

Ecotourism and Sustainable Development— A Bibliographic Approach

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Abstract

Ecotourism is a niche market that emerged due to the increase in demand. Sustainable tourism practices, however, are difficult to manage in all three dimensions of sustainable development in these sites. It is known that it was Hall 2009 [1] who found that in the mid-nineteenth century, the first global manifestations of ecotourism were promoted, on the consequences of the depletion of natural resources and their supposed inexhaustibility in his book “*Man and Nature*”. The present study is to answer the following research question; “How to do ecotourism with balanced trade-offs between economic, social and environmental dimensions?” One of the theses that can be drawn from this research is that all the actors of sustainable development can be balanced. The actors of ecotourism are: 1) Nature; 2) Flora; 3) Fauna; 4) The owners of nature; 5) The ecotourist. However, there are other qualitative aspects such as: Culture, traditions and customs, the needs of the ecotourist and the organization. The role of the ecotourist is the key to the conservation of environmental sites, for example in Durango in the ecotourism site El Ejido “el Mil diez” where garbage accumulates and neither visitors nor the owners of the site, take into account the deterioration of the ecotourism place, can avoid visiting it and become an abandoned and degraded site. This is a bibliographic study that aims to make known two things that can happen: 1) ecotourism as an engine of nature conservation, or 2) ecotourists are the cause of the destruction (construction) of the best natural places. Actions and experiences are proposed for planning and projects to open an ecotourism site. They can make the difference between a site for current and future generations or lose the best sites that are available.

Keywords

Ecotourism, Sustainable Development, Ecotourism

1. Introduction

Although there is a close historical relationship between nature and human be-

ings, the concept of mass ecotourism is relatively new, dating back to the 80's.

Since then, it has motivated the owners or possessors of natural territories to open the most attractive natural areas, without restrictions on mitigating environmental impacts.

Faced with this problem, this study seeks to raise awareness among the owners and users of the areas, contributing to the transition towards sustainable development.

True ecotourism can be used as a strategy to conserve nature and promote local development in Mexico's protected natural areas [2].

The greater the participation of the local community in the management of protected natural areas, the greater their respect and participation in conservation policies. It is understood that within protected natural areas it is crucial to achieve the conservation of biodiversity, improve the quality of life of the inhabitants and grow ecotourism.

Through ecotourism it is feasible to conserve and increase natural ecosystems; also to prevent, reduce and restore current areas [3].

The role of the ecotourist is the key to the conservation of environmental sites, for example, in Durango, in the ecotourism site El Ejido "el Mil diez" where garbage accumulates, neither the visitors, nor the owners of the place take into account the deterioration of the ecotourism site, which can become a degraded and abandoned site. With the increasing attention and awareness of the ecological environment, ecotourism is becoming ever more popular, but it still brings problems and challenges to the sustainable development of the environment [4].

This is a bibliographic study that aims to make known two things that can happen: 1) ecotourism as a driver of nature conservation, or 2) as a cause of destruction of natural sites, formerly the best natural places.

One last one: Culture must respect traditions and customs and preserve them. But in reality they are public goods and they are all responsible.

Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

A good example of ecotourism can be found in Costa Rica, where all productive activities supported by the government must be subject to severe scrutiny of environmental and social sustainability. For Costa Rica, tourism is the main source of foreign exchange. The protection of species and landscapes and the development of ecotourism are fundamental parts [5]. Another example is Sri Lanka. Biodiversity conservation and sustainably utilizing natural resources improve the benefits of ecotourism development. Ecotourism development makes values for sustainably using biodiversity creating economic development opportunities [6].

In addition, globally, protected natural areas in underdeveloped countries fulfill a social function, because they are established on land that belongs to the local population [7] [8]. In Mexico, 93% of the inhabitants of protected natural areas face some degree of marginalization [9], so their participation in the management and conservation of biodiversity is seen as a key factor in getting out of poverty

[10].

For this reason, ecotourism is used (or should be used) as a strategy to conserve nature and promote local development in Mexico's protected natural areas [11]. However, to be considered ecotourism, tourism must be managed in a way that contributes to conserving the biodiversity of the destination, respecting local lifestyles and encouraging environmental learning through education and interpretation [12].

