

# INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP “ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS“

*Sponsored by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funds from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB)*

**Proceedings of the Expert Workshop held from 21. - 25.09.2015  
at the UNESCO-Wadden Sea World Heritage Visitor Centre in  
Wilhelmshaven, Germany**



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Editors

Barbara Engels, Hubert Job, Niklas Scheder, Manuel Woltering

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# 2 Acknowledgements

Würzburg University would like to thank the BfN and BMUB for their financial support, which made this workshop possible. Cordial thanks go to Barbara Engels, BfN for having the initial idea and perpetual will to host this meeting. Many thanks also to Peter Südbeck and the staff of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park, above all Susanne Bernd, for their organizational support and their outstanding hospitality. Individual thanks are made to Jörn Bunje from the National Park administration, as well as to Jochen Runar and Arvid Männicke who provided an excellent and informative field trip to and on the island of Langeoog.

- Hubert Job

### 3 Context

In principle, protected areas serve the purpose of protecting and sustaining a region's natural potentials, irrespective of their current use by man. In Germany national parks pursue the goal of conserving and, if necessary, restoring nature in its primal condition by means of keeping ecological functions and processes free from human interferences. The German category of nature parks and especially UNESCO biosphere reserves, however, serve comprehensive goals, implementing ecological, as well as social and economic aspects in the spirit of a sustainable lifestyle. Yet for most of their expanses it is still about classic nature conservation and the preservation of traditional cultural landscapes.

These protection efforts, accompanied by scenic attractions, provide a unique selling proposition to the usually peripheral and structurally lagging protected area regions. This could enable them to establish themselves as tourist destinations with an environmentally friendly appeal. Such a brand policy provides the opportunity of a mutually rewarding cooperation between nature protection and nature-based tourism.

Management of protected areas is noticeably increasing its efforts to include nature-based tourism into the wide range of tasks and responsibilities – fitted to the individual landscape's potentials and needs. Besides the relatively abstract benefits for a region's public image, tourism in protected areas has also tangible economic impacts. These impacts originate mainly from visitor's expenses. By computing income effects and equalized disposable income, one can find hard evidence to help illustrate this added economic value of protected areas for the adjacent region.

In today's society the economic perspective has become a very important factor. Therefore the designation and sustenance of protected areas is often linked to the requirement to provide an added economic value for the region. This holds especially true for (developing) countries with a high population increase, as well as for those, where government grants are frequently being questioned for budgetary reasons. On the one hand this causes ex-ante analyses to critically evaluate possible development trends for a region. On the other hand it affects ex-post analyses, which could be conducted after the designation of a protected area in order to evaluate the overall performance and achievement of set objectives. In this context, great efforts are being made in many places to establish an instrument for the continuous evaluation of those issues as part of a more comprehensive socioeconomic monitoring system in protected areas.

This can be seen particularly in the context of the international obligation to regularly evaluate all applied conservation measures, as requested by the agreement of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Ever since the ninth CBD 2008 in Bonn, the originally sharp focus on ecology was widened by the demand for an inherent evaluation of ecosystem services, which protected areas could provide. By means of a comparative description of the costs and benefits of protected areas – especially their effects on the local population – socio-economic aspects were highlighted for the first time. Such regional economic surveys are considered very useful to rationalize the often emotionally charged arguments surrounding the designation of protected areas. Quite the same holds true for designations and regular evaluation of World Heritage Sites which commonly also have a status as protected area. Furthermore, the international guidelines for the UNESCO World

Network of Biosphere Reserves require evaluating these areas and their associated facilities once every ten years. In doing so, one must evaluate the impact on biodiversity, as well as approaches of (sustainable) regional development and others.

In this context, nature-based tourism as the leading sector of a regional economy is one of the great developmental possibilities, to benefit from protection measures and to generate added value by providing exceptional nature experiences and nature-based outdoor recreation activities. During the last few years, first steps towards such regional surveys were taken and lessons learned experiences were made in different places of the world.

