Mountain Tourism for Local Development

Training Manual for Policy Planners in Tourism and Related Areas

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
and
Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies

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Policy Planners in Tourism and Related Areas

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
and
Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CREST)
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Cover Photos

Top: Tilicho Peak (7,134m) from Jomsom - *P. Sharma*

Bottom: Lomanthang, Mustang - *P. Sharma*

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Preface

The present manual is part of a series of studies and manuals resulting from the second phase of the NORAD-funded Project entitled Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development. The principal objective of the Project is to develop training modules and materials on mountain tourism for local community development for policy-makers, programme managers, private sector agencies, and local community-based organizations and entrepreneurs and impart training to these audiences in participating countries on a pilot basis. As part of the Project a number of thematic studies and manuals has been prepared.

The present Manual consists of training modules for policy-planners in tourism and related areas. The emphasis is in providing policy-planners with an awareness of the key issues of policy concern in mountain tourism. The manual presents and elucidates the objectives and goals of sustainable tourism development in the mountains. It also presents and elucidates the key issues and approaches related to the environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects of mountain tourism and the ways and means of improving linkages and the reduction of leakages associated with mountain tourism. The roles of the different actors - government and non-government agencies, community organizations, and the private sector - in the organization and management of sustainable tourism in the mountains have also been brought out. A key thrust is on the development of participatory institutions that would set in motion a process of participatory planning of tourism so that mountain tourism may contribute to the three cardinal concerns of mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, namely, poverty alleviation, environmental care, and empowerment of local communities.

These manuals build on the country overview studies, regional case studies, and micro-case studies undertaken during the earlier phases of the NORAD supported Mountain Tourism for Local Development Project. The present manual is basically intended for a Nepali policy level audience. Separate manuals have been developed for Programme Designers and Implementors and Local Community Groups and Organizations in tourism and related areas in Nepal. Also, similar manuals have been developed for different target audiences in India and Pakistan. Pilot training through the use of these manuals has also been carried out in these countries in association with key institutions related to tourism and local development. We hope that these manuals will contribute to the process of institutionalizing the training in respective country contexts and facilitate the conceptual and operational integration of mountain tourism with local development.

We would like to thank the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CREST), our collaborating institution in the Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development Project in Nepal, particularly Dr. Kamal Banskota and Bikash Sharma, for developing these manuals.

On behalf of ICIMOD, Dr. Pitamber Sharma was the Project Coordinator as well as the technical editor of these manuals.

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Introduction

A majority of the people in the mountain areas of Nepal live in abject poverty. Development has not been able to reach many remote and inaccessible areas of the mountains and the people there continue to depend on natural and land resources for subsistence. The environment, in terms of renewable natural resources, is degrading, population is growing, and hardships increasing. Opportunities are not forthcoming either. In this apparently hopeless situation, tourism development in the mountain areas provides some hope for the alleviation of the situation faced by mountain people.

The history of mountain tourism in Nepal spans three decades. In some mountain areas, tourism has been able to bring benefits to some people. People realize higher standards of living in areas such as Namche Bazaar, parts of the Annapurna area, Langtang, and so on. However, tourism benefits have been confined to small pockets and only a small number of people have been able to reap benefits from tourism. Part of the problem lies in the way mountain tourism has developed - it is entirely demand led and the supply side section of development has been slack. The environmental resources which tourists come to enjoy have not been adequately appreciated in the host country. Without appreciation of these resources, their value cannot be realized. Neither have there been efforts to link mountain tourism development with mountain community development. Thus as a host country, Nepal has not been able to harness these resources to develop mountain tourism to benefit the mountain community. Policy weaknesses and failures have also been responsible for this poor performance. Serious concerns have been raised on the negative impacts of mountain tourism on the environment, although some of these cannot be attributed to tourism. Negative environmental impacts are even more serious since they bring more hardship to the mountain people who depend on natural resources. Besides, these provide the basis of mountain tourism in Nepal and their deterioration can have serious negative implications on mountain tourism itself. But there is no denying that despite the negative impacts, mountain tourism has had overall positive impacts on mountain communities.