The greater the participation of the local community in the management of protected natural areas, the greater their respect and participation in conservation policies [13]-[15]. Therefore, the empowerment of local people is crucial to achieving biodiversity conservation and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants [16] [17]. In addition, community empowerment becomes the key to achieving sustainable tourism [18].

Empowerment has at least four dimensions: psychological (development of pride or a sense of freedom to decide), economic (financial independence), social (improvement of educational opportunities, of conditions for frequently disadvantaged groups such as women and the elderly, and of development of the organization of social groups) and political (participation in decision-making, leadership and governance of natural resources) [19].

In the Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, in the state of Veracruz, ecotourism has been used as an economic alternative, an environmental education tool, and an opportunity for the management of resources and to promote the active participation of women in the design of the development of their communities [20].

2. Ecotourism

According to the World Tourism Organization UNWTO [21], ecotourism is one of the fastest forms of tourism expansion. Ecotourism has evolved, since the appearance of the concept in the 80s. It has been defined by numerous authors [22]. This could likely stem from the notion that ecotourism is a complex concept.

“A form of nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and has been achieved to be ecologically and culturally sustainable.” Ecotourism is traveling to fragile, ancient and normally protected ecosystems [23].

Carter and While (2004), state that traveling to a remote area to enjoy, protect and raise awareness for threatened wildlife is about having low impact on the environment—a “Leave No Trace” mentality—for conservation of the area.

In fact, McKercher [24] argues that it is important to have a critical attitude towards the concept of ecotourism, since it is considered a broad concept [25].

2.1. The Educational Interest in Ecotourism and Sustainability

Among the main interests of ecotourism is that the ecotourist feels part of the environment. This abandonment of comforts should not be confused with the lack of quality. On the contrary, ecotourists have higher expectations but are demand-

ing, educated tourists who are, therefore, more aware of environmental problems. At the same time, it seeks that products and services have an educational and learning value about the region they visit. Firstly, because of its aesthetic value, playful enjoyment, and secondly, because of the benefits that human beings receive every day from nature. It was Hall [1], who in the mid-nineteenth century wrote that since the nineteenth century, the first global manifestations were promoted on the possible consequences of the depletion of natural resources observed. Until that moment, supposed inexhaustibility of the same with his book “*Man and Nature*”.

The first steps towards sustainability in the tourism industry were taken in 1980, when the Declaration of Manila, Philippines (<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/unwtodeclarations.1980.01.01>), mentioned the important role that the ecotourism industry was beginning to play worldwide, as well as the impacts that, as a result of its growth, it caused in those sectors with which it interacted directly [26] [27].

2.2. Characteristics of Ecotourism

Although ecotourism has implicit ecological principles of protection of the natural environment as the basis of its actions for the simple fact of having the prefix “eco” and because it is developed mainly in sites of high natural value, it does not forget the importance that cultural and historical features have for the value that the environment in question has as a whole [28]. Other factors are the ecotourist and the organization as a company.

2.3. The Ecotourist

Among the main interests of ecotourism is that the visitor feels part of the environment, that there is an immersion in the tourist activity and that he becomes the protagonist in the various activities that are practiced, so that education and awareness are generated in him. Firstly, because of its aesthetic value, playful enjoyment, and secondly, because of the benefits that human beings receive every day from nature [24].

The ecotourist understands that the impact on a specific resource can lead to a chain of problems affecting the balance of an ecosystem, negatively affecting the quality of life of human beings [29].

The ecotourist’s demand is the ecotourism site, the barbecue, the beer, the sweets and the food. It can be provided to the ecotourist, but the inhabitants of the site must have mounted police to avoid disturbances as well as prevent them from throwing garbage. They must also take care that they pass through the indicated trails.

3. Ecotourism Communities

3.1. Natural Resources and Development

Development cannot subsist on an environmentally deteriorated resource base; the environment cannot be protected when growth does not take into account the

costs of environmental destruction. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate economics and ecology fully when adopting decisions and laws not only to protect the environment but also to protect and promote development [30].

3.2. The Sustainable Development of Ecotourism

Although ecotourism can be approached from numerous angles, in terms of definitions, scholars agree that sustainability is a concern that must be incorporated into the tourism sector so that this industry can be sustainable in the long term (Williams 2009). In this sense, it could be argued that ecotourism can serve as a catalyst for the inclusion of sustainable efforts in the tourism industry [31].