## **4 Workshop Goals**

This workshop aimed at enabling those experts from around the world to come together and exchange their experiences with current development trends concerning nature-based tourism as well as its monitoring in protected areas. Therefore different national monitoring approaches are presented and critically reviewed. Lastly the attendees are encouraged to deliberate the possible implementation of a global standard for visitor and economic impact monitoring in protected areas and to initiate concrete project proposals to further promote this idea.

The specific objectives were:

1. To explore the state of the art of visitation to parks and measurement of economic impacts in different national settings.
2. To identify (minimal) requirements for a global monitoring standard.
3. To explore how to best integrate possible standards in existing national monitoring practices.
4. To find the ideal balance between comprehensive results and manageable methodology.

## **5 Overview: structure and working methods**

After a short and informal get together on day one, the workshop started the second day with an inquiry about participant's expectations and input provided by several keynotes and case study presentations (see 6 & 7).

The third day featured presentations on expectations and requirements for a global visitor and economic impact monitoring standard seen from different points of view (e.g. WCMC, CBD, park manager, scientific community) (see 7). Derived from the participant's expectations, three main topics were identified and subsequently discussed in working groups identifying current issues, constraints and the way forward and later resulting in specific proposals for implementation (see 8 & 9).

## **6 Participant's expectations**

In a first brief query all participants were asked to state their expectations towards the workshop, which can be summarized as follows:

1. State of the Art: learn and discuss other nation's visitor and economic impact monitoring approaches and best practices. Exchange of knowledge and ideas.
2. Standardization: Work towards more standardization in monitoring methodology.

3. Joint Collaborations: Find common ground for (research) projects and publications.
4. Revenue: Find ways to direct more revenue from tourism into conservation efforts and managements.
5. Decision Making: Exchange experiences on travel motivations and how people make the decision to visit protected areas.

## 7 Presentations

The following presentations were held at the workshop. All presentations are available at: [https://iucn.oscar.ncsu.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Economic\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Tourism\\_in\\_Protected\\_Areas\\_Workshop](https://iucn.oscar.ncsu.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Economic_Impacts_of_Tourism_in_Protected_Areas_Workshop)

Introduction to the topic and workshop goals, Hubert Job

Keynotes:

1. Conservation and community support through tourism in protected areas, Anna Spenceley
2. History and Constraints of Park Visitor Monitoring, Paul Eagles

Case Studies:

1. United States Case Study, Lynne Koontz & Catherine Culliane Thomas
2. Economic Impacts of Tourism in Protected Areas Kenyan Experiences, Joseph K. Muriithi
3. Visitor Spending Effects of Protected Areas in Finland, Joel Erkkonen
4. Economic Impacts of Tourism in Nepalese Protected Areas, Nabin Baral
5. Marine Protected Areas - Case: Australia, Susanne Becken
6. Evaluation of the Economic Impacts of Tourism in German Protected Areas, Manuel Woltering
7. Tourism in Indian Protected Areas, Manoj Nair
8. High-quality Nature Experiences as Precondition for PA Tourism, Michael Jungmeier
9. Towards Evaluation of Economic Impacts of Tourism in Protected Areas in Russia, Evgeny Shvarts
10. Tourism and Protected Areas in New Zealand, Stephen Espiner

Viewpoints:

1. Towards Global Monitoring Standards for Tourism in Protected Areas, Oliver Hillel
2. UNESCO World Heritage: Mechanisms of the Convention, Peter deBrine
3. Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from the WCMC's perspective, Marine Deguignet
4. A Global Monitoring Standard from the Park Manager's Perspective, Michael Harbrow
5. Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from a Research Journal Perspective, Bernard Lane

## 8 Group Work Design

The workshop included two rounds of group work. For the first round, the panel was divided into three working groups, according to the three key aspects of tourism monitoring in protected areas.

