local cultural values and employment opportunities. Technical assistance should be given appropriate to the skills and technology available in mountain regions. Use of locally made products should be promoted in mountain tourism over use of imported products to stimulate local economies and highlight indigenous products.

Mountain economies should be diversified with new sustainable livelihoods that increase the benefits retained by mountain communities, recognize the land and resource rights of indigenous peoples, and carefully blend indigenous knowledge and appropriate technologies.

III. Conservation of the Biodiversity of Mountain Regions

Through policy and practical means (e.g., training, partnerships, institutional capacity and awareness building) management systems and capabilities for conserving mountain biodiversity in tourism areas should be strengthened.

Raise awareness among stakeholders and decision-makers about the linkages between sustainable mountain tourism development and conservation of mountain biodiversity. (See above)

Assess the adequacy of laws, policies, national environmental action plans, and other legal and institutional structures for implementation of the biodiversity conservation standards and conventions, and for specific needs to address local issues.

Prescribe environmental impact assessments and on-site mitigation as mandatory for all projects in mountain tourism areas, and support the development of the necessary capabilities, science and legal mechanisms, including enforcement. (See above). Alongside regulation and incentives for conservation of mountain biological resources, develop and support the availability of low-cost appropriate technological means of conserving resources, including subsidy or assisted availability of alternative fuel, development and sale of low-cost, low-fuel using stoves, development of prototype construction designs that feature insulation and passive heating systems, training in conservation practices, etc.

Educate tourists and tour guides on how to conserve energy and resources through codes of conduct, production and distribution of visitor information, and in educational opportunities as an integral part of the tourism experience. Train mountain tourism operators in eco-friendly practices.

Recognize and strengthen the cultural and religious values and restrictions on areas of biodiversity associated with sacred sites. Empower local communities with management responsibilities.

IV. Conserving Cultural Diversity and Heritage of Mountain Peoples

Mountain cultural heritage and diversity must be recognized as a valid basis for conservation, on par with biological diversity⁷, with regard to mitigating impacts of mountain tourism in both policy and practice. NGOs working with local communities should play a greater role in facilitating this task.

⁷"International NGO Consultation on the Mountain Agenda Summary" Report and Recommendations to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, April 1995

National policies should be reformed to better represent the interests of mountain communities, and to establish protocols to recognize and empower the most local forms of representation.

Systems of recognizing intellectual property rights of indigenous knowledge and cultural attributes, in terms of managing and developing mountain tourism (e.g., protection of access or guiding rights to certain sites, publication of materials, displays of cultural activities or events, etc.) should be developed and enforced.

Generate educational materials for students, young people, and tourists to recognize the cultural heritage value of mountain sites and respect the spiritual and cultural norms of local cultures.

Assess the vulnerability of sacred sites to the impacts tourism, and develop appropriate plans for tourism development and management (or closure to tourists if need be) to be carried out by local communities with support from government and NGOs, and user fees. Consider different impacts and needs of international and domestic tourists.

Mountain sites of cultural and spiritual significance should be respected as cultural heritage sites, including for example, as cultural landscapes under the World Heritage Convention. Pilgrimage sites with heavy use need special care and may need control to prevent damage to the spiritual values.⁸ While giving broader recognition to such important cultural sites, respect local needs (for access) and strengthen traditional management systems; involve local caretakers and communities in planning for conservation of such sites.

⁸Ibid.

Appendix A

BGMS-B3 Paper: "Mountain Tourism, and the Conservation of Biological and Cultural Diversity"

by Wendy Brewer Lama and Nikhat Sattar

I. Best Practices in Policy Development and Implementation *National or Provincial Level Policies (unless otherwise noted)*

- Policy support for community management of natural or cultural resources and tourism:

- Under a 'Mountain Areas Conservancy Project' in northern Pakistan an ecotourism strategy is being developed, using experiences from community management of biodiversity resources in the area. One of the principles to be used is to transfer a fixed percentage of the fees collected to village development, for use by communities.
- Legislation establishing the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area, Nepal, committed to developing local capacities to manage the natural resources, and to fund community conservation through entry fees. Village tourism management committees assist the park in oversight; a few park employees are from local areas; visitation is low, thus re-investment funds are minimal.