In fact, scholars such as Stefanica and Vlavian-Gurmeza [32] [33] argue that ecotourism has three prerequisites; namely: local participation, economic opportunities for local people and respect for the integrity of ecotourism, which implies that the development of ecotourism must be small-scale and enabled through the use of local resources. As a matter of fact, Xu *et al.* [34] describe that ecotourism is closely linked to reducing the negative environmental and social effects in the country of destination of the tourism examined. In addition, sustainable ecotourism aims to strike a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation and social justice and contribute to sustainable development [35]. Sustainable development and ecotourism have set themselves goals that are difficult to meet [36] [37].

The tourism industry should ideally employ local labour and thus benefit local inhabitants through a stable source of income [34]. If this were the case, locals might have financial opportunities to improve their standard of living while also feeling truly contributing to local society. Local residents may not possess the skills required to work in some areas of tourism [34]. For example, nature guides may be required to be bilingual, neglecting the poorest local inhabitants, as it is unlikely that they can afford such education. The argument for ecotourism as a stable source of income is questionable, as some scholars claim that wages are low and unstable [38] [39], and are connected to seasonal demand, although wages are commonly academically criticized [40].

Although the social benefits of ecotourism are recognized, there are significant negative impacts that should not be forgotten.

3.3. Ecotourism and Environmental Protection

As tourism-dependent countries depend on the state of their environment [11] [27] [41], they argue that ecotourism can be a successful tourism strategy to ensure environmental protection [42], one of the key aspects of sustainable development [43] [44]. If ecotourism companies do not act in the interest of the environment, it will not only result in contributing to environmental degradation and resource depletion in the future [12]. As Lóránt and Tünde [2] argue, tourism can also be sustainable if the capacity of the natural ecosystem is recognized.

In addition, tour operators will be able to contribute to protecting the local eco-

systems of the destinations in which they work while respecting the environment and the ability to adopt policies that are ecologically sustainable [45]. However, ecotourism uses the environment; excursions are generally nature-based (Beaumont 2001, cited in [21]-[23] [46] [47]. However, the formulation of a sustainability policy is merely sufficient to foster sustainable development [28].

As we learned in the case of Lapa Ríos, Costa Rica, ecotourism companies can contribute to the protection of their environment by investing in good employment practices, restrictive land-use policies, and community learning initiatives [42] [48].

In other words, it is important to address the issues of sustainability and environmental damage holistically, allowing the sustainability aspect of a company to permeate the entire corporate structure and business activities [49].

According to a study on ecotourism in Thailand, it may be more important that the main concerns of companies are to protect the ecosystem and foster an educational environment [50].

However, when environmental protected areas are declared, local communities are often unable to contribute to decisions about how conservation processes should be managed. [12] suggests that stakeholder participation is essential for the design of environmentally responsible business practices to accommodate the environmental aspects of sustainable development. If the needs of local communities are ignored, tourism will not be sustainable [11]. However, the examples of Kenya, Taiwan region, Madagascar and Chinese mainland show that ecotourism often lacks community stakeholders and commitment [3] [30] [34] [51]. This means that ecotourism often fails to meet its stakeholder needs [3] [30] [34] [51].

Despite this lack of attention to local interests, it is important that ecotourism raises community awareness about the importance of protecting local biodiversity, ecosystems and other fragile natural resources [22]. In this way, it aligns perfectly with the idea that the perspective of communal learning is key to ensuring the prospects of sustainable development [52]. However, ensuring that companies, such as ecotourism tour-intermediaries, capture valuable ideas and enable the internal creation of sustainability initiatives, it is important that the internal learning environment is concrete [53].

It is also important to ensure the tourist's understanding of the natural experience [50]. Tour operators have the opportunity to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour by their clients [11]. Tour guides are crucial in ensuring that environmental responsibility for aspects of sustainable development reaches tourists. Research from a Galapagos tour operator shows that guides can demonstrate the impact of tourists' knowledge on issues concerning sustainability and environmental conservation, and can make their behavior and intentions more concerned with the environment [29].

3.4. Ecotourism Education among International Actors

It is necessary for the State to be the main provider of support in educational and technical terms for the correct application of ecotourism, as well as to be respon-

sible for establishing the mechanisms for the coordinated application of policies between local, municipal, state and federal governments, so that, over time, the initiatives can stand on their own. [54] argues that the International Ecotourism Society has members in more than 100 countries, ranging from academics, students and travelers, to large companies and tour operators. The International Ecotourism Society. TIES & Ecotourism.