1. Visitor Counting
2. Visitor Surveys
3. Economic Impacts

These groups were each tasked to elaborate the general and methodological requirements for a global monitoring standard regarding their aspect, how such an effort should be communicated and what challenges it may face. As a guideline for the course of this group work, the participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. Why do we need the data?
2. What exactly do we need to know?
3. How do we generate the knowledge (methodology)?
4. What main challenges do we face?
5. How do we communicate the results?

Afterwards each group presented their findings in two rounds for both of the remaining teams, which in turn could add their input. Lastly all results were collected (see 9) and briefly discussed within the panel, leading to the question: “Where to go from here?” and the second round of group work.

This final round served as a mean for planning the next steps and the follow-up as well as proposing concrete projects. Like before, the panel was divided into three teams working on the interlinked topics:

1. Global Standard / Guideline Manual
2. Projects / Pilot Studies
3. Communication / Publications

The breakdown into these three teams derived from participant’s expectations (see 6) and the overall discussion. The results of this session are listed under “next steps” (see 9).

## 9 Conclusions

### General Conclusions

- There is a considerable gap between international evaluation obligations vs. the availability of reliable and comparable data on tourism in protected areas on a global level and sometimes even on national levels as well (results of “Patchwork monitoring”).
- This results in a need for a global standard on monitoring and reporting visitation in protected areas.
- A multi-step approach for monitoring visitation and economic impact of PA tourism is the most realistic (visitation numbers – visitor spending – economic impacts).

## **Towards a global monitoring standard**

In the first round of group work, the workshop participants discussed and noted a set of requirements and constraints of a global standard for monitoring visitation and economic impacts of tourism in protected areas regarding visitor counting, visitor surveys and economic impact monitoring.

### **1. General requirements and necessary capabilities**

Such a monitoring approach should:

- Measure visitation, economic activities and governance structures
- Allow comparability and benchmarking
- Be applicable on different scales
- Be credible (e.g. linked to an international organisation or a sound and approved authority; and backed by expertise)
- Be cost effective and easy to understand (for practitioners)
- Have an appropriate reporting frequency
- Cover costs and benefits
- Allow clear communication to media, policy-makers and park managers and the public
- Communication must happen on different scales: local, regional, national, international
- Allow to visualise results and make them accessible (internet) to justify budget (operational, capital, land acquisition), private investments, stewardship/regional acceptance and internal and external marketing/communication
- Help allocate resources
- Support the creation and expansion of protected areas networks
- Involve local communities and support public engagement
- Help identify trends in visitation/tourism
- Be intercultural
- Minimise the influence of external risks/factors (currency exchange, fuel crisis etc.)

### **2. Methodological, technical and procedural requirements**

Apart from these general requirements, the participants also came up with some concrete specifications regarding the methodology, communication and monitoring procedure:

- Visitor monitoring should include: motivation, structure, demographic, trip purpose, party size, means of travel, activities, importance of protected area for decision making
- Visitor spending should be categorized and located
- The level of accuracy for visitor counting should be > 80%
- Consider the distribution (space and time) and seasonality of tourism
- Make use of “visitor days” rather than “visits” to account for length of stay/re-entries etc.
- Analyse and differentiate visitor segments: overnight visitors, day trippers; locals, inbound and incoming visitors
- Offer a decision tree to help protected area management find the best monitoring tools for their individual setting
- Consider new technological possibilities (counting machines, mobile phones, drones etc.)
- Assess different survey approaches like face-to-face interviews on site, postal or online surveys
- Offer surveys in different languages

- Communication is essential and should be tailored to different audiences (politicians, communities, media, park staff, private sector NGOs etc.)
- Communication should be handled by professional staff
- Best-practices (such as the US-web toll) are suitable guidelines

Possible additional activities could be:

- National surveys to capture the potential (consumer surplus) of the non-use values of protected areas by capturing non-visitors as well.
- Collection of data on the tourist's willingness to pay and on visitor satisfaction as well as travel cost method