- Policy level commitment to a participatory process to mountain tourism planning and management (ideally, prior to the opening new mountain tourism areas):

- Kyrgyzstan: Helvetas Swiss Association for International Cooperation was invited by the government to give a training workshop in participatory planning for tourism at the State level, a "chance to introduce participatory planning procedures and eco-tourism issues into the tourism policy." (Fueg 2001)
- Alberta (Canada)'s Provincial Department of Tourism and Multiculturalism provided the guidelines for tourism development according to its provincial tourism strategy through which communities developed local area tourism plans. This provincial body encouraged self-regulation and decision-making, as well as broad community participation. (Moss 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).
- The State Government of Sikkim has begun using the participatory approach in State tourism planning as a result of the demonstrated success of the approach by Sikkim Biodiversity and Conservation at the local level (The Mountain Institute)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy support for an <u>integrated approach to mountain conservation and development</u>, to avoid over-dependence upon tourism: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pingwu County Government (Sichuan, China) and Sichuan Provincial Government have supported the WWF Integrated Conservation and Development Programme for Panda Conservation, with ecotourism and other enterprise-based livelihoods including improved agriculture, local food and beverage production, handicraft production, non-timber forest product development, etc. (WWF China 1996) ◦ Integrated conservation and sustainable development strategies developed through consultative processes involving the government and local communities in the two districts of Abbottabad and Chitral in North West Frontier Province and the Northern Areas flanked by the Karakoram / Himalayas / Hindukush ranges includes sustainable tourism for mountain development as a key economic development tool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Coordination among government authorities</u>, involving policy planning for tourism and related topics such as protected area management and wildlife conservation, trade and industries, transportation, immigration, finance, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fiji's Koroyanitu National Park Development Program, centered in the Mount Evans Range (funded by the New Zealand government, and implemented by the Ministry of Forestry and the Native Lands Trust Board) sought to protect cultural heritage and water, soil and forest resources through the promotion of ecotourism in land-owning villages. While all operational decisions are at the village level, these decisions are guided by a larger national framework. (reference needed from CBMT 1998) ◦ Conservation planning for mountain regions of Pakistan has used an integrated approach to mountain development, ecotourism, culture heritage and natural resource management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Policy level cooperation between government and private tourism sector and NGOs</u> (including trade organizations) in national level tourism planning and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Huascarán National Park, Peru, where facilitators from The Mountain Institute brought together national officials, park staff, and hundreds of community and private sector groups to create a local ecotourism plan. The plan is now seen as "the most comprehensive attempt to manage tourism in the history of natural protected areas in Peru, and the first one specifically tied to a management plan for any unit within the National System of Natural Protected Areas in the country" (Torres 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).

- National tourism management policies that aim to minimize impacts of tourism through policy standards (e.g., limiting the numbers of tourists, timing of visits, or group size, or setting operational standards (with examples of standards or codes of conduct)):

- Bhutan government sets a fixed (approx. \$200/day) daily tourist fare, by which tour operators must abide. (The policy does not limit the number of foreign tourists allowed into the country per se, nor to specific mountain regions)
- Mustang (Nepal): Government limits tourists to 1000/year, and charges a royalty of \$70/day to limit numbers of tourists and thereby impacts, but royalties are not reaching the local people.
- Nepal government licenses trekking agencies (now up to 450 agencies) but is ineffective in enforcing standards (annual minimum revenue) nor guide training standards.
- In Europe, certification standards and training requirements are strictly enforced for mountain guides, assuring good safety and professional standards
- Access to the summits of sacred Himalayan peaks is limited, in respect of local religious beliefs, and is relatively effective (enforced by Government Liaison Officers).
- Pingwu County policy and now national reserve statues support Wanglang Nature Reserve's limits on the number of overnight tourists to 50, in order to minimize disturbance to Giant Panda and other wildlife habitat.

- Re-investment of tourism revenues (e.g., entry fees, lodge or concessionaire royalties, hunting fees, etc.) in the conservation of cultural and biological diversity at mountain tourism sites.