Available at (<http://www.ecotourism.org/ties-ecotourism-espa%C3%B1ol>).

Members come from countries with greater development due to two main reasons: a higher level of education and interest in environmental issues; and a lower urgency to satisfy basic needs, which is experienced by countries with less development.

Likewise, the generation of distinctions, recognitions and accreditations or certifications by international organizations that grant a plus to ecotourism destinations, will serve not only to distinguish real sustainable actions from those that only proclaim themselves pro-environmentalist and take advantage of the widespread concern about environmental wear and tear to sell their products, but will also be relevant for the attraction of true ecotourists characterized by their demand and respect for the resources and characteristics of the region.

Carrying capacity and certification of ecotourism sites

Continuous studies and evaluations must be conducted on the environmental and social impacts that are generated in the environments in which it is developed. Especially as a result of pollution and the indiscriminate depletion of resources due to the massive arrival of tourists to the region.

These studies are necessary because planning on a territory must order the objectives formulated in time and space and try to anticipate the processes of change and development of the environment, providing solutions in the medium and long term". With the establishment of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC, Global Sustainable Tourism Council) worldwide in 2025 (<https://www.gstc.org/?lang=es>), by IUCN at the World Conservation Congress, a framework for action was provided for ecotourism service providers which would require accreditations and certifications that will help travelers to be able to distinguish what is truly ecological from what only pretends to be. These criteria are governed by 4 axes which are: 1) maximizing the social and economic benefits of tourism for local communities, 2) reducing negative impacts on cultural heritage, 3) reducing damage to the environment and 4) planning sustainability. Ted Turner announces the first global Sustainable Tourism criteria at the UNEP World Conservation Congress: (<https://www.unep.org/>).

Likewise, it is in the cases of those tourist destinations consolidated in the taste of tourists who seek to be transformed and guided under new responsible parameters, in which sustainability indices and studies must analyze the impacts generated so far, as well as the appropriate ways for the regeneration of the affected resources.

In this work we will focus on the so-called "carrying capacity study", which together with the concept of resilience "determine the capacity for economic exploi-

tation of natural resources within the different productive rationalities, establishing the conditions of the environment for the formation of value, for the production of guarantees and for the regeneration of resources in the long term”.

This concept arose in the 70's with the intention of imposing limits of all kinds (population, use and exploitation of resources, visitors, etc.), so that the capacity for recovery (resilience) and absorption of the ecosystem in which the tourism industry would develop would not be affected.

Likewise, carrying capacity studies are useful not only to know the limits of the natural environment but also to know other factors, such as social or psychological. The first of these refers to the maximum limit up to which a population can grow and continue to be permanently sustained in the environment in which it develops without degrading its dynamics and functions. While the second refers to the degradation limit that can affect the taste and preference of visitors.

The consequences of not carrying out prior studies for construction, not only in ecological terms but also holistically, can be proven in the way in which spaces are molded and improvised according to the needs that are generated with the growth of the popularity of the destination and the consequent increase in the number of visitors. This is more frequently observed in underdeveloped countries, especially because of the economic needs of the receiving populations and their urgency to generate the income necessary for their subsistence. Likewise, exceeding these limits will be directly reflected in the quality of the environment, which decreases along with the regenerative capacity [54].

For the proper functioning of ecotourism, it needs to be planned from the first moments under parameters and regulations of a sustainable nature (covering the natural, social and economic spheres).

However, despite the already advanced environmental concern and the proposals in all sectors for a much more responsible use of resources, there is still no fixed common definition or methodology for measuring the limits of resource use. This, together with the constant natural and social changes in the particular characteristics of the environments and the lack of clear regulations and commitment on the part of the actors involved, prevents the creation of concrete limits of use and, therefore, becomes obstacles to the success of conservation.

3.5. Protected Areas

These spaces are characterized by emerging along with the generalized and increased environmental concern in the last decades of the twentieth century. The first country to implement the first types of protection for natural spaces was the United States, forced by environmental organizations that saw in the expansive culture and conquest of land, as well as in the exploitation of resources, a danger to their environments. Although in their beginnings these initiatives were born as a concern of a purely aesthetic nature [39].