### 3. Challenges

Besides the above noted requirements, some challenges were identified as well:

- Finding necessary funding for pilot studies and projects (financial and human resources)
- Getting approval for studies on national levels (approval procedures/protocols = bureaucracy)
- The decision on which type of interview is used (face-to-face, postal etc.), depends on various factors, and has to be site specific
- How to guarantee consistent analysis/interpretation of the gathered data across different countries?
- Long-time consistency for survey design is hard to achieve considering the diversity of national settings and site specific needs
- How to handle the need for pretesting, supervision and peer-review (Who does what? / Who takes responsibility?)
- How to deal with special events and resulting spikes in visitation? (once-a-year spectacles of nature, cultural festivals etc.)
- Critically review existing data/estimates of visitation and economic impacts to clear the way for future standardized monitoring
- Creating a training systematic for protected areas staff to enable them to execute monitoring according to a given methodology (capacity building)
- Who handles periodic auditing of protected areas monitoring/management?
- How to scale up from pilot studies to national levels?

### Next steps

Since the group of participants all agreed that there is a high demand for a global standard for visitation and economic impact monitoring in protected areas, the second round of group work reached the following conclusions regarding the way forward: To best address this demand there should be a guideline manual with best practices, a set of standardized tools (methodology) and a decision tree to help protected area management choose the most fitting monitoring approach. These standards should be tested in pilot studies on a global scale. All results should be well communicated and accompanied by scientific publications.

## 1. Global Standard / Guideline Manual

### Project:

- Manual/Best practice guidelines on methodology, global standard requirements/ideas and case studies (how to deal with data gaps) - lead: Würzburg University (Niklas Scheder)

### Ideas:

- The other participants and external experts as authors and reviewers
- TAPAS to help, funding needs for printing, translation
- Link work to UNESCO World Heritage Sites tourism toolkit
- Revision of: Hornback, K. E., Eagles, P. F. J., (1999): Guidelines for public use measurement and reporting at parks and protected areas. Gland, Cambridge.

## 2. Projects / Pilot Studies

### Project:

- Workshop session at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in September 2016 - lead: BfN (Barbara Engels)

### Ideas:

- TAPAS Group as a nucleus (TAPAS online networking group to be created for future discussions and work as well as a platform for knowledge exchange)<sup>1</sup>
- WH, MAB or RAMSAR sites could serve as priority pilot sites for testing methodology on global level
- Project idea: Towards inclusion in the WDPA list
- Mobilize CBD parties (via notification?)
- The CBD provides a suitable framework: Decision XII/11 on Biodiversity and Tourism Development (COP 2014)

## 3. Communication / Publications

### Project:

- Special issue of 'JOST' (Journal Of Sustainable Tourism) in 2017 to encourage academic research - lead: Bernard Lane, Susanne Becken and Hubert Job

### Ideas:

- publish case studies: e.g. in UNESCO WH magazine, IUCN publications or IUCN Panorama website (<http://www.panorama.solutions>)
- Global reporting mechanism would be available via the WDPA
- Promote ideas at WHC, CBD COP and WCC (CBD could send a request to countries)

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<sup>1</sup> Since the workshop, a Google work group has been created and workshop attendees have been invited to join TAPAS Group

## 10 Annex: Agenda

### Day 1 / 21.09.2015

During the Day	Arrival and Check In
20:00	Who is Who? / World Café / Dinner Included
21:00	Get Together