The conventional thinking has been that tourism led development will occur simply by opening new areas and permitting tourists to visit them. A large body of evidence, however, contradicts this belief because nowhere in mountain areas has tourism development been spontaneous. Although many mountain areas are rich in natural resources that have high nonconsumptive use value essential for tourism development, such resources are not helping local people improve their quality of life. Where tourism is practiced, benefits have been limited and mountain tourism has not been able to stimulate community development despite the financial resources it generates. Mountain tourism development cannot be assumed to take care of itself and stimulate community development unless concerted efforts are made. Comparative advantages of the area have to be assessed and ways and means of linking tourism development with community development have to be explored. Proper planning is necessary. Ultimately, local people have to be able to manage their own development in a sustainable way. Efforts must start with a clear vision and encompass a broad spectrum of issues. The very fact that natural resources provide the basis for mountain tourism development and that the lives of the mountain people depend on natural resources makes its management an important exercise. Resources need to be conserved for everyone: visitors seek satisfaction, local people desire to improve their lives, entrepreneurs wish to make profits, and the government and local bodies need revenue. In this apparently complex situation where different individuals and institutions have different objectives, conflicts in interests are bound to arise.

Objective

New ideas have evolved over time in the management of natural resources. New ideas like implementing programs at the grassroots level by organizing beneficiaries, enhancing their capacities, and empowering them have already become mainstream ideas in rural development. This participatory approach, however, has not been utilized effectively in Nepal in the context of mountain tourism development. The concept of mountain tourism development has become complex. Understanding basic mountain tourism issues, sustainable development, carrying capacity of the environment, importance of energy technologies, the participatory approach, data base requirements, and monitoring and evaluation systems help facilitate the designing and implementation of sustainable mountain tourism development. The objective of this manual is therefore to introduce these concepts and generate awareness among program implementors by providing practical examples.

This manual draws from the work on mountain tourism initiated by ICIMOD in the last three years. It also draws from the work of writers that have contributed to issues related to mountain tourism in the Nepalese context. Although not all studies have been specifically referenced to in this manual, they have been utilized in previous work undertaken by CREST and have been accredited in the earlier works. Most of the materials used are cited in the reading material section.

Organization

The manual is divided into five different sessions. Session 1 provides a general overview of Nepal's tourism sector. Session 2 introduces policy planners to the major impacts and emerging issues of mountain tourism. In session 3, the concept of sustainable mountain tourism development and carrying capacity are introduced and systematically explained. Session 4 is on Planning and Management of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development where the basic elements of a perspective plan on sustainable mountain tourism and the role of different partners and required institutions are highlighted. Finally, the last session deals with monitoring and evaluation.

The curriculum or reading materials for trainers are provided at the end of the manual. The materials are mostly published reports from a variety of sources. All trainers must be thoroughly familiar with the main materials. A brief summary of the main reading materials are also provided.

SCHEDULE AND TIMING

Day 1

Session 1: Overview of Tourism

Session 2: Mountain Tourism Impacts and Issues

09.00 - 09:30	Registration
09.30 - 10:30	Inauguration
10.30 - 11:00	Tea break
11.00 - 11:30	Introduction to the Workshop
11.30 - 12.00	Video Presentation
12.00 - 13.00	Session 1: Overview of Tourism
13.00 - 14.00	Lunch Break
14.00 - 15.30	Session 2: Mountain Tourism Impacts and Issues
15.30 - 16.00	Tea Break
16.00 - 17.00	Discussion

Day 2

Session 3: Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development

Session 4: Planning and Management of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development

Session 5: Importance and Utility of Monitoring and Evaluation

08.30 - 10.00	Session 3: Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development
10.30 - 10.45	Tea Break
11.15 - 12.45	Session 4: Planning and Management of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development
12.45 - 14.00	Lunch
14.00 - 15.45	Session 5: Importance and Utility of Monitoring and Evaluation
15.45 - 16.00	Tea Break
16.00 - 17.00	Discussion

Video Presentation

First day before Session 1

There will be a video show presented on mountain tourism. The main purpose of this show is to impress policy planners on mountain tourism and provide them a basis for discussion as the training session progresses.