- Park Entrance Fees: In many mountainous areas, entrance fees are collected as a means of generating revenue for reinvestment in conservation. A significant change in protected area management policy in the 1980s allowed the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (Nepal) to collect an entrance fee of \$13 from visitors, to be channeled into local development and conservation through the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. (Preston/Mountain Forum 1997)
- Under Nepal's Buffer Zone Management policy, 30-50% of national park revenues (including tourist entry fees, lodge royalties) are re-invested in development and conservation in communities that lie within the buffer zones and wholly within the national parks. Implementation of legislation is under review.
- User Fees for Gorilla Watching in Rwanda: Visitors pay \$200/day fees to visit the endangered gorillas in their unique Afro-montane forest homes, a major source of funding for the preservation of this region and its wildlife. Funds are sent to the National Park office in Kigali and used for patrol and staff salaries, facilities

	maintenance and other park needs. (Preston/Mountain Forum 1997)
•	Policy <u>protection of "local" investment opportunities</u> against domination or profiteering by "outside" investors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sikkim State policy restricts business licensing to non-Sikkim domicile Indians, including tourism services. TAAS (Trekking Agents Association of Sikkim) bans outside tour operators from joining the association as members to protect its own members' market shares.
•	<u>Policy support for infrastructure development</u> , including improved access and communications, to remote mountain areas <u>to diversify tourism destinations</u> and reduce environmental impacts in heavily used areas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Government of Nepal has invested in establishing telephone service to every district headquarters in the country, and in many trekking villages. Trekkers feel secure that they can call home, and for a rescue helicopter in case of emergency. Tourism entrepreneurs in mountain villages can provide guarantee available food and fuel supplies, room bookings, etc.

II. Best Practices for Practical Implementation

•	<u>Participatory learning and planning methods being used:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Mountain Institute's Himal Program¹, and local stakeholders together with partner NGOs developed the Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) methodology for community-based tourism planning.

¹The Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project, Langtang Ecotourism Project and the Makalu-Barun Conservation Project.

◦	Helvetas Swiss Association for International Cooperation has embraced the APPA methodology for tourism planning in Kyrgyzstan, expanding from two initial town project sites into three new sites. Successes include the formation of a "CBT" fund collected as 5% of tourism operators charges, an almost 50% growth in CBT group members, and improved home-stay standards.
◦	Ladakh, India: The Snow Leopard Conservancy has used participatory planning methods (based upon APPA) to plan for home-stay tourism as an alternative livelihood to offset the livestock losses.
◦	WWF/Pingwu County ICDP has also adapted APPA for planning ecotourism development in Wanglang Nature Reserve, and in

Baima villages. Wanglang staff now use the participatory approach in their own meetings and planning workshops.

- IUCN coordinated conservation planning in Pakistan (the Sarhad, Balochistan and Northern Areas Conservation Strategies), the Himal Project (in Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh) and Biodiversity Conservation projects in Nepal and Pakistan have been extremely valuable as practical demonstrations of mountain policy development.

- Motivating conservation through tourism benefit sharing:

- Village home-stay operators in Baima, Sichuan Province (China) donated benches, windows, and materials to the local school.
- Kyrgyzstan: Women in Kochkor and Naryn have formed village tourism committees that operate a booking service and allocate tourists to participating home-stays based upon quality of service/community tourism standards, and visitor feedback.
- Sirubari Village Resort, Nepal shares benefits among its 100 village households by assigning guests on a rotational basis, while monitoring standards of facilities and service by committee.
- Villages of Langtang/Helambu (Nepal) allocate 5-10% of lodge and camping charges to pay for trail improvement, reforestation, community toilets, etc.
- Certain sustainable tourism practices, such as trophy hunting of the ibex and markhor in Pakistan, can add to the economic and attraction value of tourism, but require considerable management effort and strong local participation in planning and benefit-sharing.

- Re-investment of tourism revenues by non-governmental and private sector in conservation of cultural and biological diversity in mountain areas, e.g.:

- Women of Helambu (Nepal) have contributed their own money to operate a cultural museum for tourists, and perform cultural dances, to raise funds for village garbage management and in the restoration of the village monastery (Lama 2000).
- Kangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC), in Yuksom, West Sikkim, sell bird lists/guide books, rent binoculars and kerosene stoves, and collect donations to fund environmental education in the community and school.
- Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN) conducts annual "Eco-Trekking Training" in practical conservation techniques for trekking guides, using trekking agency membership fees and participation fees to pay for it.
- Mountain "eco-lodges"² reinvest in conservation, benefit local people, and employ eco-friendly designs.