### Day 2 / 22.09.2015

9:00	Welcoming Address – Peter Südbeck
9:10	Welcoming Address – Barbara Engels
9:20	Kick Off: Introduction to the Topic and Workshop Goals – Hubert Job
10:00	Coffee Break
10:30	Key Note: Conservation and Community Support through Tourism in Protected Areas - Anna Spenceley
11:15	Key Note: History and Constraints of Park Visitor Monitoring – Paul Eagles
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Case Study: USA – Lynne Koontz, Catherine C. Thomas
13:30	Case Study: Kenya – Joseph K. Muriithi
14:00	Case Study: Finland – Joel Erkkonen
14:30	Introduction to the Wadden Sea National Park on the roof terrace of the National Park Visitor Center – Peter Südbeck
15:00	Case Study: Nepal – Nabin Baral
15:30	Case Study: Australia / Marine Parks – Susanne Becken
16:00	Case Study: Germany - Manuel Woltering
16:30	Case Study: India – Manoj Nair
17:00	Coffee Break
17:15	Case Study: Austria – Michael Jungmeier
17:45	Case Study: Russia – Evgeny Shvarts
18:15	Case Study: New Zealand – Stephen Espiner
19:30	Dinner Invitation at the “Seglerheim am Nassauhafen” by the Wadden Sea National Park

### Day 3 / 23.09.2015

- 9:00 Recap: Unresolved Issues and Findings of Day 2: Clustering and Prioritizing of Metaplan Aspects – Manuel Woltering, Niklas Scheder
- 9:30 Presentation: Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from the CBD Perspective of National/International Administrations – Oliver Hillel
- 10:00 Presentation: Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from the UNESCO Perspective of National/International Administrations – Peter deBrine
- 10:30 Coffee Break
- 11:00 Presentation: Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from the WCMC's Perspective – Marine Deguignet
- 11:30 Presentation: Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from the Park Manager's Perspective – Michael Harbrow
- 12:00 Presentation: Expectations and Requirements for a Global Monitoring Standard from a Research Journal Perspective – Bernard Lane
- 12:30 Lunch
- 13:30 Group Work: Two Teams Working on Issues of:
1. Visitor Counting
  2. Visitor Survey
  3. Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring
- 15:10 Presentation of the Results & Discussion – Panel
- 16:00 Tour of the UNESCO-Wadden Sea World Heritage Visitor Centre Wilhelmshaven
- 16:30 Group Work: Where do we go from here? Main Issues and how to Address them in the Future.
- 17:45 Follow Up & Next Steps – Panel
- 18:15 Conclusions – Barbara Engels
- 19:00 Dinner Invitation at Hotel Columbia's "Harbor View" by the BMUB
- 20:00 Presentation: Perspectives for Cooperation on Sustainable Tourism within the CBD – Oliver Hillel
- 20:20 Brain Storming / Discussion - Panel

**Day 4 / 24.09.2015**

- 8:00 Transfer: Bus and Ferry Transfer from Wilhelmshaven to Langeoog Island
- 10:00 Arrival on Langeoog Island, Luggage Pickup and Hand Over of Rental Bikes
- 11:00 Guided Mudflat Hiking Tour by National Park Rangers Jochen Runar and Arvid Männicke
- 12:30 Bike Ride on Langeoog island
- 13:15 Lunch at the "Meierei"
- 14:00 Bike Ride with Several Stops Including the "Osthütte" (Eastern Hut) with Opportunities for Bird and Seal Watching and the Ornithological Station
- 17:30 Arrival and Check in at Hotel Strandeck / Haus Bethanien
- 19:00 Dinner Invitation at the "Seekrug" by the State Government of Lower Saxony

**Day 5 / 25.09.2015**

- 8:00 Transfer: Ferry Transfer from Langeoog to Mainland and Wilhelmshaven
- 10:00 Arrival at Wilhelmshaven Station
- 11:30 Arrival at BRE Bremen Airport

