



# A Guide to Biodiversity for the Private Sector

[www.ifc.org/BiodiversityGuide](http://www.ifc.org/BiodiversityGuide)

## Tourism and Hospitality

### The Bottom Line

The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the world's largest industries, employing 200 million people and generating more than 10 percent of global GDP. Tourism is a highly varied sector that includes tour operators, accommodation providers, transport, caterers, leisure activities and entertainment. The industry can impact biodiversity in multiple ways, including through the siting and construction of facilities and related infrastructure, such as hotels, airports, roads, golf courses and water and sanitation utilities. Daily operations can lead to impacts through increased water consumption, electricity use and generation of waste. In certain areas, such as along popular coastlines, the cumulative impacts to biodiversity arising from the concentration of many tourism facilities and associated infrastructure can be significant.

The leisure and hotels sector was identified as a high risk ("red zone") sector for biodiversity risk in the September 2004 report *Is Biodiversity a material risk for companies?* (F&C Asset Management plc) [Report available from: <http://www.businessandbiodiversity.org/pdf/FC%20Biodiversity%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>] The report defines red-zone sectors as those sectors in which *most companies* are likely to be exposed to biodiversity risks and the risks are *likely to be significant*.

### Drivers for change

- The need to **maintain and preserve the natural habitats**, species and features (including beaches, coral reefs, rainforests, mountain ecosystems, and savannahs) upon which many parts of the tourism industry is built (clients, shareholders, employees)
- Responding to **increasing consumer interest** in sustainable travel choices (clients)
- Compliance with the expanding number of **certification schemes** (clients)
- Opportunities for **cost savings** through decreased and more efficient use and management of natural resources such as energy and water, and more innovative solutions to waste disposal (shareholders, employees)
- Opportunities to **directly benefit biodiversity** by financing conservation activities and providing economic alternatives for exploitation of biological resources (NGOs, communities, governments, clients)
- Opportunities to attract **concessional financing** (governments, communities)

### Key sustainability initiatives and good practices

- **The International Tourism Partnership (ITP):** [<http://www.internationaltourismpartnership.org>] A program of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, [<http://www.iblf.org>] the ITP is a voluntary industry association for hotels, tour operators, airlines, and industry suppliers which aims to share and expand the use of good practices.
- **Sustainable hotel siting, design and construction guidelines:** [<http://www.iblf.org/resources/general.jsp?id=123673>] Developed by the International Tourism Partnership to help developers and others address the environmental and social risk associated with hotel development.
- **The Tour Operator's Initiative (TOI) for Sustainable Tourism Development:** [<http://www.toinitiative.org>] The TOI is a network of major international tour operators that have committed to incorporating sustainability principles into their business operations and seek to support biodiversity conservation efforts in the destinations where they operate.

- **Ecotourism Australia's Eco-certification scheme:**  
[http://www.ecotourism.org.au/eco\\_certification.asp](http://www.ecotourism.org.au/eco_certification.asp)
- **Green Globe 21:** [<http://www.greenglobe21.com>] A worldwide benchmarking, certification and improvement system for sustainable travel, originally developed by the World Travel and Tourism Council.
- **Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) program:**  
[<http://www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr/EN/home.shtml>]  
National certification scheme for Costa Rica, designed by the Tourism Institute and regulated by the National Accreditation Commission, that classifies tourism companies into five sustainability levels.
- **InterContinental Hotels “Conserving for Tomorrow” program:** [<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com>] An energy saving and waste recycling program implemented in more than 1,000 hotels around the world.
- **Inka Terra:**  
[<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/spiwebsite1.nsf/0/0c0168631283ee4b85256e210078f7d8?OpenDocument>] An IFC/GEF eco-tourism project in Peru.
- **The International Ecotourism Society:**  
<http://www.ecotourism.org>
- **IFC Ec lodges publication:**  
[http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/EBFP\\_Ecolodge](http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/EBFP_Ecolodge)
- **United Nations' International Year of Ecotourism:**  
<http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/IYE-Main-Menu.htm>
- **The National Audubon Society's Travel Ethic for Environmentally Responsible Travel:**  
<http://www.audubon.org/market/no/ethic/index.htm>
- **Tourism Concern:**  
[<http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/>] A British membership organization that focuses on ethical and fairly traded tourism.
- **People and Ecotourism:**  
<http://www.peopleandplanet.net/doc.php?id=1143&section=10>
- **Planeta:**  
[<http://www.planeta.com/ecotravel/etour.html>] A global journal on ecotourism
- **UNESCO Cultural Tourism site:**  
[http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=11408&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11408&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
- **The Green Tourism Association:**  
<http://www.greentourism.ca/home.php>
- **The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business: Travel and Leisure Program:**  
<http://www.celb.org/xp/CELB/programs/travel-leisure>