

Same same but different – concepts of tourism dimensions

Tourism is diverse and different and at the same time very similar all over the world – and so are the different concepts of tourism. The following list makes no claim to be exhaustive but is meant to provide an overview.

Nature Tourism is a form of travel to natural areas where the experience and appreciation of nature and natural phenomena is the prime motivation for visiting these places.

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, improving the well-being of local communities, and sustainable travel to natural areas.

Rural Tourism focuses on participating in a rural lifestyle; it can be a variant of ecotourism. Rural tourism allows the creation of an alternative source of income in the non-agricultural sector for rural dwellers. The added income from rural tourism can contribute to the revival of lost folk art and handicrafts.

Agrotourism is a direct expansion of ecotourism which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. While ecotourism is nature-based, agrotourism is farm-based. The rural landscape, usually a combination of wild and agro-ecosystems, can be an important resource for tourism development. This type of tourism is gathering strong support from small communities. Possible activities linked to the development of agro-ecotourism can be accommodation (traditional housing), providing local foods and non-food handicrafts, renting of animals (horses, donkeys, etc.) for pleasure tours; enhancement of the knowledge of the rural dwellers and their visitors about the protection of natural resources; promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, including valorisation of genetic heritage and commodity chain development of neglected species of medicinal and aromatic plants, grains and cereals.

Community-based Tourism (CBT) is a form of tourism in which a significant number of local people have substantial control of, and involvement in its tourism development and management. The major proportion of the benefits remains within the local economy. Members of the community, even those who are not directly involved in community-tourism enterprises, gain some form of benefit as well (community fund, multiplier effect, etc.). CBT can cre-

ate direct jobs as well as additional income for the local population, offer further training opportunities (language, service, restaurant and hotel business, guiding) for community members and can help to strengthen the social and organisational structure within the community. It can help to preserve the cultural heritage or strengthening of the cultural identity.

Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is not a specific product or niche sector but an approach to tourism development and management. It enhances the linkages between tourism businesses and poor people, so that tourism's contribution to poverty reduction is increased and poor people are able to participate more effectively in product development. Links with many different types of 'the poor' need to be considered: staff, neighbouring communities, landholders, producers of food, fuel and other suppliers, operators of micro tourism businesses, craft-makers, other users of tourism infrastructure (roads) and resources (water) etc. There are many types of pro-poor tourism strategies, ranging from increasing local employment to building mechanisms for partnerships between private tourism sector and communities. Any type of company can be involved in pro-poor tourism – a small lodge, an urban hotel, a tour operator, an infrastructure developer. The critical factor is not the type of company or the type of tourism, but that an increase in the net benefits that go to poor people can be demonstrated.

Community-benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTI): The aims and benefits of CBTI are very similar to PPT except that the identified community does not have to be poor and the tourism initiative managed by several stakeholders does not need to involve the community in any rights or decision-making processes.

Sustainable Tourism is applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three

dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Responsible Tourism: One of the challenges of Sustainable Tourism is not only its complexity but rather the readiness and eagerness by each stakeholder to actually not only talk but act in a sustainable way. In other terms, all stakeholders, individually and collectively, should feel responsible (instead of using the intangible and abstract term "sustainable") to make all forms of tourism better. Responsible Tourism in itself can be understood as the imperative of sustainable tourism (take action!), and therefore its characteristics are very similar – it

- minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local culture, social and environmental issues;
- provides access for physically challenged people; and
- is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is closely related to the principles of Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Tourism – but at micro-level. Economic, social and environmental objectives are part of the corporate strategy and vision of a tourism enterprise.

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