



Recommendation of the Council on Environment and Tourism

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Background Information

The Recommendation on Environment and Tourism was adopted by the OECD Council on 8 May 1979 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation recommends that Adherents fully integrate environmental considerations, at the earliest possible stage, in their tourism development policies and strategies and develop environmental indicators of environmentally friendly tourism.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

CONSIDERING that tourism constitutes a major economic activity in a number of Member countries and that its further expansion will continue and is desirable both for the economy and for the social well-being of the community;

CONSIDERING that tourism can further the creation of employment and regional development;

CONSIDERING that environmental resources are a major element of tourism and that a good environment is an essential quality of tourist areas;

CONSIDERING that unrestrained growth of tourism could reduce the quality of tourist areas and possibly their income earning capacity;

CONSIDERING that tourism plays a major role in the development of international understanding;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 26 May 1972 on Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies [C(72)128];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on the Implementation of the Polluter Pays Principle [C(74)223];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 12 October 1976 on Principles concerning Coastal Management [C(76)161(Final)];

HAVING REGARD to the work of intergovernmental organisations concerned with environment and tourism;

On the proposal of the Environment Committee;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries fully integrate environmental considerations, at the earliest possible stage, in their tourism development policies and strategies in order to ensure that the development of tourism is in keeping with the conservation of environmental quality.

II. RECOMMENDS that Member countries be guided in the development of their tourism industry by the Guidelines concerning the International and Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies in Tourist Areas, contained in the Annex to this Recommendation of which it forms an integral part.

III. RECOMMENDS that Member countries co-operating at international level develop a set of appropriate, practicable environmental indicators for tourist receiving areas in order to assist the relevant authorities in developing and implementing tourist policies which will be consistent with environmental needs.

IV. RECOMMENDS that Member countries take appropriate steps to ensure that environmental considerations are duly incorporated in any definition of the rights and duties of tourists established at national or international level and are followed by appropriate information and educational campaigns.

V. RECOMMENDS that Member countries take appropriate steps at national and international level to ensure that due account is taken of environmental considerations by competent public authorities as well as tourist organisations and enterprises.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN TOURIST AREAS

I. International Aspects

1. The "Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies" and "The Implementation of the Polluter Pays Principle" as adopted by OECD Member countries are also applicable to the implementation of environmental policies concerning tourist activities; the application of these principles will avoid discrimination between tourist receiving areas.

2. Member countries should co-operate in the preparation of a set of objectives and basic environmental indicators appropriate for the description of the state of the environment for tourist receiving areas.

II. National Measures

A. Standards and Related Regulations

1. In compliance with the Recommendation on Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies, the formulation of environmental standards is the responsibility of the competent public authorities and takes account of "different social objectives and priorities attached to environmental protection and different degrees of industrialisation and population density". The same applies to the formulation of standards in tourist receiving regions to meet the environmental expectations of tourists. In tourist areas standards should be designed in accordance with the health, leisure and relaxation requirements of tourists. These standards will have to take into account the financing abilities of the individual regions.

2. All aspects of tourism should be brought into line with environmental conditions in the area concerned, e.g. in mountain and coastal regions. Attention should be paid to the preservation of agriculture and forestry in order to harmonize tourism and environmental policies.

3. Bearing in mind that continued orderly development of the tourist industry depends on the maintenance of the resource on which it is based, the competent authorities should ensure that also those who offer services and amenities to tourists should comply with requirements designed for the protection of the region and respect for cultural traditions. These aims can be achieved by statutory requirements to ensure high standards for services and amenities and by the accuracy of environmental information supplied to prospective tourists.

B. Planning and Management Measures

4. In order to conserve natural, cultural and man-made resources which are the basic qualitative elements of tourism, it is essential that the competent authorities should develop environmental guidelines for tourism development plans, in particular with respect to the quality of air and water (potable and recreational), soil conservation, the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the quality of human settlements.