In this way, protected areas begin to emerge as conservation strategies for natural spaces and all the ecological processes that have a place within them, without

forgetting those of a historical-cultural nature. Also, as part of the sustainable development strategy, these are concrete actions that directly support the maintenance of current resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

In terms of tourism, protected areas are scenarios of great attraction for ecotourists, due to their level of conservation and natural beauty. At the same time, they offer a distancing from the urban and respond to the changes in the desires of new nature-conscious tourists. However, due to the complexity of their ecosystems, they are usually highly vulnerable, so their conservation requires greater care. Currently, the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN: (<https://iucn.org/es/acerca-de-la-uicn>), together with other international organizations, has been in charge of establishing protection figures for natural spaces, so that visitors who come to them are sure that the product offered to them is of quality due to the existing commitment in their management. That is why the attraction to this type of park or reserve has been increasing day by day. This body defines a protected area as “a clearly defined, recognized, dedicated and managed geographical space, through legal or other types of effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature and its ecosystem services and their associated cultural values”.

As a result of the Convention on Biological Diversity of 2024 (<https://www.un.org/es/observances/biodiversity-day/convention>). A considerable increase in the number of protected areas began to be observed and today they are equivalent to approximately 10% of the Earth's surface. Among the different figures of protection for specific territories we can find: National Parks, Natural Reserves, and Biosphere Reserves (the latter have great prestige among managers and visitors). These figures of natural protection, such as nature or biosphere reserves, are in themselves regulatory entities through which limits of use can be established and, therefore, ecotourism plans of correct environmental and social planning that give back to the local economy. These spaces should be responsible for promoting awareness about the future of society at a global level and not be limited to functioning only as figures of isolation between nature and human beings, which only contributes to increasing the feeling that nature [34].

Likewise, by creating these figures of protection for territories determined by their beauty and ecological richness, jobs are also generated that are commonly occupied by local people and become areas in which scientific research on flora and fauna resources, and physical space in general, can be developed.

Zambrano *et al.*, 2010 explain that studying the particular characteristics of the region will allow the people of the locality, if they are in charge of management, to better understand the ecosystem where they develop and take appropriate advantage of the knowledge they have of the environment.

It is important to mention that the protection figures must take into account the rights that all social sectors have to enjoy these spaces. This is due to the continuous increase in the entry quotas to protected areas that end up affecting the enjoyment of the less favored sectors.

Likewise, it is necessary to continuously deal with the possible disagreement on the part of the local populations that live in the surroundings of the protected areas, which could confuse the attempts of conservation and protection of the territory with limitations on the use of the land and the availability of resources for the growth and satisfaction of their immediate needs. which contributes to generating a generalized rejection of the figures for the protection of natural areas. It is in this context that joint participation in decision-making re-emerges as a primary characteristic for equitable and joint development. For these protection strategies to be carried out successfully, there are organizations such as the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (<https://iucn.org/es/our-union/commissions/comision-mundial-de-areas-protegidas>) [9]. They are on their websites, very accessible and are responsible for promoting and providing support for the management and establishment of protected areas. However, in developing countries there are still many details to be corrected both in their management and in their creation, especially in the lack of regulations, coerciveness and resources for the protection and conservation of protected areas. The aim is to equip them with the tools they need for effective protection and development.

3.6. Theory of Those Interested in Ecotourism

It is important to take into consideration the different stakeholders when discussing the issues of ecotourism and sustainable development. An early definition of stakeholders by Freeman [55] states that stakeholders in an organization are “any group or individual that may affect or is affected by the objectives of the organization”. While economic incentives have been identified as important for stakeholders, it is important to highlight that most stakeholders are likely to have alternative motives and that those motives are important to address in order to ensure business success and stakeholder attraction [56]. Especially, because the actors “are actual or potential signifies/obstacles to corporate objectives” [57]. In this context, it is important to promote the accountability of corporate actors; “the need for companies to respond to the needs and concerns of their different stakeholders” [58].

Stakeholder theory is key to the ecotourism debate and key for operators who conduct tours in their local environments. As Hardy and Beeton [59] argue, the identification of stakeholders and their needs “can affect the outcomes, goals, and orientations of tourism management”. According to Powell and Ham [29], the sustainability perspective of ecotourism actually depends on how different actors recognize the relationship between environmental, social, and economic benefits. Traditional actor theory was generally consigned to economic and social agents [10] [55].