## 11 Annex: Contacts List

Name	Institution / Organisation	eMail
Nabin Baral	University of Washington, United States	nbaral@uw.edu
Susanne Becken	Griffith University, Australia	s.becken@griffith.edu.au
Catherine Culliane Thomas	United States Geological Survey	ccullinanethomas@usgs.gov
Peter DeBrine	UNESCO World Heritage Centre, France	p.debrine@unesco.org
Marine Deguignet	UNEP - World Conservation Monitoring Centre, United Kingdom	marine.deguignet@unep-wcmc.org
Paul Eagles	University of Waterloo, Canada	eagles@uwaterloo.ca
Barbara Engels	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	barbara.engels@bfn.de
Joel Erkkonen	Metsähallitus, Parks & Wildlife Finland	joel.erkkonen@metsa.fi
Stephen Espiner	Lincoln University, New Zealand	espines@lincoln.ac.nz
Christiane Gätje	Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park, Germany	christiane.gaetje@lkn.landsh.de
Michael Harbrow	New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC)	mharbrow@doc.govt.nz
Oliver Hillel	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Canada	oliver.hillel@cbd.int
Hubert Job	Würzburg University, Germany	hubert.job@uni-wuerzburg.de
Michael Jungmeier	University of Klagenfurt, Austria	jungmeier@e-c-o.at
Lynne Koontz	United States National Park Service	lynne_koontz@nps.gov
Bernard Lane	Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom	bernard.lane@tiscali.co.uk
Maria de Lurdes Serpa Carvalho	Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO	lurdescarvalho4@gmail.com
Marius Mayer	University of Greifswald, Germany	marius.mayer@uni-greifswald.de
Daniel Metzler	Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany	dmetzler@hm.edu
Joseph K. Muriithi	Kenyatta University, Kenya	jkariukix@yahoo.co.uk
Manoj Nair	Wildlife Institute of India	manojnair@wii.gov.in
Niklas Scheder	Würzburg University, Germany	niklas.scheder@uni-wuerzburg.de
Evgeny Shvarts	WWF Russia	eshvarts@wwf.ru

Name	Institution / Organisation	eMail
Anna Spenceley	STAND cc, South Africa	annaspenceley@gmail.com
Peter Südbeck	Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park, Germany	peter.suedbeck@nlpv-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de
Mel Turner	Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia, Canada	melt@shaw.ca
Manuel Woltering	Würzburg University, Germany	manuel.woltering@uni-wuerzburg.de

## 12 Annex: Feedback

*“Once again, I would like to thank you and all the other organizers of the workshop. It was a pleasure meeting everyone and participating in the discussion. I am hopeful that the results can be shared once you get a chance. Well done. “*

- Mel Turner

*“The workshop was of utmost interest with a high standard of technical and scientific information and a relevant network was built, or reinforced. From our point of view the workshop was very useful and we look forward for the final guidance document, in order to share it with our Site Managers towards the implementation in the WHS Portuguese network.”*

- Maria Lurdes Serpa Carvalho

*“I would like to thank you and your team for inviting me to participate in the workshop. It was really a great opportunity to learn from the participants regarding the state of the art of visitor monitoring and economic impact assessment in protected areas. I returned fully charged, but we need to sustain our enthusiasm to accomplish the workshop’s ultimate goal of designing a standardized system for monitoring and evaluation of tourism in protected areas.”*

- Nabin Baral

*“Dear Hubert, dear Niklas, dear Barbara, dear colleagues, thanks for having prepared, hosted and facilitated this inspiring and most interesting workshop. I look forward to the documentation and the follow-up activities.”*

- Michael Jungmeier

*I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed meeting all of you last month. Thank you so much for the invitation and for being such excellent hosts. I look forward to possible collaborations with you all in the future.*

- Catherine Culliane Thomas

## 13 Annex: Impressions



Field trip on the Island of Langeoog

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Historic fishing boat in the UNESCO-Wadden Sea World Heritage Visitor Centre, Wilhelmshaven

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Discussion on the results of the first round of group work

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Introduction to the Wadden Sea National Park by Peter Südbeck

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Introduction and welcoming addresses by Hubert Job, Barbara Engels and Peter Süßbeck

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Guided mudflat hike near Langeoog

©Hubert Job