²Ec lodge criteria ("be designed in harmony with local natural and cultural environments, employ sustainable design principles, minimize use of non-renewable energy resources and materials, benefit local communities through provision of jobs ... and by buying local products and services, benefit local conservation..., and offer excellent interpretation programs"(Hawkins et al 1995 in The International Ecotourism Society 2001)

- "Conservation contracts" with the community:

- WWF/ICDP Panda Conservation Project (Sichuan China) has made "conservation contracts" with Baima villagers to protect the Giant Panda. In exchange for training and marketing assistance in ecotourism, villagers (some of whom had previously poached Panda) volunteer on Panda patrols.
- Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC) makes contracts with villagers in Ladakh to protect the snow leopard. Villagers provide labor, stone and mud to build enclosed livestock pens (rather than kill the attacking snow leopards) while SLC provides off-site materials and follow-up planning for community-based tourism that promotes snow leopard viewing. (www.snowleopardconservancy.org)

- Education and awareness-building among tourism stakeholders:

- The Stevens Village Project (Alaska) helps to educate the community about tourism and alternatives and links the village with information resources and contacts. (Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).
- Nepali, Sikkimese and Tibetan villagers and leaders learned about composting toilets, lodge and park management, etc. from each other in "peer to peer" exchanges, building relationships across borders.
- WWF/ICDP (China) organized a study tour to Nepal for County officials to learn about ecotourism. Repeated awareness-building workshops and meetings have helped convince leaders to support the development of an ecotourism lodge at Wanglang Nature Reserve and some of the first community-based ecotourism activities in China.
- Protected area managers from Nepal and Tibet have come to U.S. with The Mountain Institute to learn about tourism and park management in some of the oldest and busiest national parks in the country. Some receive on the job training as "Junior Rangers" and go home with new visions of what is possible.

- Sustainable mountain tourism standards/Codes of Conduct and certification:

- Villagers in Ladakh (India) have established criteria for the selection and operation of home-stay operators, i.e., a minimum of 2 beds, serving simple traditional food, maintaining local

culture experiences and ways of life. The majority (83%) of international tourists polled said they thought tourism should benefit local communities. (Snow Leopard Conservancy 2001)

- Wanglang Nature Reserve, Sichuan, China, has a Code of Conduct for how visitors should behave in the panda reserve in order to reduce their impacts.
- Trekking Association of Sikkim and Nepal have both adopted Codes of Conduct for "eco-trekking practices," addressing garbage management, use of alternative fuel, professionalism and safety, protection of wildlife, etc. Enforcement is difficult. In Bhutan, similar codes are in place, and reportedly are "self-enforced" within the industry (meaning that one operator reports on another).
- Australian National Nature and Ecotour Guide Certification Program sets standards for certified guides, and offers a certificate for completion of a professional training course.
- NEAP (National Ecotourism Accreditation Program) certifies nature and ecotourism sites, primarily in Australia about also internationally, based on very specific criteria for everything from energy use to interpretive skills and effectiveness of tourism impact management. Experiences/successes?
- Green Globe 21 is a worldwide certification program for sustainable travel and tourism for consumers, companies, and communities. The Green Globe standard used for certification is based on Agenda 21. "Green Globe registered companies and destinations will be marketed on-line to environmentally conscious consumers around the world."
- The Baima community has set ecotourism home-stay standards (e.g., clean toilets, bedroom standards, etc.) that not every home can meet, and this is the village's way of benefiting non-participating households.

- Regulation of negative impacts of tourism combined with practical assistance in implementing policies, e.g.,

- Government subsidization of kerosene in Sikkim makes it more affordable and available to trekking agencies to reduce the use of fuelwood collection in forests (Sikkim)
- The Makalu-Barun Conservation Project (Nepal) assisted villagers with loans to establish a kerosene depot to sell kerosene and rent stoves and blankets to porters entering the National Park to reduce fuelwood use.

- Skills development and capacity building for sustainable mountain tourism:

- Nepal has set the standards for trekking services for the region. The Hotel Management and Tourism Training Center (supported by the government and the ILO) and private companies provide

mandatory training for trekking guides. The Trekking Agents Association of Nepal and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) initiated an "Eco-Trekking Workshop" in 1991, which teaches conservation oriented skills. The training has been taken to Sikkim and Bhutan.