5. The competent authorities should ensure that in tourist areas, particular attention be paid in relation to peak demand, to sewerage, solid waste disposal, noise pollution, building and traffic density control.

6. All possible incentive actions should be taken in the public and private sectors to spread tourism demand over time and hence reduce stresses on the environment; to this end the staggering of holidays and "flexible week-ends" should be encouraged.

7. From the national listings mentioned in paragraph 11 hereunder and from description based on respective carrying capacity of sites, a planning statement should be prepared defining strategy for locations to be developed on the one hand, and environmental improvement on the other, and

integrating tourist development with the economic regional development, including social concerns and land use planning.

8. The competent authorities should ensure that decisions on tourist development plans are based on the fullest available information concerning their environmental implications; when such information is not adequate it should be sought. Environmental Impact Assessments should be used for major tourist developments to evaluate the potential damage to the environment in the light of forecasted tourism growth and peak demand. Alternative sites for development should be considered, taking into account local constraints and the limits of environment carrying capacity. This capacity includes physical, ecological, social, cultural and psychological factors.

9. Bearing in mind that the carrying capacity will vary from site to site, statutory powers should be used to limit developments in particularly sensitive areas requiring special protection, which may entail limiting access to these areas with ultimate protection being provided by public ownership.

10. On the basis of environmental indicators, as mentioned in paragraph I.2 of these Guidelines, governmental authorities should monitor the state of the environment in major tourist receiving areas and assess the changes in the environmental quality of these areas; the resulting information would be of value to both decision-makers and tourists.

C. Specific Tasks of Governments

11. The allocation of responsibility will, in environmental matters, vary from one country to another for constitutional reasons. In general, governmental authorities will need to carry out the following specific tasks related to tourism when formulating policies and programmes concerned with environmental quality and development:

- a) Identification of the following types of areas:
 - i) Sites already developed for tourism with capacity for further development;
 - ii) Sites with potential for development as new tourist areas;
 - iii) Sites requiring remedial action from the environmental point of view.

The appropriate set of environmental indicators, as proposed in paragraph I.2 of these Guidelines, could be used for this identification procedure.

- b) Development and adoption of environmental quality standards for significant tourist areas, which are consistent with the environmental, social and economic (including tourism) objectives and policies, are the responsibility of the jurisdictions and/or authorities concerned.
- c) In a number of Member countries the local level of government is the level where the policy of both central and regional levels is implemented and local land use planning takes place. This is the level at which decisions on carrying capacity (see paragraph 8 above) can be enforced by regulation of access. It is essential that there be means whereby local decisions contribute to the achievement of national goals.

D. Public Information and Participation

12. While tourists are expected to abide by the law of the country, governments and/or other appropriate bodies are responsible for providing the public with information on how to respect environmentally sensitive and cultural areas. Such action should be supplemented by the display of posters and distribution of brochures in tourist areas and also by the inclusion in school curricula of appropriate conduct to be observed in areas of cultural and natural importance.

13. Governments should take into account the variety of views of their communities on the environmental impact of tourism projects, either in the form of practical and appropriate participation in decision-making or of consultation before decisions are taken. Such procedures will improve the

understanding of local communities that the long-term conservation of tourist assets is a sound economic policy in overall national terms.

E. Financial Aspects

14. Since it is recognised that direct financing from tourist generated revenue may not always be sufficient for environmental purposes, governments may consider granting a proportion of funds provided that the allocation of such funds abides with the Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies and responds to over-riding national economic and social requirements, bearing the following considerations in mind:

- a) Government assistance for environmental protection in tourist areas can be justified in view of the social aims of tourism;
- b) Similarly, it is also justified when tourist development is part of a regional development policy.

15. Proposed plans for the development of tourism, whether at national, regional or local levels, should be subjected to financial and cost-benefit appraisals of their effects on the areas concerned and should include provision for the financing of environmental protection.

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