However, a more radical view is to include the environment as a stakeholder, as it “provides a great number of constraints and possibilities not only for business life, but for all aspects of human existence.” In the mid-1990s, it was established that there are four main groups of sustainable tourism activities, namely 1) the

local community, 2) tourists, 3) tourism enterprises, and 4) the actual environment itself [60].

3.7. The Main Stakeholders of Ecotourism Companies

If local communities are involved and ecotourism companies ensure that they get the benefits they deserve, people will be more likely to participate, as they will have “*a stimulus and a challenge, to protect what tourists come to see*” [61]. However, financial incentives may not be enough. As Stronza [62] shows, research in Peru shows that some individuals may be more altruistic, while others are simply potential environmental degraders of life. Instead, one should look at the non-economic issues that allow for constraint or participation of community stakeholders and how these actors respond to the values, beliefs, and attitudes that are introduced through ecotourism [63].

Tourism companies and their employees are also clearly interested in the whole ecotourism equation. As mentioned above, tourism organizations must be economically viable in order to be able to afford to implement voluntary initiatives viewed as responsible by their external stakeholders. Depending on the state of the environment and the conditions that exist in the Community, they must have a clear interest in ensuring the quality of their immediate environment [41] [47].

Likewise, employees must have equal interests in ensuring the success of their employers, as companies do in creating job seeker opportunities. Companies should also recognize that their employees are important, especially the guides, as they are the ones that customers face and have a great influence on how sustainability issues are addressed and conveyed [29] [50].

Last but not least is the actor that is shaped by the environment. The local state of the environment depends, or perhaps calls into question, the behavior of businesses, communities, and tourists who use their resources for business, everyday or recreational activities. In order for the natural flora and fauna to function properly, it must be treated with respect and caution [47].

The nature of local ecosystems can be fragile to external shocks and climate changes caused by reckless human interventions [64].

It is difficult to reconcile the present and future needs of different stakeholders, which is particularly evident in developing countries serving tourist destinations. They tend to discuss “short-term profits to an interest in the outcome of long-term losses to others”. Instead, in order to contribute to sustainable, ecotourism, companies need to consider and balance accommodation for both inter- and intra-generational needs [42].

3.8. Culture

It is important to mention that unfortunately the current global conservation movement does not respond to the urgency of the extinction of culture, but to the extinction of the natural resource base and the consequences of this on the quality of life of society. However, ecotourism seeks to be community and integrative,

that is, it is also concerned with establishing conservation strategies in cultural assets, Andersson Cederholm, E. & Hultman, J. (2006) [65], mention that architectural values and traditional values, as well as carrying out cultural interaction and exchange through integration and direct participation between locals and visitors, in such a way as to revalue what each culture is in itself and to contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance. However, at the same time, ecotourism recognizes the limits of such interaction in order to avoid both a deculturalization of the host society as a consequence of the loss of cultural heritage, and the emergence of conflicts over the space in which it develops. This is the result of the growth of a globalizing world society that tends to standardize tastes and behaviors.

4. Conclusions

1) The owners or possessors of the ecotourism site are to offer the satisfaction of the new ecotourists. Not only does it imply the revaluation of the natural environment, but in the medium and long term it will also be the means by which to combat mass tourism, also called conventional tourism and its unsustainable practices.

At the societal level, success will be measured in the way in which ecotourism activity evolves in the territory of the host society. That is, that its planning and regulations are carried out correctly, but above all that an equitable distribution of benefits is granted not only within the receiving population, but also at the visitor level through learning and enjoyment of the natural and social environment.

2) On the other hand, ecotourism should be a tool that helps in the updating and generation of agreements for the harmonization of laws that combine actions at the municipal, state and national levels, as well as the participation of each of the actors involved in it, to regulate both the management of the industry itself, such as the way recreational activities are carried out.

3) The certification of areas open to ecotourism should be an imperative to reduce the felling of trees, the destruction and degradation of natural areas.

4) Ecotourism must function as a social enterprise; it must have a distribution of profits for all. The stalls should be for the owners of the land. Only in this way, the sites will be preserved.

5) Visits should be made to successful ecotourism companies, such as the management of ecotourism in Costa Rica.

Stakeholders must be part of the organization; they must be tourism professionals.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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