- Several ecotourism and conservation projects in Nepal (e.g., ACAP, Langtang and Makalu-Barun, CCODER) have developed excellent lodge management training programs that are given in the village to improve lodge standards and environmental practices. CCODER focuses on homestay training. Training in energy efficiency includes building low fuel using stoves.
- The Mountain Institute and RECOFTC³ have developed a training course on "Community-based Tourism for Conservation and Development." The course uses Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) to promote tourism that is a visitor-host interaction with meaningful participation by both, and that generates economic and conservation benefits for local communities and environments. The international training course has been given for four years (1999-2002), training over 100 international participants from NGOs, government, private sector, and universities from approximately 15 countries. The method is being used in at least seven countries including Vietnam, China, Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan, Nepal, India and Indonesia by people who have attended the course. A training Resource Kit in the "CBT" method has been published and is available commercially, and a trainers' training manual is underway (TMI/RECOFTC 2001).

³RECOFTC: Regional Community Forestry Conservation Training Center, Thailand

• Successful small-scale enterprises linked with mountain tourism:

- Villagers of Langtang/Helambu received small matching grants to establish kerosene depots. The profits from kerosene sales are used for conservation, tourism management and infrastructure improvements.
- Local guide services. In Pakistan, village wildlife guides are a group selected, trained and paid through the Mountain Areas Conservancy Project.
- Trained naturalist guides in Yuksom, Sikkim are employed by trekking agencies to identify birds, plants and tell about the ecology of Kangchendzonga National Park.
- Handicraft sales: Nepali village women knit woolen hats, mittens, and socks to sell to trekkers on site. Handicraft retailers and women's development projects in Kathmandu buy handicrafts made by women in rural areas. Transportation and

communication, as well as quality control, remain major hurdles to expansion of the production base.

- Baima women of China have set up a revolving loan program to enable women to buy yarn to weave traditional belts for sale to tourists. Women could not repay loans because belts were too expensive for the domestic market. WWF/ICDP assisted with the design of new cheaper products (purses, placemats, etc.) which along with home-made honey, are being sold at the Panda reserve headquarters as well as in village home-stays.
- Micro-enterprise was successfully used to value both cultural and natural heritage by the Dadia Women's Cooperative in Greece. A women's cooperative was formed in 1994 when the forestry service allowed the women to use the canteen in a recreation area. The village of Dadia then gave them a piece of land to build their own food kitchen. At first, store-owners in the nearby town of Soufli gave them credit for purchasing raw materials which was repaid once money started flowing in. The women now rent a small building to prepare traditional dishes and sell traditional products. The women were given an opportunity to receive US \$114,000 as grant funding but are hesitant to take it because their cooperative is already self-funding and working well. (Valaoras 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998)

- Marketing mechanisms and linkages for small scale mountain tourism operators:

- Effective marketing and promotion of sustainable services and practitioners: The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) is collaborating with its institutional members (tour operators) to promote ecotourism trips during the International Year of Ecotourism. Tour operators commit to a donation to TIES out of trip profits.
- Other web-based ecotourism organizations offer ecotourism information and marketing exposure for its members, e.g., Himalayan Explorers Connections, Adventure Travel Trade Association, Planeta.com, Ecoclub, etc., some of which is oriented toward mountain tourism.
- In Kyrgyzstan, NoviNomad has established market contact with ecotourism operators in Europe and elsewhere to promote community-based ecotourism and nomad tourism in the mountain areas. NoviNomad works closely Helvetas in developing community-based ecotourism as well.
- CCODER, working with village home-stay operators in Nepal, is a small Kathmandu-based NGO that helps make marketing links with local and international tour operators (as well as providing training and project inputs).

III. Existing and Potential Partnerships in Mountain Tourism

- Partnerships for Planning and Management:

- The Budongo Forest Ecotourism Project in the highlands of Uganda involves the communities of five parishes and is based on wildlife viewing. Partnerships between natural resource managers and their neighboring communities create a win-win situation in natural resource management. (Langoya 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998)
- Transboundary tourism epitomizes government to government tourism partnerships, and exists between US and Canada, Nepal and Tibet (China), China-Central Asian republics, and across mountain borders of European countries. Governments must agree to immigration regulations and enforcement, safety management, and mechanisms for curtailing potential illegal cross-border trade in wildlife parts, medicinal plants, drugs, weapons, etc. Nepal and Tibet protected area and tourism managers, as well as government leaders, participated in a number of study tours to border regions to learn from each other and to map out strategies for Transboundary resource and tourism management.
- Partnerships between local communities and NGOs: Local NGOs have an important role in working with communities to foster sustainable mountain tourism. Local NGOs, such as Mountain Spirit, KCC, Sagun (see above re: Nepal and Sikkim) functioned both as trainers and planning facilitators, and now (since completion of project funding and activities) provides follow-up assistance to communities in community development (e.g., development of health clinic), environmental education, monitoring of tourism impacts, etc. NGOs have taken communities "under their wing."
- Partnerships between local and international NGOs: Local NGOs often provide the local expertise (of culture and language), personal familiarity, mobility, and cost-effectiveness that can serve as the ideal bridge between international NGOs and communities; e.g., The East Foundation contracts with The Mountain Institute to carry out field work, training, planning and follow-up, etc. in TMI project sites in Makalu-Barun area.
- Waste Management on Mt. Kenya, Kenya: Due to the large numbers of tourists, problems with litter and human waste are prevalent. Three kinds of initiatives are being undertaken to address the waste problem: (1) informative pamphlets and signs, (2) government sponsored and private-interest sponsored group clean-ups, and (3) disseminating information by word-of-mouth about impacts by tour operators to tourists. The key lies in collaboration between interest groups, which currently include

the Association of Mount Kenya tour operators, National Park authorities, the Kenya Wildlife Service, National Outdoor Leadership School, the Mountain Club of Kenya, and the United Nations Environment Programme. (Carlsson 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).

- Partnerships for Capacity Building and Learning:

- Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Cultural Centre, Australia is jointly managed by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and the indigenous land owners, or Anangu people. The park houses one of Australia's most popular attractions: Ayers Rock, or Uluru. Over the years, Ayers Rock has become known among tourists as a geological feature to be climbed. To the Anangu people, however, Uluru has tremendous spiritual significance. In an effort to stem visitor climbing, the Anangu and the Australian National Conservation Agency have cooperated in developing the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Cultural Centre. This centre informs tourists of the cultural and spiritual significance of Uluru and the surrounding area. (Kelly 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).
- Dig Afognak, Alaska, US: Museums, like visitor centers, can be a vehicle for unifying a community and revitalizing community culture. Dig Afognak was developed to help the Koniaq Alutiiq people recover pre-historic artifacts located on native-lands. Now the project is funded by tourists who partake in the archeological dig and learn about the local culture, geography and environment. The program includes lectures for tourists and community members who take part in the dig, combined with valuable hands-on experience. (Patterson in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998).
- Partnerships for information sharing/networking: Community-based tourism sites and private operators can obtain hard-to-get information about mountain tourism issues and opportunities, as well as market exposure to the international tourism market, by way of websites operated by a number of non-profit ecotourism organizations, including: Adventure Travel Trade Association, Ecoclub, Planeta.com, The International Ecotourism Society, Himalayan Explorers Connection/HimalayaNet, and others (?). The websites provide valuable services to their members and to the consumer.

- Partnerships in Marketing:

- Cooperatives are a form of partnership whereby members work together and provide mutual support toward the achievement of a particular goal. The support is often financial. When some members of a cooperative are more successful at selling their product and are earning more revenue, these members have the

ability to subsidize other members of the cooperative. Such subsidies work best in communities with an orientation toward communal social organization. Among the Aboriginal people of Australia's central mountain regions, for example, intra-cooperative subsidies are highly effective due to a tradition of strong communal bonds. One example is the art center of Yuendumu, which, like other art centers, is owned by the local community and functions as a cooperative. Entire families work closely together, with the more successful artists subsidizing other artists. Revenue generated from art sales to tourists keeps the enterprise operational. Extra revenue filters down through the rest of the community. Betz 1998 in Mountain Forum/The Mountain Institute 1998.

- Community-private partnerships: Sirubari, a Gurung village Nepal, has an exclusive partnership with an international marketing agent in Kathmandu. No tourist is allowed to stay in the village who has not come through specified market channels, or the partnership will be dissolved.
- Study abroad programs are a fast-growing market. Some study abroad programs involve students spending time with mountain families, studying the culture, language and undertaking research for accredited course work. Participating universities have established partnerships with communities to host students, and in some cases with INGOs to study in their project sites (e.g., The Mountain Institute's School for Mountain Studies).
- See above re: website marketing connections.

Notes to readers

This paper is case study on the Mountain Tourism, and the Conservation of Biological and Cultural Diversity under Sustainable Mountain Economies. A Mountain Forum Thematic Paper for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. UNEP (draft). 23-28 April 2002.